

HON 410 – Pets, Property, or Persons? Tracking “the Animal” in Human Societies

Course meets Friday from 8:30-11:15 AM

Instructor:

Office:

Office Hours: MW 11:30 – 12:45; and by appointment

Office Phone:

Email:

Classroom:

Course Description

Animals abound. They surround us, interact with us, and have been used as symbolic and material resources since the dawn of humanity. While we are profoundly dependent upon animals, we also dictate the quality of their lives in myriad ways. This seminar explores human-animal relationships along three vectors: pet ownership; institutions that rely on animal bodies, such as science and agriculture; and efforts to promote animal welfare.

Readings will consist of scholarly writings and primary texts. Moreover, our class discussions will be periodically complemented by guest lectures from professionals who work with animals. Altogether we will better understand the societal forces that shape our attitudes and treatment of animals.

Course Goals

By the end of this semester, students should have the skills and knowledge necessary to

1. Critically examine how we communicate about, through, and for animals
2. Evaluate the treatment of animals, whether as pets or property
3. Navigate and take a stance on key debates regarding animal welfare and rights
4. Explain how the treatment of animals has shifted historically
5. Dialogue with professionals who work with animals

Required Texts

DeMello, Margo. *Animals and Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies*. 2nd ed., Columbia UP, 2021.

All other readings will be available on WebCampus. If you do not already use an PDF transcription tool, I highly recommend it. I use Foxit PDF reader, but there other (potentially better) options.

Seminar Assignments

Cruelty in Sin City: The Bobby Berosini Case

In 1989, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) released video footage of Las Vegas entertainer Bobby Berosini hitting his orangutans backstage at the Stardust casino. Concerned citizens quickly protested his show and mailed hundreds, if not thousands, of letters to complain to Stardust’s management. Over the following years, a lengthy legal battle was fought in Nevada’s

courtrooms. In 1990, a jury found in favor of Berosini, but this judgment was overturned by the Nevada Supreme Court in 1994.

This semester we will work together to piece together this historic instance of animal rights activism on the strip. UNLV's Special Collections in the Lied Library contain extensive archival documents related to this case, such as Stardust's internal memos, letters from concerned citizens/tourists, and newspaper clippings. For this assignment, I will divide everyone into groups and task each group with researching specific folders from the Bobby Berosini collection (Box 316). This research will be conducted in a sequential fashion—after the first group reports their findings to the class, the second group will be permitted to access the files, and so on. By the end of the semester, we will have created a master document that recovers this important part of animal rights activism in Las Vegas. More details on this assignment will be provided early in the semester.

The Rhetoric of Social Controversy

Throughout the semester you will conduct research on a current social controversy regarding animals. A social controversy is an ongoing public argument that seeks to influence norms, values, and attitudes. Your primary task is to size up each side and describe how they go about persuading an audience to support their views. For instance, how does PETA critique bull fighting? How do supporters of bull fighting advocate to maintain it? This rhetoric can involve a wide array of tactics from webpages, blogs, comment chains on videos, documentaries, pamphlets, books, journal articles, exposés, celebrity endorsements, interviews, and so on.

Note: while PETA may be a useful resource, they are not the only animal rights organization. Focusing on them exclusively will blind you to various other rhetorical strategies being employed. In addition to other animal rights organizations, there are animal humane societies that work on behalf of animals.

This assignment is split into several stages, involving a topic proposal, two 3-page analyses, and an 8-10 minute extemporaneous presentation.

- Topic proposal: Your topic proposal will consist of two components. There should be page breaks between each section. Pages should be numbered.
 - o One page identifying the social controversy you will analyze. What is the controversy about primarily? As far as you can tell, how long has this debate persisted? Who are some of the parties' mobilizing arguments in this controversy? Your answer to this question should identify specific individuals/organizations, but also general categories, e.g., scientists or farmers.
 - o A compilation of texts by invested parties who are either taking a stance or pushing an angle in the social controversy. In total you should have six texts—three for each side of the controversy. A text is simply a distinct object or artifact that you can analyze. This is where you will identify texts such as articles on PETA's webpage, exposés, or public rebuttals to such arguments.

Please note that organizations seeking to maintain the status quo do not always address complaints about animal abuse directly. Sometimes they create a text that stresses how animals are handled professionally or are part of a cultural heritage. Even though it might not court controversy explicitly, this is still a rhetorical maneuver and you should include these types of texts.

For each entry in this compilation, I would like you to provide a citation, explain which side it supports, and briefly describe—in approximately 100 words—the types of arguments and tactics it uses. Please remember that not all arguments are reliant on logos, some make extensive use of ethos (character) and pathos (emotions).

