

**PHI 860-001 SEMINAR IN METAPHYSICS AND EPISTEMOLOGY SPRING SEMESTER 2011**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Paul B. Thompson **OFFICE:** 526 S. Kedzie/330 Natural Resources

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**APPOINTMENTS:** Contact Julie Eckinger, 432-0317; [jeckin@msu.edu](mailto:jeckin@msu.edu)

**Description:** This seminar will explore the recently burgeoning literature on the metaphysics of humanity and animality. We will begin by examining the key metaphysical claims made by Peter Singer and Tom Regan in launching their projects in animal ethics in the 1980s, but will move rapidly into literatures that span the universe of philosophical styles. There is now a very expansive literature on this question, much of which has been produced in the last decade, and I can be somewhat responsive to requests from people enrolled in the class. At a minimum, we will be reading (in addition to Singer and Regan) selections from Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Jacques Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am (Following)*, Kelly Oliver, *Animal Lessons*, and *Philosophy and Animal Life* with contributions from Cora Diamond, Stanley Cavell, John McDowell and Ian Hacking.

**Requirements:** Students should be admitted to the Ph.D. program in philosophy at MSU, or should seek permission from the instructor. All enrolled students will be required participate fully. Come to the seminar prepared to analyze and critique assigned readings, and to engage with other participants in response to their comments. Absent special arrangements, enrolled students who miss four or more sessions will receive a grade of "F", irrespective of other work completed. Students who expect to miss more than two sessions should notify the instructor. Each student must prepare and present a verbal précis and lead discussion for one session, and must write two short out of class essays in response to questions that will be distributed at least one week in advance. Written assignments will be due Feb. 17, 2011 and March 24, 2011. No grades will be assigned to short essays, though comments will be provided. Enrolled students who do not complete short essay assignments will receive a grade of "F" irrespective of other work completed. In addition to these ungraded requirements, the course grade will be assigned based on a research paper that should not exceed 10,000 words. Final papers will be due on May 5, 2011.

**Textbooks:** This is a graduate seminar. There are no "textbooks" in the usual sense for graduate seminars in philosophy. However, there will be extensive assignments from the books listed below, and all of them have been ordered using the designated book ordering system. In addition, there will be shorter readings from materials that are available through the MSU Library and, in the case of books, would be considered standard books that one would expect to find in the library of anyone undertaking advanced study in philosophy. The following books have been ordered:

1. Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* 2002 Ed. New York: HarperCollins
2. Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* 2004 Ed. Berkeley: U. California Press.
3. Stanley Cavell, Cora Diamond, John McDowell and Ian Hacking. *Philosophy and Animal Life* New York: Columbia University Press
4. J.M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* Princeton: Princeton U. Press
5. Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press.
6. Jacques Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am (Following)* New York: Fordham University Press.
7. Kelly Oliver, *Animal Lessons: How They Teach Us to Be Human* New York: Columbia University Press.

Readings: The calendar of readings follows (currently under construction). Those designated as Target Readings should be regarded as required for participation in the class. I make a concerted effort to keep target readings to less than 100 pages. Those designated as Background Readings should be regarded as readings that may be brought into the discussion. It would be desirable for seminar participants to have familiarity with these readings, and it is "fair game" for participants to presume that others have some degree of knowledge about them. In addition, at the end of this calendar are a number of books designated as Deep Background and others designated as Peripheral Readings. Deep background texts are directly relevant to the subject matter of the seminar. They may come up, but if they do, no one should presume that others have familiarity with them. Texts on the peripheral readings list have been randomly selected (mainly because I've read most of them relatively recently), and may be of some interest to selected seminar participants. I've refrained from putting anything on either list that I either have not read or considered to be a total waste of time.

