



Course Syllabus
Religious Perspectives on Animals
ANZO 503

Fall 2016, Professor Paul Waldau

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30-3:50 (Eastern), or by appointment.

Course Description ♦

Students explore the role that religious traditions have played and are now playing in humans' views and interactions with other living beings. The approach is interdisciplinary, and the course relies heavily on open discussion so that students can develop their own understanding of the long history and complex present and future possibilities of religious communities regarding the living beings beyond the species line. The course builds on the work in Introduction to Anthrozoology ANZ501 regarding other animals' realities and the constructed categories into which human have sorted themselves and other animals.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, *each student* will be able to accomplish the course objectives stated below. As you read these, please recognize that (i) each of the following goals for your learning in this course is meant to work together with the others, and (ii) *as a practical matter*, these goals have a single, overarching purpose, namely, helping me notice your individual abilities so that I can challenge each of you, as a graduate student, to

recognize that *you* are *now* the person most fully in charge of your education.

- Think critically about different senses of “religion and animals”;
- Identify the definition of “religion and animals” that they will use in their own work;
- Explain why critical thinking and basic factual information are so important to the study of religion and animals;
- Understand how religious views have impacted contemporary views that are self-consciously *non-religious*; and,
- Describe why the study of animals across different religious traditions and cultures creates interesting problems and possibilities.

Programmatic Learning Goals and Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, *each student* will be able to accomplish the following programmatic objectives (the list of all the objectives and learning goals for the Anthrozoology Master of Science program can be viewed at <http://www.canisius.edu/anthrozoology/learning-goals-objectives/>).

- Learning Goal 1: Students will exhibit strong critical thinking skills in their study of the interactions between humans and nonhuman animals and of the roles of nonhuman animals in human society. To achieve this goal, each student will
 - Objective A: Synthesize interdisciplinary information as it relates to anthrozoology.
 - Objective B: Identify strengths and weaknesses in arguments regarding human and nonhuman animals.
 - Objective C: Construct a literature review that evaluates a subset of scholarly anthrozoological publications.
- Learning Goal 2: Students will proficiently communicate anthrozoological information. To achieve this goal, each student will
 - Objective B: Construct a written, evidence-based argument on an anthrozoological topic.

Class Organization and Structure

The course is divided into three stages:

(1) **Introductory Week** (Monday, Aug 29 and 30) where you will do a few preliminary tasks that will help us during the upcoming On-Campus Component.

(2) **On-Campus Component** (September 1 to 4) during the four-day, in-person component we call the OCC; and,

(3) **On-Line Component** (September 6 – December 9, Weeks 2 through 15 of the term).

Class participation is critical in all three stages—I view learning as an active process, and your active contribution through asking questions and participating in back-and-forth conversations with other students is vital.

Because this is a graduate-level course, students are expected to come to class fully prepared—**a crucial way to prepare is to think *ahead of time* about the focus questions listed for each week**. In any discussion of these specific questions and other issues, you *should* make an effort to cite assigned materials (when you cite such sources, be prepared to help others in the class follow your comments by indicating specifics, such as the page number of the reading you are citing).

Because this course is primarily conducted online, your feedback is important to me as an educator *and* important to your fellow students' learning. So I will ask for feedback frequently throughout the class: what did you like, what did you not like, and why? What was clear and what was confusing? Are there suggestions you'd like to make about how we can communicate better?

As to assigned materials, do not assume that they have been chosen because they are the final word on a subject—in fact, many of the readings have been chosen because they *invite* each of us to think *for ourselves* about the questions they raise. So as you read, always be willing to question claims being made.

Assigned Materials

Required Textbook: Waldau, Paul and Kimberley Patton, eds., 2006. *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science, and Ethics*. New York: Columbia University Press (this book is referred to below as *Communion*).

Additional assigned written materials will be available at the course website, usually in the form of .pdf files.

Additional audio and video may also be assigned (and if possible, these will also be available at or through the course website).

Grading

The possible grades in this course are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+ and C.

Your course grade will be based on these different elements, each of which is explained in detail below.

