

# Effective Animal Advocacy

Fall 2018



## Description

Effective animal advocates attempt to use evidence and reason to do the most good possible in animal advocacy. In this course we examine this approach to animal advocacy from theoretical as well as practical perspectives. First, what does it mean to do the most good possible, and how do effective animal advocates attempt to pursue this aim? Second, what are the main theoretical objections to effective animal advocacy? For example, does it involve too much cluelessness, demandingness, or implausibility? Third, what are the main practical objections to effective animal advocacy? For example, does it focus too much on direct, short-term, individual change and not enough on indirect, long-term, structural change? Along the way we will consider broader moral and political questions related to effective animal advocacy, and we will discuss these questions with people doing cutting-edge work in this movement.

## General Information

- Time: W 5–7:30
- Place: 60FA 110
- Email: [jeffsebo@nyu.edu](mailto:jeffsebo@nyu.edu)
- Office: 285 Mercer Street #908
- Office hours: M 3-5pm
- Course website: [jeffsebo.net/teaching/](http://jeffsebo.net/teaching/)

## Readings

The required books for this class are: William MacAskill, *Doing Good Better* (hereafter “DGB”) and Larissa MacFarquhar, *Strangers Drowning*. (hereafter “SD”). All readings not from the required books will be available on NYU classes or online, as noted below.

## Grading

Your grades will be determined as follows:

- **Papers (70%):** You will write either two 4,000 word papers or one 8,000 word paper and submit them to [effectiveanimaladvocacy18@gmail.com](mailto:effectiveanimaladvocacy18@gmail.com). Each paper should summarize and evaluate an argument concerning effective animal advocacy and should engage with multiple course readings and discussions. If you write one paper, your paper is due at the end of the day on 12/16. If you write two papers, paper 1 is due at the end of the day on 10/21 and paper 2 is due at the end of the day on 12/16.
- **Weekly Writing (15%):** Prior to each session, you will send an email to [effectiveanimaladvocacy18@gmail.com](mailto:effectiveanimaladvocacy18@gmail.com) with the subject heading Last Name Date (e.g. Smith 9/12) that briefly discusses your reaction to the readings. This assignment is due no later than 4:30pm on the day of class and will be graded Pass/Fail.
- **Attendance and Participation (15%):** I expect regular attendance and thoughtful participation from all students. My assessment of the quality of your performance on these items will account for 15% of your grade in this class.

## Policies

- **Late Papers/Extensions/Incompletes:** Late papers will lose 1/3 letter grade for each day late. Late WW assignments will be accepted for half credit up until the start of class. Extensions and incompletes will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. If you want to request either, please do so in advance.
- **Academic Dishonesty:** Plagiarism results in failure in the class and referral to an academic dean. Plagiarism includes: copying sentences or fragments from any source without quotes or references; not citing every source used in your papers; citing internet information without proper citation; presenting someone else’s work as your own; or copying verbatim from any source. You are subject to the CAS guidelines on plagiarism: [cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity](http://cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity).
- **Academic Accommodations:** Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

NYU Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities  
726 Broadway, 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10003-6675  
Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114  
Web site: <http://www.nyu.edu/csd>

# Schedule

- **9/5 - Introduction**

- Peter Singer, "Famine, affluence, and morality"
- Peter Singer, "All animals are equal"
- Tom Regan, "Human rights, animal rights"
- Mary Midgley, "Getting animals into focus"

- **9/12 - Effective altruism**

- William MacAskill, "How many people benefit, and by how much?" (DGB)
- William MacAskill, "Is this area neglected?" (DGB)
- William MacAskill, "What are the chances of success, and how good would success be?" (DGB)
- Garrett Broad, "Effective animal advocacy"

- **9/19 - Applied rationality**

- D.Q. McInerney, "The language of logic"
- Douglas Hubbard, "Calibrated estimates," "Bayes"
- Richard Thaler & Cass Sunstein, "Biases and blunders"
- Kristie Dotson, "A cautionary tale: on limiting epistemic oppression"

- **9/26 - Theoretical issues**

- Nakul Krishna, "Add your own egg" (online)
- Amia Srinivasan, "Stop the robot apocalypse" (online)
- Iason Gabriel, "Effective altruism and its critics"
- Jeff MacMahan, "Philosophical critiques of effective altruism"