DATE	READING
1/13/11	<u>Target Reading</u> : Singer, <i>Animal Liberation</i> , Chapters 1, 5 and 6 <u>Background Reading</u> : Singer, <i>Practical Ethics</i> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ed. Chapter 6: Taking Life: Animals; Chapt. 10: The Environment; René Descartes, <i>Discourse on Method</i> Esp. Part 5.
1/20/11	<u>Target Reading</u> : Regan, <i>The Case</i> Chapters 1, 2 and 7; <u>Background Reading</u> : Regan, <i>The Case</i> Chapters 6 & 8; Kant, <i>Lectures on Ethics</i> : Duties towards Animals and Other Spirits
1/27/11	<u>Target Reading</u> : Oliver, <i>Animal Lessons</i> Chapter 1; Cora Diamond, "Eating Meat and Eating People," <i>Philosophy</i> 53: 465-479; Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat," <i>Phil. Review</i> 85: 435-450; Donald Davidson, "Rational Animals," <i>Dialectica</i> <u>Background Reading</u> : Daniel Dennett, <i>Kinds of Minds</i> (1999).
2/3/11	<u>Target Reading</u> : Peter Caruthers, "Brute Experience," <i>J. Philosophy</i> 86:258-269; Invertebrate concepts confront the generality constraint (and win) <i>Philosophy of Animal Minds</i> (2010); Endel Tulving, Episodic Memory and Autonoesis: Uniquely Human? <i>The Missing Link in Cognition</i> (2005); Janet Metcalfe and Hedy Kober, Self-Reflective Consciousness and the Projectable Self, <i>The Missing Link in Cognition</i> (2005); <u>Background Reading</u> : Herbert S. Terrace, Metacognition and the Evolution of Language, <i>The Missing Link in Cognition</i> (2005); Katherine Nelson, Emerging Levels of Consciousness in Early Human Development," <i>The Missing Link in Cognition</i> (2005); ); Michael Tetzlaff and Georges Rey, Systematicity and intentional realism in honeybee navigation, <i>Philosophy of Animal Minds</i> (2010).
2/10/11	<u>Target Reading</u> : J.M. Coetzee, <i>The Lives of Animals</i> : Reflection by Peter Singer; <u>Background Reading</u> : Introduction/Reflections by Amy Gutmann, Marjorie Garber; Wendy Doniger; Barbara Smuts
2/17/11	<u>Target Reading</u> : Cavell, Diamond, McDowell and Hacking, <i>Philosophy and Animal Life</i> ; <u>Background Reading</u> : Introduction by Cary Wolfe.
2/24/11	No Class: Reading Day for March 3
3/3/11	Heidegger, <i>Fundamental Concepts</i> Part II, Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4; <u>Background Reading</u> : Heidegger, <i>Fundamental Concepts</i> Introduction and Part I

- 3/17/11 Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts Part II*, Chapters 5 and 6; Background Reading: Stuart Eldon, Heidegger's Animals, *Continental Philosophy Review* 39: 273-291; Mathew Calarco, *Zoographies* (2008).
- 3/24/11 Kelly Oliver, *Animal Lessons*, Chapters 2, 3 and 8; Background Reading: Oliver, Introduction & Conclusion
- 3/31/11 Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, pp. 1-51; Oliver, *Animal Lessons*, Chapter 4; Background Reading: Cary Wolfe, *What Is Posthumanism?* Chapters 3 and 4.
- 4/7/11 Jacques Derrida *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, pp. 52-118; Oliver, *Animal Lessons*, Chapter 5; Background Reading: Castree & Co-authors. "Mapping Posthumanism: An Exchange," *Environment and Planning A* 2004, volume 36, pages 1341 - 1363
- 4/14/11 Jacques Derrida *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, pp. 119-140; Oliver, *Animal Lessons*, Chapter 7; Background Reading: Deluze and Guateri, *A Thousand Plateaus* Chapter 10
- 4/21/11 Jacques Derrida *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, pp. 141-160; Oliver, *Animal Lessons*, Chapters 11 & 12; Background Reading: Len Lawler, *This Is Not Sufficient*
- 4/28/11 Kelly Oliver, *Animal Lessons*, Chapters 6, 9, 10
- 5/5/11 Final Session (Final Exam Period)