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Description:
Do human beings have moral obligations to the other animals? If so, what are they, and why? Should or could non-human animals have legal rights? Should we treat wild and domestic animals differently? Do human beings have the right to eat the other animals, raise them for that purpose on factory farms, use them in experiments, display them in zoos and circuses, make them race or fight for our entertainment, make them work for us, and keep them as pets? We will examine the work of utilitarian, Kantian, and Aristotelian philosophers, and others who have tried to answer these questions.

This course, when taken for a letter grade, meets the General Education requirement for Ethical Reasoning.

Sources and How to Get Them:
Many of the sources from we will be reading from onto the course web site, but you will need to have copies of Singer’s Animal Liberation, Regan’s The Case for Animal Rights, Mill’s Utilitarianism and Coetzee’s The Lives of Animals. I have ordered all the main books from which we will be reading (except my own book, which is not yet published) at the Coop.

The main books we will be using are:
Fellow Creatures: Our Obligations to the Other Animals, by Christine M. Korsgaard. In manuscript, forthcoming from Oxford University Press.
http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.ebook:GEN_9780195305104


I have also ordered one recommended book, a good general introduction to the subject:

All other works assigned and most recommended are on the course website.

Assignments and Grading Policies:

Papers: There will be three papers of about 8-10 pages or 2000-2500 words, to be turned in by 5:00 p.m on Friday, October 13, Friday, November 17, and Thursday, December 14. In order to pass the course, you must turn in all three papers. (I will not average in failing grades for missing papers. If any paper is missing, you fail the course.) Papers must be submitted in a .doc or .docx format. Topics will be suggested. You may also write on a topic of your choice with the permission of your section leader. Extensions on the two midterm papers must be requested before the date on which the paper is due. Work that is late without an extension or beyond an extension will be discounted at the rate of one-third of a grade per day (A to A-, A- to B+, and so forth). No extensions will be granted on the final paper. If your paper receives a grade of B- or below for reasons other than lateness you may rewrite it for a higher grade under the guidance of your section leader. The three papers will count approximately equally, but active participation in section discussions and marked improvement in your written work will weigh in your favor.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

Note: All assignments that are not in Singer, Regan, Mill, or Coetzee are available on the course website, including the ones from The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics (OH) and Animal Rights: Current Debates and New Directions (AR), in the folder “Files.” The schedule is tentative and subject to change.

Also Note: We will meet for lecture Friday September 1 for the convenience of shoppers but thereafter we will use the Friday slot for discussion section.

Wednesday, August 30: Introduction

Friday, September 1:
Factory Farming

Wednesday, September 6:  
Pain and Experiments

Braithwaite, “What is Pain and Why Does It Hurt?” Chapter 2 of *Do Fish Feel Pain?*, pp. 25-44

Also Recommended:  

Monday, September 11 – Wednesday, September 20  
Moral Theory, Singer, and Utilitarianism

Korsgaard, *Fellow Creatures*, §4.4 “Are Humans Better off than the Other Animals?”

Also Recommended:  
Rawls, “Two Concepts of Rules”  

Monday, September 25 – Wednesday, September 27  
Singer and Utilitarianism, Continued

Singer, *Animal Liberation*, first section of Chapter 4, “Becoming a Vegetarian,” pp. 159-164  
Korsgaard, *Fellow Creatures*, §5.2 “Against the Argument from Marginal Cases,”

Also Recommended:  

Monday, October 2 – Wednesday, October 4  
Regan’s Rights-Based Approach to Animal Ethics

Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights” (the paper)  
Wednesday, October 11 – Monday, October 16  
Regan's Rights-Based Approach to Animal Ethics, continued  

Singer and Regan, “The Dog in the Lifeboat: An Exchange,” pp. 1-4  

Also Recommended:  
Taurek, “Should the Numbers Count?”

***First Paper Due Friday, October 13***

Wednesday, October 18:  
Some Protests  

Bernard Williams, “The Human Prejudice”

Monday, October 23 – Wednesday, October 25  
A Kantian Approach to Animal Ethics  

Korsgaard, *Fellow Creatures*, §5.1, “Human Beings as Ends in Themselves”  
Korsgaard, *Fellow Creatures*, Chapter 7: “Kant against the Animals, 2: Reciprocity and the Grounds of Obligation”  

Also Recommended:  
Korsgaard, “Introduction to the Groundwork”  
Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Section 2

Monday, October 30 – Wednesday, November 1  
A Kantian Approach to Animal Ethics  

Korsgaard, *Fellow Creatures*, Chapter 8: “A Kantian Case for Our Obligations to the Other Animals”  
Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*, pp. 15-69

Monday, November 6 -Wednesday, November 8  
The Badness of Death and the Question of Humane Farming  

Nagel, “Death.” From *Mortal Questions*, pp. 73-80  
Williams, “The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality,” from *Problems of the Self*, pp. 82-100  
McMahan, Selections from *The Ethics of Killing*, pp. 189-203
McMahan, §4.3 “The Time-Relative Interest Account” from “The Comparative Badness for Animals of Suffering and Death,” pp. 1-2
Korsgaard, Fellow Creatures, §12.3 “Eating Animals,” pp. 9-20

Also Recommended:
McMahan, “The Comparative Badness for Animals of Suffering and Death”

Monday, November 13 - Wednesday, November 15
Wild Animals, Endangered Species, and the Problem of Preemption

Regan, The Case for Animal Rights, Chapter 9, Section 3 “How to Worry about Endangered Species,” pp. 359-361
Korsgaard, Fellow Creatures, from Chapter 10, “The Animal Antinomy, 1: Creation Ethics,” §10.1, §10.4, §10.5
Korsgaard, Fellow Creatures, from Chapter 11, “Species, Communities, and Habitat Loss,” §11.1-11.5

Also Recommended:

***Second Paper Due Friday, November 17***

Monday, November 20
The Ethics of Having Pets

Bok, “Keeping Pets” OH, pp. 769-795
Selections on Pets from the PETA website.
Korsgaard, Fellow Creatures, §12.6 “Companion Animals”
Korsgaard, Fellow Creatures, §11.9.1 (first section of “Should Humans Go Extinct?”)

Monday, November 27-Wednesday November 29
The Question of Legal Rights for Animals

Sunstein, “Can Animals Sue?,” AR, pp. 251-262

Also Recommended:
Francione, “Animals: Property or Persons?,” AR, pp. 108-142
Korsgaard, “The Claims of Animals and the Needs of Strangers: Two
Cases of Imperfect Right.”

***Final Paper Due Thursday, December 14***