

Pitzer College
POLITICAL ANIMALS AND ANIMAL ETHICS

Dr. Jordan Daniels

Pronouns: she, her, hers

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Office hours: Fletcher 101

MW 4:00-5:00pm and by appt.

PHIL 108

Spring 2023

MW 2:45-4:00pm

Fletcher 106



COURSE DESCRIPTION

In what ways are we ethically accountable to non-human animals? How can our ideas about politics do justice to our relationships with the more-than-human world? How, in turn, do our conceptions of ethics and politics change when we take animals seriously? Many thinkers recognize that these questions, long kept in the margins of canonical philosophy, are increasingly central and urgent. This course introduces students to recent answers to these questions in the emergent fields of animal ethics, critical animal studies, and the politics of animal rights.

Our course is divided into three main units. In **Unit 1: Animals and Philosophical Ethics**, we examine some accounts of animal life and their value as they appear in debates within mainstream animal ethics, alongside some critical alternatives. In **Unit 2: Animal Politics**, we explore the dominant practices within food industry and the shape of political demands for justice within that sphere for animals and humans both. In **Unit 3: Race, Colonialism, Animals**, we examine how the abuse of animals *and* some animal rights movements can align with or mask racist and colonialist projects. Throughout the course, we will remain attuned to real-world cases while we parse the limits of our philosophical and political imagination regarding what a good relationship to the non-human world might be.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the class, I hope students will be able to understand knowledge creation, engage multiple perspectives, and investigate meaningful questions in the domain of critical animal studies and animal ethics. Here are some more specific learning outcomes we will work towards:

- Students are able to articulate and evaluate some of the most influential philosophical approaches to animal ethics
- Students learn to describe and assess key political projects regarding animals
- Students are able to culturally and historically situate our discussions of human beings' relations to non-human animals
- Students can connect the theoretical approaches we discuss to real-world practices
- Students assess their own place in the world and their own responsibilities to human, non-human, and non-animal nature

COURSE MATERIALS

J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).
ISBN: 9780691173900

Aph Ko, *Racism as Zoological Witchcraft* (Woodstock, NY: Lantern Publishing and Media, 2019).
ISBN: 9781590565964

You can purchase these books in the Claremont bookstore. I also recommend you search online for second-hand copies.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation

I divide your participation grade into two units of 10 points so that you can take note of your standing around halfway through the course. Components of your participation grade include **attendance, preparation, activity in class, and the Thursday Blog**.

1. Regular attendance and your engaged attention are expected. You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. Excused absences include illness or Covid-related difficulties and notification prior to class beginning. I also reserve the right to add short quizzes if students do not seem prepared. These quizzes will count towards your participation grade.
2. The assigned readings should be completed by the start of class. For challenging texts (and all may fall under this category), I recommend rereading. Your participation grade will suffer if it is clear you are unfamiliar with the assigned texts.

3. Participation can take many forms in person: being vocal in discussion, active listening, respectful engagement with your peers, and meeting with me in office hours. I encourage everyone to experiment with forms of participation that may be new for them. *If you find yourself taking up a lot of space in the classroom*, try directing your questions and comments to other students. *If you don't find vocal participation to be intuitive*, practice by asking a question—odds are, other students share your question or you might spark a generative new direction. There will also be lots of small group discussions for you to practice this.
4. An additional component of your participation grade is your weekly posting on the **Thursday Blog** on Sakai. The blog offers a further chance for you to engage with your peers and synthesize the material we have been covering in the readings and in course meetings. The blog will be continuous throughout the semester, and you are required to post a comment of 5 sentences minimum once a week, after our second class and by Thursday, 11:59pm. In your post, you may pose a question, reflect, make connections to resources outside the course, and you are additionally encouraged to comment on fellow students' posts. As one component of your participation grade, each blog post itself is not scored. Thoughtful posts that fulfill the minimum requirements account for full credit.