- Shorter Assignments (there are two of these): 20%
- Participation: 30%
- Final Paper 50%

Grading Rubrics—there are three different documents called “rubrics” posted at the course website. These explain how each kind of assignment is graded. **Note carefully the specifics in these documents.**

Shorter Assignments

Assignment #1, which is due Week 6, is discussed in the Week 3 entry below. The assignment is to “research a *subtradition* of your own choosing from one of the major religious traditions on the animals issue.”

Assignment #2 is described at the end of the Week 6 entry below—the written portion of the assignment (see the Rubric for guidelines) will be due during Week 12. Each student will **present her or his completed Assignment #2 during our synchronous sessions in Weeks 13 and 14.** For this assignment, each student will choose an indigenous people or small-scale society to research regarding their relationship with and to the non-human beings in and near where these people live.

Some Important Policies

Students with disabilities (the language of this paragraph will be updated shortly to reflect new provisions that the Canisius administration wants in each course syllabus): The Office of Accessibility Support serves as the college's advocate for students with disabilities and is responsible for arranging necessary support. Any student who needs academic accommodations should contact the Griff Center main line at (716) 888-2170 to reach someone from the Office of Accessibility Support. If you have a disability for which accommodations are necessary, please also inform the instructor. For more information about academic accommodations, please visit www.canisius.edu/dss or call (716) 888-2170.

Academic Misconduct: Students are expected to abide by the Canisius College Honor Code. Academic misconduct includes a variety of violations of academic ethics including cheating, plagiarism, using or interfering with other student's work, buying or selling papers or examinations, etc. The Department actively seeks to impose penalties on violators of academic ethics. Penalties include failure of an assignment, failure of the course, or

suspension or expulsion from the College. See the Academic Catalog, section Academic Misconduct, for further descriptions of what constitutes misconduct, procedures for handling cases of misconduct and penalties.

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Introductory Week

(Monday and Tuesday, August 29 and 30)

We have two tasks to accomplish during the pre-OCC period: (1) Read three assigned readings (two will be sent to you as .pdf files) & (2) think about the focus question “What do I want out of this course?”

Assigned Reading: (1) *Communion* pp.5-10, Prologue “Loneliness and Presence” by Thomas Berry;

(2) Singer’s *Animal Liberation* Chapter 5 “Man’s Dominion ... a short history of speciesism” (.pdf);

(3) Feldman, Noah. “A Lesson for Newt Gingrich: What Shariah Is (and Isn’t).” *The New York Times*, Sunday Review, July 15, 2016 (.pdf).

Using Materials from your ANZ501 course—we rely in this course on certain materials from the introductory course:

(i) From Week 6 of ANZ501, Handout re comments by scholars Armstrong and Doniger about ancient roots of animal protection.

(ii) From Week 5 of ANZ501, excerpts from Richard Sorabji’s 1993 *Animal Minds and Human Morals: The Origins of the Western Debate* (short Introduction with observations about arguments made by the ancient Greeks and Romans; Chapter 1 “The crisis: the denial of reason to animals”; and Chapter 14 that discussed Augustine on irrational animals and the Christian tradition—there are copies of these .pdf files at the website for this course).

Discussion Board—using a single question, we will start our use of the Discussion Board feature of the course. Here’s the question: Which

religious traditions have, in your opinion, displayed an interest in other animals' actual realities? **Please post by the end of Wednesday, August 31**, and try to keep this post to 150-200 words or so, but if you feel you simply must write more, you are free to do so.

On-Campus Component

(September 1 to 4)

September 1 (Thursday) The Field of “Religion and Animals”

We address both (i) the field of “religion and animals” and (ii) how this field is related to the academic disciplines Anthrozoology, Animal Studies, law, ethics, and various sciences. To address these themes, I’ll work in comments to stimulate group discussion about each of the pre-OCC assigned readings—bring your questions about each of these.

Focus Questions

- (1) What’s in a name? We’ll consider these options for the names that might be used for the whole field and for courses such as this: “animals and religion,” “religion and animals,” “religion and other animals,” “religious perspectives on other animals,” and more.
- (2) What kinds of work already done by the human community fit comfortably within this field (however we name it)?

September 2 (Friday) Basic Issues I

You already know a number of the challenges that arise as any human tries to learn about nonhuman animals—we will look in this session at comparably difficult problems that arise when one studies humans’ religious traditions and claims. These include the problem of subtraditions—for example, is Singer talking about *all* of Christianity? Our goal is to anticipate a series of problems that arise when people comment about “religion” but have in mind only their own experience with a particular religious tradition, or possibly the larger and better known religious traditions that sometimes are referred to as “world religions.”