- Essay 1 – Analysis of Animal Advocacy:

- In 3 pages (double spaced) you will analyze **one** text protesting the mistreatment of animals. This text can be one of the ones you identified in your topic proposal or a different one. This essay will include a brief explanation of the text (e.g., scope, medium, genre) before highlighting specific elements that you are analyzing. Your analysis must be clearly organized (introduction, body, conclusion) and possess a thesis about the text functions rhetorically. The goal is not to praise or blame this rhetoric. You are simply explaining how it attempts to persuade an audience.

- Essay 2 – Analysis of Opposition:

- In 3 pages (double spaced) you will analyze **one** text opposing the general stance identified in your previous paper. This text can be one of the ones you identified in your topic proposal or a different one. This essay will include a brief explanation of the text (e.g., scope, medium, genre) before highlighting specific elements that you are analyzing. Your analysis must be clearly organized (introduction, body, conclusion) and possess a thesis about the text functions rhetorically. Similar to the last paper, your goal is not to praise or blame this rhetoric. You are simply explaining how it attempts to persuade an audience.

- Seminar Paper Presentation:

- At the end of the semester, you will give an 8-10 minute presentation in which you explain the social controversy you researched. Your first main point should explain the first text you analyzed, your second main point should explain the second text, and your third main point will offer an evaluation of each. Ultimately, regardless of your stance on the debate overall, which text do you find more persuasive and why? Visual aids and extemporaneous delivery are required. Extemporaneous delivery relies on a keyword outline and general familiarity with the subject matter, as opposed to using a manuscript or complete memorization. A presentation that is not extemporaneous will not receive an A—regardless of quality otherwise.

Participation

There are four primary forms of participation within this seminar. Completing the reading, engaging the material in class, actively contributing to course discussion, and being attentive participants for our guest speakers. You will also need to come prepared with three questions for each speaker, which I will collect and grade. Students will also be invited to sign a thank you letter for each guest. In my senior level seminars, I generally call on students only when they actively engage the material as I believe they need to be taking initiative at this point in their undergraduate career.

Field Trips

We will be visiting the Las Vegas Livestock farm in class during late February. There should also be the option to visit the Animal Foundation. These dates will be established by the first day of class. More details forthcoming.

Course Policies

Assignments

I will be collecting all your homework online via Canvas. Please submit your homework as a Word .doc or PDF. If I need to ask you to resubmit it because the file is wrong or corrupt, I consider it late. Assignments turned in after the due date will receive a 10% deduction for every DAY (not every class day) they are late. You must deliver your final presentation on your assigned day. If you miss your scheduled presentation slot, you will be allowed at a later time only if time permits. You will also receive a 10% penalty.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend each class. That said, I recognize that emergencies and appointments sometimes conflict with our schedules. Thus, students are allowed to miss one class without any grade deductions. Each absence after the one permitted, however, will result in a 3% grade deduction. At four absences (including the one permitted), your final grade will be a D. If you are absent six times (including the one permitted), you will fail the course.

Please note that students who are consistently late to class will also receive a grade deduction—I will consider three “lates” to qualify as an absence. You are considered late if you are not present when I begin taking attendance or the official start time of class, whichever occurs last. If you miss more than half of the class without advance notice and permission, I will consider you absent for the day.

Office Hours

If you need assistance, have questions, or need clarification on an assignment, please feel free to send me an email or catch me after class. Please note that:

- I check my email during work hours, which runs from 9-5 on Mondays through Fridays.
- A response may take 24 hours, but never more than 48 (unless over the weekend).
- **I do not have my phone synced with my school email account.**

Course Evaluation:

Class participation	15%
Bobby Berosini Group Project	20%
Topic proposal	10%
Essay 1 – Analysis of Animal Advocacy	15%
Essay 2 – Analysis of Opposition	20%
Seminar paper presentation	20%

Grades will be determined on the following scale

93-100% = A	80-82% = B-	67-69% = D+
90-92% = A-	77-79% = C+	63-66% = D
87-89% = B+	73-76% = C	60-62% = D-
83-86% = B	70-72% = C-	0-59% = F

UNLV Policies

Public Health Directives

Face coverings are currently mandatory for all faculty and students in the classroom. Students must follow all active UNLV public health directives while enrolled in this class. UNLV public health directives are found at [Health Requirements for Returning to Campus](#). Students who do not comply with these directives may be asked to leave the classroom. Refusal to follow the guidelines may result in further disciplinary action according to the [UNLV Student Conduct Code](#), including being administratively withdrawn from the course.

Academic Misconduct

Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the University community. We all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility, and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, and are encouraged to always take the ethical path whenever faced with choices. Students enrolling at UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's educational mission. An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another person, from the Internet or any other source without proper citation of the source(s). See the [Student Conduct Code](#).