Midterm Paper

You will complete one argumentative paper of 5-7 pages that focuses on our first unit, Animals and Philosophical Ethics. The assignment will be distributed in class, and you are to upload the assignment to Sakai. Please submit a double-spaced **Word document**, in size 12 Times New Roman or Garamond font.

Group Presentation

By March 20, students will be assigned to groups of 3. Each group will select an animal—a singular creature or a species—and create a 20-25 minute presentation to share in the final weeks of the semester. This presentation is an opportunity to present a case study and creatively apply some of the theoretical tools we have developed over the course, and to connect our discussions to animals or species in Southern California. Students can build on the topics we discuss in class (ethical approaches, political frameworks, cultural significance) but also draw on other materials, such as theorists we have not read in class, biological/ecological sciences, and the work of artists. Students are required to include at least one thinker we have read in the course. Each group must provide a handout, a work of art/visual guide, or create a PowerPoint.

Final Paper

By the end of the semester, you will turn in a final argumentative paper of 7-10 pages, double-spaced, in size 12 Times New Roman or Garamond font with normal margins. You will receive the assignment in class.

GRADE TOTAL

ACTIVITY	POINTS
Participation	10
Participation	10
Midterm Paper	30
Group Presentation	20
Final Paper	30
<hr/> TOTAL POINTS	100

POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Covid Safety Awareness

Our health, both mental and physical, is paramount. We must consider the health of others inside and outside the classroom. We need to take care of each other for this course to be successful. I ask you therefore to adhere to the following principles:

- **You must wear a mask for the entire class. Eating and drinking are not permitted. Your mask must cover your mouth and nose.**
- Class attendance is required, but if you need to miss class for health reasons, concerning symptoms, suspected Covid exposure, unexpected dependent care, technology issues, or other emergency reasons I will work with you. Let me underscore this: please make your decisions always based on health, safety, and wellness—yours and others—and I will work with you at the other end. Take the symptom “Pitzer Safe Daily Health Check” seriously; we’re counting on each other.

Technology Policy

Phones, tablets, computers, and other electronic devices are great, but not for our classroom except in cases where permission is arranged. **Unless you get have an accommodation or speak with me, computers are not allowed.** Let's practice sustained attention with one another, a welcome break after so much screen time last few years. All PDFs should be printed unless permission is granted in advance.

Paper Policy

I will not *in private* read a draft of papers prior to their submission, but I will happily meet *with students* to discuss their drafts in office hours. This is because I believe you should be actively involved in the editing/critiquing/brainstorming/thinking process of bringing your draft to a more refined form. I prefer to finish these meetings 24-48 hours prior to the deadline, office hours allowing.

Late Assignment Policy

You will lose 50% of the possible points for any assignment that you submit late if you have not spoken with me before the deadline. I AM VERY HAPPY TO GRANT EXTENSIONS IF YOU

WRITE/SPEAK WITH ME. Please communicate with me at least 48 hours before an assignment is due if you feel you need an extension.

Academic Integrity

The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: **when you are responsible for a task, such as thinking up and writing a paper, you will perform that task.** When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

Disability Accommodations

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your faculty and the Pitzer Academic Support Services by email at academicsupport@pitzer.edu at the beginning of the semester if you have not already registered for accommodations.

Writing Center

The Writing Center is open this semester. Writing and Speaking Partners meet one-on-one with students to talk about their work and provide feedback at any stage of their preparation process. Additionally, staff offer specialized writing and speaking support for multilingual students navigating English as an additional language. To make an appointment with a Writing or Speaking Partner, please visit <https://www.pitzer.edu/writing-center/>.

Diversity and Inclusion

In our classroom, we seek to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and ability.

Non-Sexist Use of Language

We academics no longer use "man" or "mankind" to refer to the entirety of humanity or a hypothetical person. This extends to written work as well as discussions, and it will serve you well throughout the rest of your professional lives.

Content Warning

In this course, we will be discussing colonial and racist violence, and animal cruelty and death.

