

Animals and Climate Change

Fall 2019



Description

Animals matter for climate change and climate change matters for animals. In particular, many animals (especially farmed animals) will have a significant impact on the climate, and the climate will also have a significant impact on many animals (especially wild animals). In this seminar we explore the science and philosophy of these impacts. We start with a discussion of the Anthropocene / Capitalocene. We then discuss the impacts that animal agriculture will have on the climate, along with the moral and political questions that these impacts raise. We then discuss the impacts that climate change will have on wild animals, along with the moral and political questions that these impacts raise. Along the way we discuss the many issues in moral and political philosophy that are relevant to animals and climate change, including agency, sentience, well-being, moral standing, political standing, population ethics, and the ethics of risk and uncertainty.

General Information

- Time: W 5:30–8:00
- Place: SILV 410
- Email: jeffsebo@nyu.edu
- Office: 285 Mercer Street #908
- Office hours: M 3-5pm
- Course website: jeffsebo.net/teaching/

Readings

All readings will be available on NYU Classes or online, as noted below.

Grading

Your grades will be determined as follows:

- **Paper (35%)**: You will write a 3,000 word paper and submit it to animalscc19@gmail.com. This paper should summarize and evaluate an argument related to animals and climate change, and it should engage with multiple course readings and discussions. You should clear your topic with me in advance. Your paper is due anytime during the semester.
- **Project (35%)**: You will complete a self-directed creative project. It can be an activity, article, artwork, or anything else. In terms of effort, it should be comparable to the paper, and you should clear your idea with me advance. This project is due anytime during the semester. On the last day of class, everyone will give a short, informal presentation about their project.
- **Presentation (10%)**: You will give a short (10-15 minute) presentation about a case study (past, present, or future) related to animals and climate change. Your presentation should include a description of the case study, as well as an analysis of the case study that draws from course materials. We will coordinate the schedule and topics via Doodle.
- **Weekly Writing (10%)**: Prior to each session, you will send an email to animalscc19@gmail.com with the subject heading Last Name Date (e.g. Smith 9/12) and a question or comment about each reading. This assignment is due no later than 4:30pm on the day of class and will be graded Pass/Fail.
- **Attendance and Participation (10%)**: I expect regular attendance and thoughtful participation from all students.

Policies

- **Late Papers/Extensions/Incompletes**: Late weekly writing 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.
- **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. Please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980. They are located at:

726 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003-6675
Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114
Web site: <http://www.nyu.edu/csd>

Schedule

- **9/4 - Introduction**
Jason Moore, “Anthropocene or capitalocene”
Peter Brannan, “The anthropocene is a joke” (online)
- **9/11 - Industrial agriculture** (Guest: Christopher Schlottmann)
Christopher Schlottmann & Jeff Sebo, “Agriculture and the environment”
Christopher Schlottmann & Jeff Sebo, “Industrial agriculture”
- **9/18 - Alternatives to industrial agriculture**
Christopher Schlottmann & Jeff Sebo, “Alternatives to industrial agriculture”
Julie Guthman, “If only they knew”: The unbearable whiteness of alternative food”
- **9/25 - Food ethics**
Christopher Schlottmann & Jeff Sebo, “The ethics of food consumption”
Karen Ehrhardt-Martinez et al, “Consumption and climate change”
- **10/2 - Food politics**
Christopher Schlottmann & Jeff Sebo, “The ethics of legal food activism”
Beth Schaefer Caniglia, et al, “Civil society, social movements, and climate change”
- **10/9 - The sixth extinction**
IPCC, “Global warming of 1.5° C: summary for policy-makers” (online)
Elizabeth Kolbert, “The sixth extinction,” “The thing with feathers”
- **10/16 - Mitigation and adaptation**
Ronald Sandler, “The value of species,” “The conservation biology dilemma”
Ronald Sandler, “Assisted colonization,” “Shifting goals and changing strategies”
- **10/23 - Animal ethics**
Marti Kheel, “The liberation of nature,” Sunaura Taylor, “Interdependent animals”
Clare Palmer, “Wild and domesticated animals,” “The case of the polar bear”
- **10/30 - Climate ethics** (Guest: Dale Jamieson)
Stephen Gardiner, “A perfect moral storm,” “Some initial ethics for the transition”
Dale Jamieson, “The frontiers of ethics,” “Living with climate change”
- **11/6 - Political rights**
Alasdair Cochrane, “Sentientist democracy,” “Sentientist cosmopolitan democracy”
Alasdair Cochrane, “Sovereignty for animals,” “Diversity and toleration in a sentientist political order”
- **11/13 - Property rights**
John Hadley, “Animals owning things,” “The mechanics of animal property rights”
John Hadley, “Justification of animal property rights: parts 1 and 2”
- **11/20 - Global ethics**
Dominic Roser & Christian Seidel, “How should we assign responsibility?” 118-167
Dominic Roser & Christian Seidel, “From ethical theory to political practice”

- **12/4 - Population ethics**

John Broome, "Uncertainty," "The future versus the present"

John Broome, "Lives," "Population"

- **12/11 - Conclusion**

Dale Jamieson & Bonnie Nadzam, "Love in the anthropocene"

Emma Marris, "Rambunctious garden: saving nature in a post-wild world"