The Chinese University of Hong Kong
PHIL5583 Issues in Practical Philosophy: Animal Ethics-Theory and Practice
Course Outline 25/26 2nd semester

Instructor: Dr. Kwok Pak Nin, Samson
Time: Friday 6:30-9:30pm
Venue: WMY 508

Course overview:

This course provides a comprehensive introduction to the philosophical study of animal ethics. Students will critically examine the major arguments in contemporary debates concerning the moral status of non-human animals and explore a wide range of practical ethical issues involving animals. Through rigorous analysis and discussion, the course aims to deepen students' understanding of the moral considerations surrounding human-animal interactions and their philosophical implications.

Learning outcomes:

1. Articulate and evaluate key philosophical arguments regarding the moral status of non-human animals.
2. Analyze the ethical dimensions of human practices involving animals, including domestication, meat consumption, experimentation, and pet-keeping.
3. Critically assess the social and cultural representations of animals and their ethical significance.
4. Apply philosophical theories to real-world ethical dilemmas involving animals.
5. Develop well-reasoned arguments on complex issues in animal ethics.

Learning activities and workload:

1. **Lecture**: 3 hours each week.
2. **Reading**: 2-3 hours per week. Students are required to read the reading material assigned.

Assessment:

Task nature	Description	Weight
Debate	Group Debate	10%
Presentation	Group Presentation	20%
Midterm Paper	Midterm Paper	35%
Term End Paper	Term End Paper	35%
*Participation**	*Students who actively participate in both class and online discussions may receive a bonus of up to 5% on their final grade*	

Details of course website:

Lecture notes and information on assignments will be posted on the Blackboard Learn website.

Late submission policy:

Assignments submitted after the due date will incur a 5% grade reduction per day. Extensions will only be granted in cases of unexpected or exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control.

Grade Descriptors:

http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf

Course schedule:

Week	Date	Lecture Topic	Presentation (week 4 to week 12)
1	Jan 9	Introduction: Why Animals Matter? & The Animal-Human Borders	
2	Jan 16	Theory: Moral Standing and Moral Status	
3	Jan 23	Theory: Utilitarianism, Specieism and Sentientism	
4	Jan 30	Theory: Kantian and Rights Theory	Shelly Kagan, "What's Wrong with Speciesism?"
5	Feb 6	Theory: Abolitionist and Capabilities Approach	Aaron Simmons, "Do All Subjects of a Life Have an Equal Right to Life?" & Mary Anne Warren, "A Critique of Regan's Animal Rights Theory."
6	Feb 13	Theory: Against the Moral Standing of Animals	Ramona Ilea, "Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach and Nonhuman Animals: Theory and Public Policy"
7	Feb 20	***Lunar New Year Holiday***	
8	Feb 27	Theory: Hierarchy View	Peter Carruthers, "Against the Moral Standing of Animals"
9	Mar 6	Practice: Animal as Food - Meat Eating	Zorana S. Todorović, "The Moral Status of Animals: Degrees of Moral Status and the Interest-Based Approach"
10	Mar 13	Practice: Animal as Tool - Animal Experiment and Animal-Assisted Activities	Donald W. Bruckner, "The Vegan's Dilemma"
11	Mar 20	Practice: Animal as Family Member - Commodification and Keeping pets	Alexander Zambrano, "Animal Experimentation as a Form of Rescue"
12	Mar 27	Practice: Animal as Political Member - Animal Citizenship	Jessica Du-Toit, "Is Having Pets Morally Permissible?"
13	Apr 3	***Public Holiday***	
14	Apr 10	Remaining Issues/Conclusion	Alasdair Cochrane, "Cosmozoopolis-The Case Against Group-Differentiated Animal Rights"
15	Apr 17	Group Debate	

Recommended learning resources:

Main Reference:

Beauchamp, Tom. (Eds). *The Oxford handbook of animal ethics.* Oxford University Press**,** 2014.

DeMello, Margo. *Animals and Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

Kagan, Shelly. *How to Count Animals, More or Less.* Oxford University Press, 2019.

錢永祥，《人性之鏡：動物倫理的歷史與哲學》。台灣：聯經出版社，2023 年。

Reading list:

Topic-specific lists of references, required and suggested readings will be given in lecture notes and bibliographical notes (separate) for each topic.

Feedback for evaluation:

1. Students are strongly encouraged to provide feedback on the course via email or meetings with lecturer.
2. Students evaluate the course through a survey and written comments at the end of the term as well as via regular feedback between teacher and students. This information is highly valued and is used to revise teaching methods, tasks, and content.

Contact:

Lecturer	
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Academic honesty and plagiarism:

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/ .
With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.
For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

Guidelines on the Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

Use only with prior permission Students may use AI tools for Term Paper, but not for other assignments. These tools can be used for: 1. Checking grammar and 2. Polishing arguments. All use of AI tools must be cited or acknowledged.