Contact Policy

I prefer if you contact me via email at jordan_daniels@pitzer.edu rather than through Sakai. Additionally, I strive to keep my emailing to the hours of 9-5pm, M-F. Please bear that in mind when you are awaiting a response.

SCHEDULE (*subject to change*)

Unit 1: Animals and Philosophical Ethics

January 18	Intro
January 23	Peter Singer, “All Animals Are Equal”; <i>recommended</i> : Eva Feder Kittay, “The Personal is Philosophical is Political: A Philosopher and a Mother of a Cognitively Disabled Person Sends Notes from the Battlefield”; Alice Crary, “The Horrific History of Comparisons between Cognitive Disability and Animality (and How to Move Past It)”
January 25	Christine Korsgaard, “Fellow Creatures: Kantian Ethics and Our Duties to Animals”
January 30	Cora Diamond, “Eating Meat and Eating People”
February 1	J.M. Coetzee, <i>The Lives of Animals</i> , “The Philosophers and the Animals,” pgs. 15-45; Kafka, “A Report to an Academy” <i>Available</i> : Thomas Nagel, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?”
February 6	J.M. Coetzee, <i>The Lives of Animals</i> , “The Poets and the Animals,” pgs. 47-69; Rilke, “The Panther”; Ted Hughes, “The Jaguar” and “Second Glance at a Jaguar”
February 8	Barbara Smuts, “Reflection,” in <i>The Lives of Animals</i> ; watch My Octopus Teacher
February 13	Val Plumwood, “The Ethics of Commodification,” selections
February 15	Val Plumwood, “The Eye of the Crocodile,” selections
February 20	Research Librarian Visit
February 22	John Berger, “Why Look at Animals?”; watch Grizzly Man
February 24	MIDTERM PAPER DUE, 11:59pm
	Unit 2: Animal Politics
February 27	Timothy Pachirat, <i>Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight</i> , chapters 1-2 (“Hidden in Plain Sight” and “Where the Blood Flows”)

March 1	Timothy Pachirat, <i>Every Twelve Seconds</i> , chapter 3 (“Kill Floor”)
March 6	Raj Patel and Jason Moore, <i>A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things</i> , “Introduction”; explore https://pinkchickenproject.com/
March 8	Raj Patel and Jason Moore, <i>A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things</i> , “Cheap Food”; Eric Schlosser, <i>Fast Food Nation</i> , chapter 8 (“The Most Dangerous Job”); https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/16/meatpacking-industry-covid-outbreaks-workers
March 13-17	SPRING BREAK
March 20	Claire Jean Kim, “Abolition”
March 22	Gary Francione, “The Abolition of Animal Exploitation,” selections
March 27	Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, <i>Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights</i> , excerpts from Part I (“An Expanded Theory of Animal Rights”)
March 29	Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, <i>Zoopolis</i> , chapter 4 (“Domesticated Animals within Animal Rights Theory”)
April 3	Claire Kim, “The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Michael Vick”
April 5	Syl Ko, “By Human, Everyone Just Means “White;” Aph Ko, <i>Racism as Zoological Witchcraft</i> , “Introduction”
April 10	Aph Ko, <i>Racism as Zoological Witchcraft</i> , chapters 1-2 (“Anti-Racism vs. Animal Liberation” and “White Supremacy as Zoological Witchcraft”); watch <i>Get Out</i>
April 12	Aph Ko, <i>Racism as Zoological Witchcraft</i> , chapters 3-5 (“Moving from Intersectionality to Multidimensionality Liberation Theory,” Afro-Zoological Resistance,” and “Freeing the Animal from the Grasp of the Animal Rights Movement”)
April 17	Vanessa Watts, “Growling Ontologies: Indigeneity, Becoming-Souls, and Settler Colonial Inaccessibility”
April 19	Margaret Robinson, “Veganism and Mi’kmaq Legends”

Final Blog post due

April 24	Group Project Presentations
April 26	Group Project Presentations
May 1	Group Project Presentations
May 3	Conclusion, evaluations
May 2	FINAL PAPER due for seniors*
May 8	FINAL PAPER DUE