We then will consider what might be called “the roots question” about ancient insights that motivated the early forms of influential traditions in India, China and the Middle East (we will return to this topic in more detail in Week 7).

Finally, we tackle “the scholar problem” (sometimes in academic work what is taught or described in journal articles and books scholars can differ greatly from on-the-ground versions of the religion being described).

September 3 (Saturday) Basic Issues II

We look at the negative reaction to religion generally in the modern animal protection movement. We will look at again at the pre-OCC assigned reading by Peter Singer, and I'll raise a number of problems that appear in the work of animal law/legal rights advocate Steven Wise. We'll then discuss the faith outreach work of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) as an example of the kinds of on-the-ground, practical work with specific religious communities that we delve into further in Week 6.

Additional Assigned Reading: "Faithful Following," by Karen Lange, *All Animals*, November-December 2011, regarding the work of HSUS with communities of faith.

Focus Questions:

- (1) What suggestions do you have for getting religious communities into conversations where they can discuss *and learn about* issues involving other-than-human animals?
- (2) What ideas, language, vocabulary, or "tradition of discourse" is useful when discussing "religion and animals" issues? Is it the language of the religious community, the language that dominates today's animal protection organizations, or some other way of speaking? (We will continue with this question in Week 2)

September 4(Sunday) Where we are going?

We discuss the upcoming online segment of the course, the course objectives and assignments, grading, our synchronous meeting schedule, how we will use discussion boards and when posts will be due, and, if we have time, various issues relevant to the focus questions from our previous three OCC sessions.

Online Component

Weeks 2-15 (September 6 to December 9)

Week 2 (Tues, Sep 6 to Sep 10). Inventorying Basic Issues: The Complexities of Studying Religion. We remain at the general level through an effort to list various difficulties one encounters in studying religion *especially* as these combine with the difficulties of knowing other animals' realities to create formidable challenges for the general inquiry "religion and animals."

- Assigned Reading** (1) *Communion*, Introduction (pp. 11–23)
(2) *Communion*, Waldau, “Seeing the Terrain We Walk” (pp. 40–61)
(3) Recommended only: *Communion*, Patton’s “Caught with Ourselves in the Net of Life and Time,” (pp. 27–39)

Focus Question

- (1) We’ll discuss again *your* thoughts on this question—***how can we best talk about religious views of other animals?*** This question could be asked in a more technical way—what “discourse tradition(s)” do you think one is well advised to use when discussing religion? As you discuss this, please be free to talk in your own terms about how you think one can be fair and productive when addressing the way that religion has impacted and now impacts the development and content of views about and actions towards nonhuman animals.

Week 2 Discussion Board

- **Post your thoughts on the above Focus Question**, keeping your post to 150-200 words or so, although if you feel you simply must write more, you are free to do so. **Post by the date we agree upon at last meeting of the OCC so that we can use these posts in our upcoming synchronous session.**

Synchronous session (at time agreed upon during OCC)

- Our principal task in this first synchronous session is to nurture further the “culture” we started at the OCC and, additionally, get familiar with this medium because it is so crucial to our post-OCC work. **We will discuss both the assigned readings and your posts at the Week 2 Discussion Board.**

Week 3 (Mon, Sep 12 to Sep 17). A Closer Look at Religion—Jains and Buddhists

We look at several religious traditions that are often cited as very animal friendly. Recall that in ANZ501, you read a number of pieces relevant to this issue (copies of these readings are in a folder at this course’s website named “ANZ 501 readings used in this course”): (i) Excerpts from Joseph Epes-Brown 1997. *Animals of the Soul: Sacred Animals of the Oglala Sioux*, (ii) “The Ecology of Magic” mentioning insects (the opening in David Abram’s 1966 *The Spell of the Sensuous*), and (iii) a handout that included comments by scholars Armstrong and Doniger about ancient roots of animal protection in views of the Axial Age sages.