- **10/3 - Practical issues**

- Jerry Muller, "The tyranny of metrics"
- Andrea Smith, "The revolution will not be funded"
- Douglas Hubbard, "The illusion of intangibles"
- Holden Karnofsky, "Hits-based giving" (online)

- **10/10 - The altruistic life**

*Guest speaker:* Larissa MacFarquhar (Author, *Strangers Drowning*)

*Guest speaker:* Nandini Thiyagarajan (Animal Studies, New York University)

- Larissa MacFarquhar, "The most oppressed of all" (SD)
- Larissa MacFarquhar, "Duty! Thou sublime and mighty name..." (SD)
- Larissa MacFarquhar, "At once rational and ardent" (SD)
- Larissa MacFarquhar, "From the point of view of the universe" (SD)

- **10/17 - Evaluation**

*Guest speaker:* Sofia Davis-Fogel (Managing Director, Animal Charity Evaluators)

- Animal Charity Evaluators, "Charity reviews," "Prioritizing causes" (online)
- Casey Taft, "What does the science tell us about effective animal advocacy?"
- John Halstead, "Concerns with ACE research" (online)
- Toni Adleberg, "ACE's response to John Halstead" (online)

- **10/24 - Diversity, equity, and inclusion**

*Guest speaker:* Aryenish Birdie (Executive Director, Encompass)

*Guest speaker:* Sunaura Taylor (Author, *Beasts of Burden*)

- Claire Jean Kim, “Dangerous crossings: race, species, and nature in a multicultural age”
- Emily Gaarder, “Women and the animal rights movement”
- Sunaura Taylor, “All animals are equal (but some are more equal than others)”
- Toni Adleberg, “Diversity, equity, and inclusion in the animal advocacy movement” (online)

- **10/31 - The goals of animal advocacy**

*Guest speaker:* David Wolfson (Animal Studies & Law, New York University)

- David Wolfson & Mariann Sullivan, “Foxes in the hen house”
- Sue Donaldson & Will Kymlicka, “Zoopolis”
- Wayne Gabardi, “The next social contract”
- Robert Garner, “Welfare, rights, and non-ideal theory”

- **11/7 - Social change**

*Guest speaker:* Syl Ko (Co-author, *Aphro-ism*)

*Guest speaker:* Lauren Gazzola (Communications, Center for Constitutional Rights)

- Iris Marion Young, “Five faces of oppression”
- Aph Ko & Syl Ko, “Aphro-ism”
- Tobias Leenaert, “How do we motivate for change?”
- Lauren Gazzola, “What does the animal rights movement mean?” (online)

- **11/14 - Institutional change**

*Guest speaker:* David Coman-Hidy (President, The Humane League)

*Guest speaker:* Kelly Witwicki (Executive Director, Sentience Institute)

- Sentience Institute, “Foundational questions in effective animal advocacy” (online)
- William MacAskill, “Why voting is like donating thousands of dollars to charity” (DGB)
- Michael Maniates, “Individualization: plant a tree, buy a bike, save the world?”
- 80,000 Hours Podcast, “Ending factory farming as soon as possible” (online)

- **11/28 - Political change**

*Guest speaker:* Rachel Atcheson (Deputy Strategist, Brooklyn Borough President Office)

*Guest speaker:* Kevin Schneider (Executive Director, Nonhuman Rights Project)

- Jason Matheny, “Effective altruism in government” (online)
- Iris Marion Young, “Activist challenges for deliberative democracy”
- Steven Wise, “Animal rights, one step at a time”
- Kimberly Smith, “Reform”

- **12/5 - Technological change**

*Guest speaker:* Garrett Broad (Communications, Fordham University)

- Lori Gruen, “Technology”
- Garrett Broad, “Markets and the future of meat”
- Rebekah Sinclair, “The sexual politics of meatless meat”
- Carol Adams, “Ethical spectacles and seitan-making”

- **12/12 - The limits of effective animal advocacy**

*Guest speaker:* Jennifer Jacquet (Animal Studies & Environmental Studies, New York University)

- Jennifer Jacquet, “Is shame necessary?”
- Jeff Sebo & Peter Singer, “Activism”
- Erica Chenoweth & Maria Stephan, “The success of nonviolent resistance campaigns”
- Christopher Schlotmann & Jeff Sebo, “The ethics of illegal animal activism”