

<p>Food, Animals & the Environment</p> <p>ENVST-UA 0440 (Environmental Studies)</p> <p>ANST-UA 0440 (Animal Studies)</p> <p>New York University</p>		<p>Mondays 3:30-6:00pm Spring 2015</p> <p>Professor Schlottmann cps236@nyu.edu</p> <p>Office hours: http://goo.gl/mXYvp Office: 285 Mercer Street, 1004</p>
--	---	---

Animals and food are both parts of nature, and our interaction with them has environmental impacts. The purpose of “Food, Animals and the Environment” is to critically analyze the place of animals in our food system and in the environment, with an emphasis on the overlap between the two. The course is cross-listed between NYU’s Department of Environmental Studies and Animal Studies Initiative, and is designed to reflect the rich overlap between the two fields.

Many environmental problems in the food sector can be represented as problems intertwined with the role of animals. Climate change, deforestation, grazing, water pollution, air pollution, resource use and biodiversity are all examples of environmental impacts that have more significant roots in animal agriculture than is often assumed. Given these impacts, how should we conceive of the ethics of food and the environment? The course is interdisciplinary with an emphasis on ethics and analysis of concepts through which we understand food, including naturalness, purity, and localism.

The course is split into three components, covering:

1. the status of animals. What makes animals, plants and nature morally considerable? How do we weigh these values against each other? We will discuss the status of animals from a primarily philosophical lens. This includes both traditional questions in ethics and animal ethics as well as more conceptual questions about naturalness and domestication. We analyze the ethics of eating animals and how to foster constructive conversations about related topics.
2. animals as food. What are the environmental and non-environmental impacts? We survey and analyze the role of animals in our food systems. Especially in recent years, researchers have learned that the environmental impact of animals in the food system is quite substantial. Analyses differ, but animal agriculture contributes at least 18%, and by some measures much more, of the anthropogenic greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The incorporation of non-carbon greenhouse gases, like methane and nitrous oxide, poses special challenges for climate change research and policy.
3. the environmental impacts of agriculture, transportation, and consumption. What are the impacts of industrial and local food? What qualifies as sustainable food systems? What should we do when conflicts arise, e.g., between climate impact and air pollution, or between development rights and local food preferences? We analyze the local and organic food movements’ claim of environmental benefits; critiques of industrial food systems for their waste, carbon impact, habitat destruction and fracturing of farming communities; animal agriculture’s environmental impact; and traditional and contemporary notions of environmentally responsible food. Topics include organic food, local food, purity, ethics and impacts of food. We will closely analyze arguments for local, omnivorous lifestyles, especially the notions of naturalness and tradition.

The class includes collaborative research projects, guest speakers, a public event, and a field trip. Texts include selected articles and selections from the following books:

<p><i>Eating Animals</i>, Jonathan Safran Foer <i>The Ethics of What We Eat</i>, Singer & Mason</p>	<p><i>Just Food</i>, James McWilliams <i>Ethics and Animals</i>, Lori Gruen</p>
---	---