

“The Biology and Philosophy of Human-Animal Relationships”
Zoology/Forest & Wildlife Ecology 335

Patricia B. McConnell

This course is an inquiry into the complex and often contradictory relationships between humans and other animals. It begins by examining the paradox of humanity—asking when and how humans, clearly still members of Class Mammalia, became an animal like no other. We will do a comparative study of several aspects of behavior often labeled as unique in humans, including culture, tool use and language. The semester continues with a discussion of a major change in the relationship between humans and other animals, the process of domestication. We'll look at how the process could have begun, and the profound affect that agriculture and domestication had on all the species involved.

A substantial section of the course is devoted to the study of ethology and behavioral ecology, first in a general sense, and then related specifically to common domestic animals. Domestic animal ethology will be studied through a series of lectures, slides, videos and live demonstrations. The Ethology section ends with a comparative study of cognition in human and non-human animals, and an objective process by which to determine suffering in other species. This section provides a foundation on which to form opinions about welfare and rights issues later in the semester.

The next section of the semester is an inquiry into philosophical perspectives of our duties toward other animals. Beginning with Aristotle, the course provides a brief history of the changing nature of our perceptions of other animals, and beliefs about our obligations toward them. Several different perspectives are examined in depth, distinguishing between concerns about animal welfare vs. concerns about animal rights, the viewpoint of ecological holists, and the balancing act of two factor egalitarianism.

The semester concludes with a substantial section on current social controversies involving our relationships with animals. It begins with considerations of our relationship with wild animals and the ecosystems in which they live, and continues with the biology and philosophy of using animals in bio-medical research, in agriculture, and as companions. This section of the course includes guest lecturers from a variety of fields, from wildlife conservation to agriculture.

The goal of the course is to provide students the foundation needed to make thoughtful, educated decisions about their relationships with other animals. It does not prescribe what those decisions should be, but rather encourages all citizens to examine each issue—from wildlife conservation to eating meat to keeping pets—from many different perspectives. None of these issues are simple or black and white, and each of us needs to thoughtfully examine many different perspectives before making informed and personally ethical decisions about our own behavior.

This is not an easy course. It involves a relatively heavy reading load throughout in the semester, and research for—and careful writing of—two short papers (2-3 pages) throughout in the semester. Do not take this course if you need some easy credits, but do consider it if you are interested in gaining knowledge and perspectives that will inform and enrich the rest of your life.

Zoology/Forest & Wildlife Ecology 335
Human/Animal Relationships: Biological and Philosophical Issues

Syllabus: Spring 2009

INTRODUCTION

January

- 20 Introduction: Our complicated and contradictory relationships with other animals
Reading Packet: "Border Trouble." Harriet Ritvo. In: Humans and Other Animals. 1995. Ohio State University Press.
- 22 How do we fit in? Where does "Animal" end and "Human" begin?
"Prologue," The Ape and the Sushi Master, Frans de Waal
- 27 Tool Use, Community and Culture in non-Human Animals
*Online: Tool Use by the New Caledonian crow Corvus moneduloides . . .
G. R. Hunt. Nature. 1996. Vol 379, Issue 6562. pp. 249-251.*
- and
- Chapter 6, Ape and the Sushi Master, Frans de Waal*
- 29 The Evolution of Domestication
*Reading Online: Early Canid Domestication: The Farm-Fox Experiment.
Lyudmila N. Trut. Amer. Scientist 87 no. 2 ppg 160-169. April 1999.*
- Reading Packet: "Pets in Tribal Societies." James Serpell, In the Company of Animals. 1996. Cambridge University Press.*

APPLIED ETHOLOGY

February

- 3 Introduction to Ethology: Understanding Animal Behavior
Chapter 1, The Ape and the Sushi Master, Frans de Waal
- 5 Ethology, Habitat and Wildlife: You really ARE what you eat (& where you live)
*Online: Intraspecific variation in group size in the blackbuck antelope . . .
K. Isvaran. Beh'l Ecology. 2007. 154. pp. 435-444.*
- 10 Trials of Life Videos: Ethology and Behavioral Ecology
- 12 The Ethology of Agricultural Animals ½ **PAGE PAPER TOPIC DUE**
Reading Packet: Chapter 4, Socioecology. In: The Nature of Horses. Stephen Budiansky. 1997. The Free Press. pp. 80-10.

- 17 Herding Dog Demonstrations and Sheep Ethology: **STOCK PAVILION**
Reading Packet: "Lessons from Animal Trainers." Patricia McConnell.
In: Perspectives in Ethology, Vol 9. 1991. Plenum Press.
- 19 The Ethology of Companion Animals
- 24 Cognition I: Thinking about thinking
Reading Packet: "Emotions." For the Love of a Dog: Understanding Emotion in You and Your Best Friend. Patricia McConnell. 2005.
- 26 Cognition II: Intelligence and Self-Awareness in non-human animals
*Reading Online: "Grey Parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*) Numerical Abilities." J. of Comp Psych. 2006 Vol. 120. No 1, 1-11.*

March

- 3 Stress: Definition, how to measure it and its relationship to welfare issues.
Reading Online: Individual differences in macaques' responses to stressors...
Boccia, M. et al. Lab Animals. 1995, Vol 29, pp. 250-257.
- 5 **EXAM I** (Short answer and essay, in class)
- 10 Suffering: How can we determine if an individual of another species is suffering?
Reading Packet: Chapter 6, Behavior and Suffering. In Animal Suffering: The Science of Animal Welfare. Marian Stamp Dawkins. 1980. Chapman and Hall. ppg. 67-107.