Assigned Reading (1) *Communion* essay on the Jain tradition by

Chapple, “Inherent Value with Nostalgia: Animals and the Jaina Tradition” (241-249);

(2) “Buddhism and Animal Rights,” Waldau 2017 (forthcoming) in *The Oxford Handbook of Buddhist Ethics* edited by Daniel Cozort and James Mark Shields, Oxford University Press

(3) Recommended only—*Communion* essay “Five-Sensed Animals in Jainism” (250-255) by Wiley;

(4) Recommended only—excerpts from *The Specter of Speciesism: Buddhist and Christian Views of Animals*, Introduction to Part III, and Chapters 6 and 7 (.pdf files at course website).

Focus Questions

- (1) What was your impression of the Jains and/or Buddhists prior to reading this week’s assigned materials?
- (2) What, if anything, do you find (i) realistic, and (ii) unrealistic about the views of nonhuman animals portrayed in this week’s readings?
- (3) What place is there in these traditions for a search for other animals’ actual realities?
- (4) Speculate—*why* are different versions told of the story of Buddhism and other animals? To stimulate your thinking and FYI, different kinds of claims mentioned at the very beginning of Chapter 7 of *The Specter of Speciesism*, and this important claim appears as the epigram prefacing Chapter 1 of the *Specter of Speciesism*, “[I]n Buddhist texts animals are always treated with great sympathy and understanding.” [The quote is from F. Story’s 1964 book *The Place of Animals in Buddhism*.]
- (5) Are there any fundamental features of the Jain or Buddhist tradition that in your opinion do either of the following: (a) foreclose consideration of the animals outside the human species; *or* (b) require that Jains/Buddhists notice and take seriously some or all living beings outside the human species?

Week 3 Discussion Board

- Post your thoughts on **whether you think followers of a particular religious tradition have in-born abilities to identify and assess with sufficient care the realities of nonhuman animals whom they notice living in their locale**. As usual, keep your post in the range of 200 words. Post by end of the day before this week’s synchronous session.

Synchronous Session

We will discuss both the assigned readings and your posts at the Discussion Board.

Note: Assignment #1 will be due in Week 6: Research a *subtradition* of your own choosing from one of the major religious traditions

on the animals issue—you might choose, for example, a group from Islam or Judaism or Christianity or Buddhism or Hinduism or one of the Chinese traditions. There are *many* possibilities—for example, any number of subtraditions thought a vegetarian lifestyle was mandatory for a spiritual person. If you get stumped, call me and we can talk about what you might pursue.

Week 4 (Sep 19-24). Deeper into Basic Philosophical Problems—Opportunities and Challenges for Footloose Researchers and Other Animals.

We again engage what it means for an outsider, such as a believer from a different tradition or a scholar who looks at materials centuries after they were created, to look at an accumulating religious tradition. We will talk about what might be called “scholars’ religion” (or, more specifically, “scholars’ Buddhism” or “scholars’ Islam,” etc.). We use several often-discussed essays (e.g., the readings from Lynn White and Vine Deloria, Jr.) as we discuss these topics.

Assigned Reading (1) Excerpt from Deloria, Vine, Jr., 1969, *Custer Died for Your Sins*, Chapter 5 regarding Christian missionaries who worked with Native Americans (.pdf)

(2) White, Lynn, Jr., 1967. “The Historic Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis”, *Science*, 155, 1203-1207 (.pdf)

(3) Waldau 2017, “A Lens, a Path, a Return Journey—Lynn White and the Question of Animal Protection” in Todd, and Anna Peterson, eds., 2017. *Religion and Ecological Crisis: The “Lynn White Thesis” at Fifty*. New York: Routledge, 147-164 (.pdf)

(4) *The Specter of Speciesism*, Chapter 1, discussion of the multifaceted features of religion (read the entire nine-page chapter, but pay particular attention to the discussion under the heading “Religious Traditions” at the beginning of the chapter) (.pdf)

(5) Recommended only—Patton, Kimberley C. 2000. “He Who Sits in the Heavens Laughs’: Recovering Animal Theology in the Abrahamic Traditions”, *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 93, No. 4 (Oct., 2000), pp. 401-434. (.pdf file at course website)

(6) Recommended only—excerpt (chapter 14 and notes) from Wright, John 1966. *Human Nature in Geography: Fourteen Papers, 1925-1965*.

