

## Course Outline Handout: Animals and Society (APBI 314)

### *Learning objectives*

- To become aware of the diverse use of animals in contemporary society in such areas as food production, companionship, recreation and science
- To develop the ability to find, evaluate and use information about animals and society
- To develop awareness of social and ethical issues surrounding how people affect animals, and to develop the habit of thinking critically about these issues
- To develop an appreciation of the role of animals in human culture
- To understand the protection of animals afforded by society and the law, and its limitations

### *Topics*

Animals in Food Production  
Animals in Science  
Companion Animals and Animal Protection  
Wild Animals  
Animals in Human Culture

### *Instructors*

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### *Evaluation*

Assignment 1	5
Assignment 2	10
Assignment 3	10
Midterm exam	30
Final exam	30
Participation	10
Oral presentation and write-up	5
Bonus marks for field trips (maximum of 2)	<u>2</u>
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### *Readings*

Readings will be available on Canvas.

### *Oral presentations*

During the course, most sessions will begin with 2 or 3 brief oral presentations on some aspect of animals and human society. The goal is to briefly introduce fellow students to a topic that they may not know about, or to give a perspective that they will find interesting. Topics can be relatively broad such as wildlife rehabilitation, zoos, game ranching, cosmetic testing or horse racing, or they may be more specific such as chuck-wagon racing, use of diabetic rats in research, iguanas as pets, or laws regarding ownership of pitbulls.

Students work in groups of 3 to prepare the oral presentation, and each person should give part of presentation. Presentations should not exceed 4 minutes. Practice ahead, and time your presentation! You may bring visual aids but NOT Powerpoint. Sign up in groups of three for a date on the list.

Within a week after the oral presentation, each student individually writes up to a page (single-spaced) summarizing the topic in their own words. A list of sources is not needed. The page should be printed with your name and student no. and given to a TA.

### *Sample oral presentation (3 paragraphs so it could be given by 3 students)*

We wanted to tell you about some strange ways that people have used domestic geese. Domestic geese have generally been on the fringe of human society. They are not nearly as popular as chickens for farms or small-scale production, but many people enjoy geese because they're interesting and independent birds with great loyalty and protectiveness. The ancient Romans kept a group of geese in the Temple of the goddess Juno where they were considered sacred, and the birds were actually credited with saving the Roman army. Around the year 390, an invading army of Gauls from modern France attacked Rome, and the Roman Army held out in a fortress on the hill where the temple was located. One night the Gauls tried to climb the hill in silence and attack, but the geese heard the disturbance and their honking alerted the guards.

More recently, geese have been used for weed control in farm crops. Geese will eat almost any plant, but they have a strong dislike for certain species including strawberry plants and cotton. If geese are kept in strawberry or cotton fields they will keep many of the common weeds under control and cause relatively little damage to the crop. This can reduce or avoid the need for chemical weed control and it saves a lot of labour. It also turns the weeds into fertilizer for the crop and Thanksgiving dinners for the ungrateful humans.

The use of geese for weed control started around 1950, and hundreds of thousands of geese were used for weed control at that time. The practice declined as chemical herbicides became more common in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, with more concern about bacterial contamination of food, people would be reluctant to have geese in strawberry fields where the fruit develops at ground level, but it should still be fine for orchards and cotton. With the current interest in sustainable and pesticide-free agriculture, there is a small resurgence of interest in weeder geese, but the manufacturers of Roundup don't seem worried yet.