

# Animals and Climate Change

Fall 2024



## Description

Humans, animals, and the environment are deeply connected. For example, animal farming is a leading cause of climate change, and climate change is a leading cause of biodiversity loss and wild animal suffering. In this seminar we examine these connections from moral, legal, and political perspectives. We start with a survey of the main moral, legal, and political frameworks that are relevant to this discussion, including animal and environmental protection and rights. Next, we discuss the impacts that animal farming will have on the climate, the impacts that climate change will have on animals, and the moral, legal, and political questions that these impacts will raise. Along the way we discuss the many theoretical and practical issues that are relevant to animals and climate change locally and globally, including agency, sentience, well-being, moral standing, legal standing, political standing, discount rates, and multi-species impact assessments.

## General Information

- Time: Mon 4:45-6:45pm ET
- Place: Furman Hall Room 118
- Email: [jeffsebo@nyu.edu](mailto:jeffsebo@nyu.edu)
- Office: Zoom
- Office hours: Mon 12-2pm ET
- Course website: NYU Brightspace

## Readings

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

## Grading

Your grades will be determined as follows:

- **Paper (70%):** You will write either two 2,500 word papers or one 5,000 word paper (plus notes and references) and submit them via Brightspace. These papers should summarize and evaluate arguments related to animals, climate change, and the law, and they should engage with multiple readings. You should clear your topic with me in advance. Your papers are due anytime during the semester.
- **Presentation (10%):** You will give a 10-15 minute presentation about a case study related to your session (other than the ones already covered). Your presentation should include a summary and analysis that draws from course materials. You can select a date and topic on a shared Google Drive document.
- **Weekly Writing (10%):** Starting September 9, you will write a short, informal assignment that briefly presents a question or comment about each reading. You will submit these assignments via Brightspace as well. This assignment is due at 3:45pm ET 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.
- **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>

## Current Schedule

### 1. September 4 - Introduction

Lori Gruen, “The natural and the normative” (optional)

Stephen Gardiner, “A perfect moral storm” (optional)

*No case studies*

### 2. September 9 - Environmental Protection

Dale Jamieson, “The value of nature”

Giles Atkinson et al, “Environmental cost-benefit analysis”

*Case studies: Environmental protection laws or cases*

### 3. September 16 - Animal Protection

Dale Jamieson, “Humans and other animals”

Andrew Stawasz, “Animals in cost-benefit analysis”

*Case studies: Animal protection laws or cases*

### 4. September 23 - Rights of Nature

Christopher Stone, “Should trees have standing?”

Kyle Pietari, “Ecuador’s constitutional rights of nature”

*Case studies: Rights of Nature laws or cases*

### 5. September 30 - Animal Rights

Alasdair Cochrane, “Legal personhood”

*Nonhuman Rights Project v Breheny*

*Case studies: Animal rights laws or cases*

### 6. October 7 - Food, Animals, and Climate

Anna Lappe, “The climate crisis at the end of our fork”

David Wolfson & Mariann Sullivan, “Foxes in the hen house: animals, agribusiness, and the law”

*Case studies: Food, animals, and climate laws or cases*

### 7. October 21 - Food, Animals, and Climate: Local Policy

Adalene Minelli et al, “Towards plant-forward diets: a toolkit for local policymakers”

*National Pork Producers Council v Ross*

*Case studies: Food, animals, and climate laws or cases*

### 8. October 28 - Food, Animals, and Climate: Global Policy

Jeff Sebo et al, “Towards a global ban on industrial animal agriculture by 2050”

IEEP, “Transition towards cage-free farming in the EU”

*Case studies: Food, animals, and climate laws or cases*

### 9. November 4 - Climate, Biodiversity, and Wildlife

Jeff Sebo, “Animals, pandemics, and climate change”

Natalie Jacewicz, “Crafting a new conservationism”

*Case studies: Climate, biodiversity, and wildlife laws or cases*

10. **November 11 - Climate, Biodiversity, and Wildlife: Local Policy**  
Alisa White et al, “Wild animal welfare in local policies on land use and the built environment”  
Ragnhild Sollund, “The dark side of nature conventions”  
*Case studies: Climate, biodiversity, and wildlife laws or cases*
11. **November 18 - Climate, Biodiversity, and Wildlife: Global Policy**  
Cleo Verkuijl et al, “Mainstreaming animal welfare in sustainable development”  
Manu Saunders et al, “Limited understanding of bushfire impacts on Australian invertebrates”  
*Case studies: Climate, biodiversity, and wildlife laws or cases*
12. **November 25 - Animal and environmental advocacy: Ends**  
Ronald Sandler, “Shifting goals,” “The conservation of biology dilemma”  
Martha Nussbaum, “Animals who live with us,” “The “wild” and human responsibility”  
*Case studies: Nonhuman representation laws or cases*
13. **December 2 - Animal and environmental advocacy: Means**  
Christopher Schlottmann & Jeff Sebo, “Legal activism,” “Illegal activism”  
Justin Marceau et al, “Voluntary prosecution and the case of animal rescue”  
*Case studies: Animal or environmental activism laws or cases*