Cambridge: Harvard University Press (the topic is geopiety and geotheology; FYI, the Index to this book lists the following pages in this excerpt as relevant to “Animals: Biblico-religious”: 250, 255, 258, 261, 26-

266, 268-270, and you could also look at the passages mentioning porpoises on 290-293).

(7) Recommended only—for those who might want to get more background in the way that religion and religious ethics are discussed by scholars today, see the excerpt that is the first chapter in Fasching, Darrell J., Dell deChant, and David M Lantigua 2011. *Comparative Religious Ethics: A Narrative Approach to Global Ethics*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. The coverage here does not deal with nonhuman animals in any detailed way, although some of the stories or narratives mentioned in the reading do mention certain nonhuman animals.

Focus Questions

- (1) After reading this week’s assigned materials, what is your sense of the role, if any, to be given broad generalizations about single religious traditions along the lines of “Christianity’s view of animals is X” or “In Buddhism, the place of animals is Y” where X and Y are very simple, one-dimensional characterizations (such as Buddhism is good, or Christianity is bad, or Islam doesn’t think animals valuable, etc.). What I’m after is your sense of the value of what might be called “single-focus generalizations” about the views of the living beings outside our species found within a single religious tradition.
- (2) Based on what you have read so far in this course, what is your sense of whether or not religiously committed scholars and believers can contribute to the goals of the now-mostly-secular animal protection movement?

Week 4 Discussion Board

- Post your thoughts on Focus Question 2. As usual, keep your post in the range of 200 words. Post by end of the day before this week’s synchronous session.

Synchronous Session

We will discuss both the assigned readings and your posts at the Discussion Board.

Week 5 (Sep 26-Oct 1). Christianity and Other Animals

We turn to what it means to engage a single tradition, and we will do this by exploring “religion and animals” in the largest single religious tradition today. We will be able to build upon the discussions we had in our first five weeks, including our discussions regarding Lynn White’s views and those expressed in the excerpt from Deloria 1969. Notice as well that this week’s third assigned reading will allow us to raise the question of macro/micro animals.

Assigned Reading: All three readings are from *A Communion of Subjects*—(1) McDaniel’s “Practicing the Presence of God: A Christian Approach to Animals”; (2) Steiner’s “Descartes, Christianity, and Contemporary Speciesism”; and (3) Kienzle’s “Moth and Wolf: Imaging Medieval Heresy with Insects and Animals.”

Focus Question

- Speculate again—*why* are different versions told of the story of Christianity and other animals? Asked another way, why do the assigned readings frame “Christianity and animals” in such diverse ways?

Week 5 Discussion Board

- Post your thoughts on the Focus Question. As usual, keep your post in the range of 200 words. Post by end of the day before this week’s synchronous session.

Synchronous Session

We will discuss both the assigned readings and your posts at the Discussion Board.

Week 6 (Oct 3-8). Different Takes: Christianities that are *Radical* (etymologically, *back to the roots*)

As we turn to the question of what Christians inherit as part of their religious tradition, we consider what it means to give an account of “Christianity and animals” *beginning in and remaining committed to caring about other animals*. A related issue is whether it is possible to enter the field of “Christianity and Animals” via the *animal* door rather than the religion door. Through asking these questions, we also consider what happens if one insists that the realities of other-than-human animals must be part of any evaluation that hopes to answer the question “What is(are) the Christian view(s) of other animals?”

Useful this week will be the excerpts we read in the 501 course from Richard Sorabji’s 1993 *Animal Minds and Human Morals: The Origins of the Western Debate* (short Introduction with observations about arguments made by the ancient Greeks and Romans; Chapter 1 “The crisis: the denial of reason to animals”; and Chapter 14 that discussed Augustine on irrational animals and the Christian tradition—there are copies of these .pdf files at the course website).

Recall, too, Lynn White’s claim that while Christianity was plagued by a debilitating anthropocentrism, nonetheless Christianity has resources

relevant to a solving problems caused by human-centeredness that promotes destruction of the more-than-human world.

Assigned Reading:

(1) Excerpt (Chapters 2 and 3) from Linzey, Andrew 1994. *Animal Theology* London: SCM)

(2) Review the reading from OCC session on August 30 about HSUS outreach to conservative U.S. Christians (“Faithful Following,” by Karen Lange, *All Animals*, November-December 2011, regarding the work of HSUS with communities of faith).