Auditing Classes

Auditing a course allows a student to continue attending the lectures and/or laboratories and discussion sessions associated with the course, but the student will not earn a grade for any component of the course. Students who audit a course receive the same educational experience as students taking the course for a grade, but will be excused from exams, assessments, and other evaluative measures that serve the primary purpose of assigning a grade.

Classroom Conduct

Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in class and in the libraries in ways that do not interfere with the rights of other students to learn, or of instructors to teach. Use of devices such as pagers and cellular phones, or potentially disruptive activities are only permitted with the prior explicit consent of the instructor. Students are specifically prohibited to record classes without instructor authorization, including online/remote classes (either audio only, or video and audio). The instructor may rescind permission at any time during the class. If a student does not comply with established requirements or obstructs the functioning of the class, the instructor may initiate an administrative withdrawal of the student from the course.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic forced most instruction to be delivered remotely starting on March 2020, numerous students have asked instructors to record their synchronous classes, so that they can access them at their convenience. Instructors who agree to record their classes (audio only, or video and audio) should inform students in advance. Recorded lectures may not be broadly released to anyone, but made available exclusively to those students enrolled in the class during the particular academic term. Recorded lectures must be stored securely, and are subject to the Nevada System of Higher Education's Records Retention Policy, meaning that the recordings can only be deleted 120 days after the end of class (i.e., after grades are posted). Once this requirement is met, the recordings should be deleted. Class recordings are protected from disclosure, as they are deemed part of an educational record under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Copyright

The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with, and to follow [copyright and fair use requirements](#). You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you, nor

assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The [UNLV Disability Resource Center](#) (SSC-A, Room 143, telephone 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. Students who believe that they may need academic accommodations due to injury, disability, or due to pregnancy should contact the DRC as early as possible in the academic term. A Disabilities Specialist will discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours, so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Final Examinations

The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur on the date and at the time specified in the Final Exam schedule. The Final Exam schedule is typically available at the start of the semester, and the classroom locations are available approximately one month before the end of the semester. See the [Final Exam Schedule](#).

Identity Verification in Online Courses

All UNLV students must use their Campus-issued ACE ID and password to log in to WebCampus-Canvas.

UNLV students enrolled in online or hybrid courses are expected to read and adhere to the [Student Academic Misconduct Policy](#), which states that “acting or attempting to act as a substitute for another, or using or attempting to use a substitute, in any academic evaluation or assignment” is a form of academic misconduct. Intentionally sharing ACE login credentials with another person may be considered an attempt to use a substitute, and could result in investigation and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Academic Misconduct Policy.

UNLV students enrolled in online courses are also expected to read and adhere to the [Acceptable Use of Computing and Information Technology Resources Policy](#), which prohibits sharing university accounts with other persons without authorization.

To the greatest extent possible, all graded assignments and assessments in UNLV online courses should be hosted in WebCampus-Canvas or another UNLV-managed platform that requires ACE login credentials for access.

Incomplete Grades

The grade of “I” (Incomplete) may be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session, but cannot complete the last part of the course for reason(s) beyond the student’s control and acceptable to the instructor, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. For undergraduate courses, the incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the period indicated, a grade of “F” will be recorded, and the student’s GPA will be adjusted

accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete grade do not register for the course, but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the “I” grade.

Library Resources

Librarians are available to consult with students on research needs, including developing research topics, finding information, and evaluating sources. To make an appointment with a subject expert for this class, please visit the [Libraries’ Research Consultation](#) website. You can also [ask the library staff](#) questions via chat and text message.

Missed Classwork

Any student missing class, quizzes, examinations, or any other class or laboratory work because of observance of religious holidays will be given an opportunity during that semester to make up the missed work. The make-up opportunity will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for Fall and Spring courses (except for modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for Summer and modular courses, of their intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit the Missed Work policy, under Registration Policies, on the [Academic Policies](#) webpage.

In accordance with the policy approved by the Faculty Senate regarding missed class time and assignments, students who represent UNLV in any official extracurricular activity will also have the opportunity to make up assignments, provided that the student provides official written notification to the instructor no less than one week prior to the missed class(es).

The spirit and intent of the policy for missed classwork is to offer fair and equitable assessment opportunities to all students, including those representing the University in extracurricular activities. Instructors should consider, for example, that in courses which offer a “Drop one” option for the lowest assignment, quiz, or exam, assigning the student a grade of zero for an excused absence for extracurricular activity is both contrary to the intent of the Faculty Senate’s policy, and an infringement on the student’s right to complete all work for the course.

This policy will not apply in the event that completing the assignment or administering the examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the University that could be reasonably avoided. There should be a good faith effort by both the instructor and the student to agree to a reasonable resolution. When disagreements regarding this policy arise, decisions can be appealed to the Department Chair/School Director, College/School Dean, and/or the Faculty Senate Academic Standards Committee.

