# APBI 315 “Animal welfare and the ethics of animal use” Syllabus

This multi-disciplinary course helps students to develop an intellectual framework for understanding issues involving animal welfare and the ethics of animal use in agriculture, science, and society.

**Educational objectives**

*Students will develop:*

• skills in drawing upon different disciplines in understanding and discussing animal welfare and animal ethics issues;

• awareness of the diversity of factors (values, knowledge, technology, regulation and economics) that enter into decisions about animal use;

• skills in finding and critically evaluating information as a basis for problem solving;

• communication skills through presenting material to the class and by discussing issues with others whose views may be different from their own.

*Students will learn about:*

• scientific research designed to understand and improve animal welfare (recognizing pain and distress, understanding animals’ environmental preferences, etc.);

• philosophical positions on animal use (rights-based views, utilitarian views, etc.) and the diversity of ethical views of the relation between humans and other species;

• practical issues involving animal welfare and ethical concerns that arise in agriculture, wildlife management, animal research, and use of companion animals.

**Instructors**

David Fraser

Dan Weary

**Textbook**

*Understanding Animal Welfare: The Science in its Cultural Context*, by David Fraser, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2008.

**Evaluation** emphasizes comprehension of concepts, critical thinking, independent research and effective communication, as evidenced by written assignments, in-class discussion, a term paper, and an oral or electronic presentation to the class. This course depends greatly on “discussion-method learning”: students typically do a reading or exercise before class, and this becomes the basis of in-class discussion, supplemented by some lecture material. None of the evaluation involves factual recall/memorization. Success depends strongly on regular attendance and active participation.

* Attendance (10) and participation (5) 15
* Current/cultural event 5
* Assignment 1. Analyzing an issue 5
* Assignment 2. Critical reading of a scientific review 10
* Assignment 3. Integrating the science readings 10
* Assignment 4. Integrating the ethics readings 10
* Term paper (research on a specific issue) 35
* Oral or web-page presentation 10
* Optional field trips (bonus) up to 2

**Outline of topics (the order will vary slightly)**

*Introduction*

* Ethical vs. empirical issues
* Values, knowledge, technology, regulation, and economics

*Scientific approaches to animal welfare*

* Public concerns about animal welfare and the emergence of animal welfare science
* Abnormal behaviour
* Disease, injury and production
* Stress
* Affective states
* Natural living
* Preferences and motivation
* Human-animal interaction

*Philosophical approaches to animal issues*

* Utilitarianism
* Rights-based approaches
* Traditional husbandry ethics
* Communitarian/feminist approaches

*Specific topics*

* Wide range of topics covered in student and guest presentations