(3) Excerpt (Chapter 11 on U.S./Southern evangelicals) from Wise, Steven M. 2009. *An American Trilogy: Death, Slavery, and Dominion on the Banks of the Cape Fear River*. Philadelphia, PA: Da Capo Press

(4) Excerpt (Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2) from Blue, Debbie 2013. *Consider the Birds: A Provocative Guide to Birds of the Bible*, Nashville: Abingdon Press.

(5) Recommended only—excerpt from Montalembert volume 2, 1861, about Christian monks living alongside nonhuman animals in the forest (some of these passages are highlighted in the .pdf at the course website).

(6) Recommended only—in a submodule/folder for this week, there are extra readings for those who want to get a sense of the larger historical context created by Christians’ heritage from the Jewish tradition, as well as some issues they faced by virtue of being citizens and/or slaves in the Greco-Roman world. These are excerpts from *The Specter of Speciesism* (Introduction to Part IV and Chapters 8 and 9 on Christianity). You will also get a sense of these background issues if you look at the *Communion* essays by Klawans and McDonough, as well as Patton’s essay on sacrifice.

In the submodule are also extra readings on Andrew Linzey’s views—see Waldau, Paul 1996. “Shortcomings of Isolated Traditions of Ethical Discourse: The Case of Andrew Linzey's *Animal Theology*.” *Between the Species* 12 (3 & 4) (Summer-Fall 1996): 105-110; and 2011 Book Review by Paul Waldau of Andrew Linzey, *Why Animal Suffering Matters: Philosophy, Theology, and Practical Ethics* published in *Studies in Christian Ethics*, November 2011, 24: 505-509.

Focus Questions

- (1) What is a reasonable summary of the *actual* place nonhuman animals have been given in the Christian tradition as a whole?
- (2) Are there any fundamental features of the Christian tradition that in your opinion do either of the following: (a) foreclose consideration of the animals

outside the human species; *or* (b) require that Christians notice and take seriously some or all living beings outside the human species?

- (3) What do you think is the best place that Christians while remaining true to their own religion can give to nonhuman animals (one could frame an answer to this question by talking about how Christians might in their daily lives treat the actual other-than-human living beings with which Christians share their local world).
- (4) Can find a sub-tradition within Christianity that was friendly to the animal issue in some way?

Week 6 Discussion Board

- Post your thoughts on Focus Question 2. As usual, keep your post in the range of 200 words. Post by end of the day before this week's synchronous session.

Synchronous Session

We will discuss both the assigned readings and your posts at the Discussion Board.

Note: Each student will present her or his completed Assignment #2 during our synchronous sessions in Weeks 13 and 14—for this assignment, choose an indigenous people or small-scale society and then describe for the class during the Week 13 or 14 synchronous session the relationship of this indigenous people to the non-human beings in and near your people's communities.

Week 7 (Oct 10-15). Islam

We continue with our inquiry about what it means to engage a single tradition by exploring “religion and animals” in Islam, the world's second largest religious tradition. Here, too, we ask what it means to give an account of “Islam and animals” especially if one is committed to caring about other animals.

Assigned Reading: The first three readings are from *A Communion of Subjects*—(1) the Foltz essay at 149;
(2) Kassam's “*The Case of the Animals Versus Man: Towards an Ecology of Being*” at p. 160; and
(3) Asani's ““Oh, that I could be a bird and fly, I would rush to the Beloved’: Birds in Islamic Mystical Poetry” at p.170.
(4) Excerpts (Introduction, Chapters 1, 5 and 7) from Richard Foltz 2006. *Animals in Islamic Tradition and Muslim Cultures*. Oxford: Oneworld (four .pdf files)

(5) Excerpts (opening paragraph, Table of Contents, Preface, and Chapter 1) from Tlili, Sara, 2012. *Animals in the Qur'an*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(6) Excerpt from Masri, B. A. 1989. *Animals in Islam*. Petersfield, England: The Athene Trust (pp. 1-31).

Focus Questions

- (1) What in the readings suggests to you that there are different subtraditions within Islam on the animal issue?
- (2) Are there any fundamental features of the Islamic/Muslim tradition that in your opinion do either of the following: (a) foreclose consideration of the animals outside the human species; *or* (b) require that Muslims notice and take seriously some or all living beings outside the human species?
- (3) What is your take on how Foltz handles the dog issue in Chapter 7 of his book (the file is a .pdf at the course website).