For purposes of definition, extracurricular activities may include, but are not limited to: academic recruitment activities, competitive intercollegiate athletics, fine arts activities, liberal arts competitions, science and engineering competitions, and any other event or activity sanctioned by a College/School Dean, and/or by the Executive Vice President and Provost.

Rebelmail

Rebelmail is UNLV’s official email system for students and by University policy, instructors and staff should only send emails to students’ Rebelmail accounts. Rebelmail is one of the primary ways in which students receive official University communications, information about deadlines, major Campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the University. Emailing within WebCampus-Canvas is also acceptable.

Tutoring and Coaching

The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching, and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, please visit the [ASC website](#), or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of SSC A, Room 254. Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library, and on the second floor of the College of Engineering building (TBE A 207).

UNLV Writing Center

One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the [Writing Center](#), located in the Central Desert Complex, Building 3, Room 301 (CDC 3–301). Walk-in consultations are sometimes available, but students with appointments receive priority assistance. Students may make appointments in person or by calling the Center, telephone 702-895-3908. Students are requested to bring to their appointments their Rebel ID Card, a copy of the instructions for their assignment, and two copies of any writing they have completed on their assignment.

Diversity Statement

As an institution of higher learning, UNLV represents a rich diversity of human beings among its faculty, staff, and students, and is committed to aspiring to maintain a Campus environment that values that diversity. Accordingly, the University supports understanding and appreciation of all members of its community, regardless of race, sex, age, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status, or political affiliation. Please see [University Statements and Compliance](#).

A successful learning experience requires mutual respect and trust between the students and the instructor. Accordingly, the instructor asks that students be willing to listen to one another's points of view, acknowledging that there may be disagreements, keep discussion and comments on topic, and use first person, positive language when expressing their perspectives.

[Academic Policies](#)

[Student Services & Activities](#)

[University Policies](#)

[University Community & Libraries](#)

Course Schedule

Date	Day	Reading and Work Due
1-21	F	Class introduction Chapter 1: Human Animal Studies
1-28	F	Chapter 3: The Social Construction of Animals & Leslie Irvine extra Chapter 4: Animals ‘in the Wild’ and in Human Societies
2-4	F	Wallace, David Foster. “Consider the Lobster” Blankfield, Bryan. “The Gustatory Ethics of ‘Consider the Lobster’” Letters to the editor
2-11	F	Chapter 6: Display, Performance, and Sport (skip 135-139) Meet in the Special Collections Topic Proposal Due
2-18	F	Chapter 19: The Animal Protection Movement Simonson, Peter. "Social noise and segmented rhythms: News, entertainment, and celebrity in the crusade for animal rights." <i>The Communication Review</i> 4.3 (2001): 399-420.
2-25	F	Las Vegas Livestock Field Trip [sometime in late February/early March]
3-4	F	Chapter 7: The Making and Consumption of Meat Safran Foer, “Pieces of Shit,” <i>Eating Animals</i> (2008), 174-181. Grandin, “Pigs” & “Afterword,” in <i>Animals Make Us Human</i> (2009), 173-205, 295-301
3-11	F	Atkins-Sayre, Wendy. "Articulating Identity: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and the Animal/Human Divide." <i>Western Journal of Communication</i> 74.3 (2010): 309-328. Atkins-Sayre, Wendy. “Protection from ‘Animal Rights Lunatics’: The Center for Consumer Freedom and Animal Rights Rhetoric” in <i>Arguments about Animal Ethics</i> . Essay 1 – Analysis of Animal Advocacy Due
3-18	F	<i>SPRING BREAK</i>
3-25	F	Chapter 10: Animal-Assisted Activities & Kendra Coulter extra Guest Visit from Cicon Gewelber of Airborne Wildlife Control Service and/or Kristin Mathe
4-1	F	Chapter 9: Animals and Science Chapter 12: Violence to Animals (280-293)
4-8	F	Chapter 8: The Pet Animal & David Redmalm extra, Irvine (2003) “How Shelters ‘Think’ About Clients’ Needs and Unwanted Pets” about animal shelters—organize class visit to Animal Foundation? Essay 2 – Analysis of Opposition Due
4-15	F	Chapter 18: The Moral Status of Animals Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights” Dr. Cheryl Abbate visit

Date	Day	Reading and Work Due
4-22	F	Chapter 17: Animal Behavior Studies and Ethology & Alexandra Horowitz extra Guest Visit: Sue Grundfest, Benny, Hildie, Charlie (9:30-10:30)
4-29	F	Final Presentations
5-6	F	Final Presentations
5-13	F	Finals week – no class. Final Reflection on the Bobby Berosini Case due