PHILOSOPHY: ANIMAL WELFARE AND ANIMAL RIGHTS

- 12 Philosophy I: Introduction—Early Philosophers and their Attitudes toward Animals
Reading Packet: Kant, Bentham & Singer (Source for Singer: People, Penguins and Plastic Trees. Ed. by C. Pierce & D. VanDeVeer.)
- 17 Spring Break
- 19 Spring Break
- 24 Philosophy II: Peter Singer and the Welfare Perspective, Tom Regan and Animal Rights
Reading Packet: Regan, Baxter, Rawls (Primary source: People, Penguins and Plastic Trees. Ed. by C. Pierce & D. VanDeVeer)
- 26 Philosophy III: Leopold, Callicott, Ecological Holism; Van de Veer & 2 Factor Egal.
 [Guest Lecturer, Jim Anderson, Dept. of Philosophy]
Reading Packet: Leopold, Callicott and VanDeVeer (Primary source: People, Penguins and Plastic Trees. Ed. by C. Pierce & D. VanDeVeer)

CURRENT ISSUES AND CONTROVERSIES

- 31 Welfare and Wildlife: Perceptions & Priorities. **FIRST PAPER DUE**

April

- 2 Wildlife and Social Controversies.
Reading Online: Rural Residents' Free-Ranging Domestic Cats. J. Coleman and S. Temple. 1993. Wildl. Soc. Bull. 21:381-390.
- 7 Welfare and Wildlife: Well-being of the Planet [Guest Lecture: Richard Thiel]
Online: Predicting Gray Wolf Landscape Recolonization . . . Mladenoff, Sickley & Wydeven. Ecol Applications. 1999. Vol 9(1). pp. 37-44.
- 9 Agricultural Animals & Current Social Issues: Part I, Introduction
Reading Packet: Chapter 5, "Cows." In: Animals Make Us Human. Temple Grandin.
- 14 Agricultural Animals & Current Social Issues: Part II [Guest Lecturer]
- 16 Biology and Ethics in Biomedical Research: The Historical Perspective
SECOND PAPER DUE
The Monkey Wars. Deborah Blum. 1994. Oxford.
- 21 Biology and Ethics in Biomedical Research: Current Issues
The Monkey Wars. Deborah Blum. 1994. Oxford.
- 23 Panel Debate: The Biology and Philosophy of Eating Meat
- 28 Companion Animal Welfare, Part I
Reading Packet: "Animal Shelters and Rescue." In: Companion Animals and Society. Stephen Zawistowski. 2008. Thomson. pp. 71-75, 93-99.
- and*
- Reading Packet: "Gimme Shelter/What's Wrong with No-Kill?" Pat Miller. 2009. Whole Dog Journal. January 2009*
- 30 Companion Animal Welfare Part II
Reading Packet: "Translating Primate to Canine." In: The Other End of the Leash. Patricia McConnell. 2002 Ballantine.

May

- 5 Companion Animal Welfare, Part III (Applied Ethology Demonstrations in Class)
- 7 **EXAM II** (Short answer and essay, in class)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Dr. Patricia McConnell: 365 Birge Hall, 279-7533 (cell) or 767-2435 (business ofc). The *class email* address is: zoology335-1-s09@lists.wisc.edu (all messages automatically go to the entire class) and my *private email* is pbmconn@wisc.edu. Email is a great way to contact me and I am always happy to talk with students about the class and your participation in it. I am on campus every Tuesday and Thursday, with *office hours* from 4 pm to 5 pm on Tuesdays or by appt. Go to *Learn at UW* through *My UW* for lectures, updates, online readings and discussions with your colleagues. There is also a website for the class through the Zoology Department's website (www.zoology.wisc.edu/courses/335/335home.html) but *Learn at UW* is the primary source for class information.

Alycia Reynolds Lackey is your Teaching Assistant. Her office is 426 Birge Hall and you can email her at acreynolds@wisc.edu or call her at 262-4437. Her *Office hours* are from noon to one PM on Wednesdays, or by appointment. The *OPTIONAL discussion section* is held on Thursday, at 3:50 PM, in 350 Birge Hall. Alycia will also lead online discussions about relevant topics for each lecture.

Grading:

EXAMS: The two (in-class) exams will be short answer and essay questions. The exams are scheduled for *March 5th* and *May 7th*, and will be given in class. There is no Final for this course. You must see the Teaching Assistant well in advance if you can't attend on an exam day. The first exam is worth 90 points, the second is worth 110 points.

PAPERS: You are required to turn in 3 papers throughout the semester, all relating to the topic you have chosen out of the five offered (paper topics will be distributed by the end of the second week of class). Examples from previous years are: The Biology and Philosophy of Eating Farmed versus Wild Caught Shrimp. Which is Better? *or* The Biology and Philosophy of Deer Hunting in Wisconsin *or* The Biology and Philosophy of Using Transgenic Animals in Biomedical Research. You will choose one topic from the five offered. The three papers you must turn in related to that topic are:

Due Feb. 12th: A half page (really!) that explains which topic you have chosen and what you think the controversies will be surrounding the issue. [graded +/-, paper MUST be turned in.]

Due March 31st: 2 to 3 pages on the biological aspects of the issue you have chosen. (for ex: what are the biological costs and benefits of farmed versus wild caught shrimp?) [100 points]

Due April 16: 2 to 3 pages on 1) the philosophical perspective that best informs your belief about this issue and 2) YOUR argument about how the issue should be resolved. [100 pts]

Your grade will be based on a total of 400 points. If a student fails to take one exam or to turn any of the papers, his or her grade will automatically become a "D." If two exams or one exam and one paper are not received, the grade automatically becomes an "F."