



Animal Minds*

ANST-UA 410 - Spring 2017

How do animals experience the world, and how is their experience similar to and different from ours? We need to be able to answer this question for many practical and theoretical purposes, but there seem to be serious limits, both scientific and philosophical, to our ability to answer it. What is a mind? Which animals have minds? How can we learn about them? What kinds of emotions and thoughts do nonhuman animals have? Is language required for thought? Who is self-conscious? Can animals have culture and moral agency? The course is an introduction to the philosophy of animal minds, and also draws from natural and social sciences. Some materials and notions will be challenging, but the preamble to the course will make them accessible to all. The learning curve is steep and rewarding. There are no prerequisites in philosophy, psychology, biology or animal studies for this class.

Practical Information

Time: MW 12:30 - 1:45PM **Place:** TBA

Instructor: Nicolas Delon

Email: nd746@nyu.edu

Office: 285 Mercer, 10th floor, #1006

Office hours: make an appointment here: goo.gl/0tl38l

Readings

No purchase of books is required; readings will be posted on NYU Classes. The following are useful resources, available at the NYU Bookstore under this course number. You may pick either of them as your main reference in addition to the required readings listed in the schedule.

- Bekoff, M. Allen, C., Burghardt, G. (eds), *The Cognitive Animal: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives on Animal Cognition*, 2002 [also in the **course reserve** at Bobst]

* **IMPORTANT:** syllabus is subject to change without notice before the beginning of the semester. Please check for updated versions on NYU Classes.

- Wynne, C., *Animal Cognition: Evolution, Behavior, and Cognition*, 2013
- Andrews, K., *The Animal Mind: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Animal Cognition*, 2014

Grading

The course is meant to foster careful reading and analysis of both empirical and philosophical subjects, drawing from the resources, concepts and methods of many disciplines. You will be assessed on the basis of your demonstrated capacity to engage with arguments, verify assertions, research facts, unpack implicit assumptions, and critically examine your own views. These skills can only be achieved with your collaboration, including active participation and timely submission of assignments. The grading criteria are: structure, organization and coherence; grasp and use of references and course materials; critical skills; clarity in writing.

- **Tests** (50%): 2 quizzes (multiple-choice questions) (25% total) and 1 exam (short essay questions) (25%). Tests cover all course materials up until test day. No finals.
- **Group project** (25%): oral presentation (10%) and an 8-page paper (plus references) presenting the project and your own contribution to it (15% due **TBA** by email). Projects will be assigned early in the semester. We will discuss the projects, requirements and presentations in class. Presentations will take place on the same date.
- **Responses** (10%): each student will closely analyze the readings scheduled for one class and post a 2-page outline and response (including questions) on NYU Classes at least 24h before class; other students are required to post brief responses online.
- **Public events** (5%): You are expected to attend the public event below and email me a 2-page analysis, relating it to course materials: [TBA].
- **Attendance and participation** (10%): Missing more than one class without permission will negatively impact your grade (email me in advance and bring a note to class). Active participation is required (weekly discussion on NYU Classes forum and class participation).

Policies

- **Laptops** use is discouraged and tolerated only for note taking. They will be banned for everyone if they cause any distraction. **Cell phones** must be on silent and left in your bag.
- If you need **special accommodations regarding attendance and assignments**, I am happy to oblige but please let me know in advance.
- **Disability Disclosure Statement**

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](tel:212-998-4980).

NYU's Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities

726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10003-6675

Telephone: [212-998-4980](tel:212-998-4980) - Voice/TTY Fax: [212-995-4114](tel:212-995-4114) - Web site: <http://www.nyu.edu/csd>

- **Plagiarism** and other forms of academic dishonesty will be checked for and may result in failure for the class and referral to an academic dean. They include: copying 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. See NYU CAS policy on Academic Integrity: <http://cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity>.
- **Late Papers/Extensions:** Out of fairness to other students, extensions are only granted in exceptional circumstances **and** if requested **at least a week in advance**. Otherwise late papers will lose 10 grade points (/100) per day.

Provisional weekly schedule

PDFs in NYU Classes Resources or follow links

1. The problem of other minds

- *The Economist*, "The Hard Problem" [[here](#)]
- "Animals think, therefore..." [[here](#)]
- Lurz, *The Philosophy of Animal Minds*, Intro

2. Anthropomorphism and ethology

- Allen & Bekoff, *Species of Mind*, chapter 2
- Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, chapter 2
- Bekoff & Horowitz, "Naturalizing anthropomorphism"

3. Thinking: beliefs and rationality

- Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, chapter 4
- Bermúdez, *Thinking Without Words*, preface

4. Consciousness - QUIZ 1

- Nagel, "What is it like to be a bat?"
- Dennett, "Animal consciousness: What matters and why"

5. Feelings and Emotions

- Bekoff, "Animal emotions"

- Panksepp, "Do animals have affective lives?"
- LeDoux, "Feelings"

6. Reading minds

- Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, chapter 6
- Cheney & Seyfarth, *Baboon Metaphysics*, chapters 8 (ch. 9 optional) [via NYU Libraries]

7. EXAM and movie discussion

8. Communication

- Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, chapter 5
- Cheney & Seyfarth, *Baboon Metaphysics*, chapter 10 (ch. 11 optional) [via NYU Libraries]

9. Cats and dogs w/ TBA

QUIZ 2

- Hecht & Horowitz, "Introduction to dog behavior"
- Marshall-Pescini et al. "Social eavesdropping"

10. Aquatic minds w/ TBA

- Brown, “Fish intelligence, sentience & ethics”
- Magee & Elwood, “Shock avoidance...”
- Optional: Braithwaite; Foster Wallace; Sneddon

11. Convergent evolution

- Godfrey-Smith, “Cephalopods and the evolution of the mind”
- Marino, “Convergence of complex cognitive abilities in cetaceans and great apes”

12. Sociality, culture, morality

- Whiten et al., “Cultures in chimpanzees”
- Andrews & Gruen, “Empathy in other apes”
- Pierce & Bekoff, “Wild Justice Redux”

13. Animal minds and ethics

- Jamieson & Bekoff, “Ethics and the study of animal cognition”
- Bekoff, “Representing and misrepresenting animals”

14. Group presentations