

PHL 413: Animal Ethics

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Description

In this seminar we will look at some of ethical questions regarding our relationship to non-human animals. Parts of the course are devoted to particular applied issues, such as eating meat, while other parts are devoted to determining what the main ethical theories—consequentialism, deontology, and contractarianism—have to say about these questions.

Grading

You are required to write two papers for this course, each between 8–10 pages (2,750–3,400 words). You are encouraged to discuss your topic with me before you begin writing it. You are also encouraged to discuss your topic and seek comments from your peers. Please use standard formatting: 1 inch (2.54 cm) margins with 12-point, Times New Roman (or another suitable serif) font. Late papers will be penalized one letter point per day (e.g., a paper submitted one day late will go from a B to a B-). I will post paper topics on Blackboard. Papers must be submitted on Blackboard. As this is a seminar, you are expected to attend class and be prepared to discuss the readings in detail.

Paper 1 (Due at the end of the 6th week)	50%
Paper 2 (Due on the last day of class)	50%

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence which many students commit unintentionally. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. In particular, for this course, you are required to give a citation whenever you discuss someone else's work. This is true regardless of whether you directly quote the author or, alternatively, summarize the author's ideas in your own words. This course, and philosophy in general,

has no agreed-upon style guide. You can use whichever method you prefer, so long as I can find the relevant passage. Most importantly, *you must provide page numbers*. Here are two examples:

Direct quotation: In the introduction of *Reasons and Persons*, Derek Parfit says “Like my cat, I often simply do what I want to do” (p. ix).

Summarization: In the introduction of *Reasons and Persons*, Derek Parfit describes how he often behaves like his cat by acting in whatever way he wants to (p. ix).

If you are unsure how to properly cite something, consult one of the following sources: [The Writing Centre website](#); [one of the physical writing centres](#); or me, the instructor. For more information on academic integrity, please consult the [university’s webpage](#).

Contacting the Instructor

I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours. If you email me, please include the course code in the subject or body of the message. If you are unable to attend my office hour (right before class) we can arrange a time to talk via Skype, Google Hangouts, or some other medium.

Reading Schedule

There is no assigned textbook or reading pack for this course. All of the readings are either available for free online or will be made available on Blackboard. We will be reading canonical texts, so buying these books might be worthwhile.

Week 1: Introduction

- Jeff McMahan, “Our Fellow Creatures,” *The Journal of Ethics* 9:3 (2005): 353–380.

Week 2: Pain

- J. S. Mogil, “Animal Models of Pain: Progress and Challenges,” *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience* 10 (2009): 283–294.
- Victoria Braithwaite, excerpt from *Do Fish Feel Pain?*

Week 3: Speciesism

- Peter Singer, chapter 1 of *Animal Liberation* .
- Shelly Kagan, “What’s Wrong with Speciesism?” *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 33:1 (2016): 1–21.

Week 4: Replaceability

- Peter Singer, excerpt from *Practical Ethics*
- Tatjana Visak, “Do Utilitarians Need to Accept the Replaceability Argument?” from *The Ethics of Killing Animals*
- Shelly Kagan, “Singer on Killing Animals” from *The Ethics of Killing Animals*

Week 5: Killing Animals

- Peter Singer, excerpt from *Practical Ethics*
- Jeff McMahan, chapter 3 of *The Ethics of Killing*

Week 6: Eating Animals

- Jeff McMahan, “Eating Animals the Nice Way” *Daedalus* Winter (2008).
- Elizabeth Telfer, “Animals Do It Too!: The Franklin Defence of Meat-Eating,” *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 1:1 (2004): 51–67.
- David Foster Wallace, “Consider the Lobster,” from *Consider the Lobster*
- Christopher Cox, “Consider the Oyster,” *Slate*

Week 7: Collective Actions

- Shelly Kagan, “Do I Make a Difference?” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 39:2 (2011): 105–141.
- Julia Nefsky, “Consequentialism and the Problem of Collective Harm: A Reply to Kagan,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 39:4 (2011): 364–395.

Week 8: Abolitionism

- Jeff McMahan, “The Meat Eaters,” *The New York Times*, September 19th, 2010.
- George Dvorsky, “The Radical Plan to Phase Out Earth’s Predatory Species,” *io9*
- David Pearce, “The Abolitionist Project”

Week 9: Deontology

- Christine Korsgaard, “Fellow Creatures: Kantian Ethics and Our Duties to Animals,” *Tanner Lecture on Human Values*, 2004.

Week 10: Deontology

- Tom Regan, excerpt from *The Case for Animals Rights*

Week 11: The Social Contract

- Martha Nussbaum, chapter 6 of *Frontiers of Justice*

Week 12: The Social Contract

- Martha Nussbaum, chapter 6 of *Frontiers of Justice*
- Peter Carruthers, “Contractualism and Animals,” from *The Animals Issue*