Week 7 Discussion Board

- Post your thoughts on the Focus Question 2. As usual, keep your post in the range of 200 words. Post by end of the day before this week's synchronous session.

Synchronous Session

We will discuss both the assigned readings and your posts at the Discussion Board.

Week 8 (Oct 17-22). Pluralism in Christianity and Islam as Object Lesson for Animal Studies

We consider both of the Abrahamic traditions we have studied in the past weeks to see if we can draw any conclusions regarding the extreme pluralism in each of these traditions. We will then see if we can extrapolate what we learn to Animal Studies as an emerging field.

Assigned Reading:

Excerpt from Ahmed, Shahab. 2016. *What is Islam?: The Importance of Being Islamic*, Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press. The excerpt is Chapter 1 of this highly praised, very complicated argument about pluralism—read only pp. 3-11, but if you can get further, you will see a careful scholar trying to work out fundamental questions that arise in the study of religious traditions.

Focus Questions

- (1) If after a survey of all of the major religious traditions in the world we notice that pluralism *always* occurs in any religious tradition that (i) exists in

more than one culture, and (ii) has been around for more than a decade, does this help us at all with regarding to pluralism in Animal Studies?

- (2) Is pluralism in religion, or in Animal Studies, a good thing or something to be avoided if possible?

Week 8 Discussion Board

- Post your thoughts on the Focus Question 1. As usual, keep your post in the range of 200 words. Post by end of the day before this week's synchronous session.

Synchronous Session

We will discuss both the assigned readings and your posts at the Discussion Board.

Week 9 (Oct 24-29). Small-Scale and Indigenous Traditions

We open the door further to cultures other than our own by turning to the ways the field of “religion and animals” is greatly enriched and diversified when we consider indigenous and small-scale societies. We build on the work we did in ANZ501 where we looked at (i) excerpts about the Oglala Sioux from Joseph Epes-Brown 1997, *Animals of the Soul: Sacred Animals of the Oglala Sioux*, and (ii) Abram's “The Ecology of Magic” (Abram suggested that animistic or theistic belief about a supernatural realm may have a connection to *actual* animals with whom/which we share ecological niches). Recall as well the comments about the ancient roots of animal protection in views of the Axial Age sages by scholars Armstrong and Doniger.

We will raise various questions about (1) what “indigenous” and “small scale” mean; (2) some relevant features of the lifeways of indigenous peoples; and (3) ask about the romanticization of certain indigenous peoples even as they continue to suffer much harm from the developed world.

As we engage these issues, we will explore debate over indigenous peoples' attitudes toward the natural world. We will read a challenging, very scholarly article by Yale's John Grim, who at pages 377-378 defines “indigenous” in ways that reflect how scholars of religious traditions try to be careful with their terms—Grim uses the term to refer to human groups that live in small scale societies that continue to feature deep commitments to place or homelands, ancestral memories, local and specialized mythologies, special commitments to their own kinship systems, and distinct languages. ‘Indigenous’ in such studies, then, is a specialized term with uses that are, by practice, unrelated to some important literal senses of the term ‘indigenous’ such as “originating where it is found” [in other words, some of

the groups we are about to put in the category “indigenous” did not originate where they are now found, and some groups we will not put in this category did, in fact, originate where they are now found].

We also will address a question that is similar to the emphasis this course places on the realities of other animals—as we do, we will discuss the following argument about parallel cases.

It is a given that any researcher with integrity knows how important it is to be realistic when describing the viewpoints of urban dwellers in a culture, and this “given” parallels the emphasis our Anthrozoology program has placed on attempting to know the features of the *actual* lives of nonhuman animals that one is researching. Similarly, it is of the utmost importance to describe the views of indigenous peoples realistically. This has often *not* been the case. At one end of the spectrum there have been extremely negative, dismissive views of indigenous peoples as stupid, ignorant, unproductive and lazy—such views have, sadly, been advanced by major figures in our intellectual and scientific history and then promoted without any detailed effort to meet and/or otherwise know the realities of these people. At the other end of the spectrum, there have been romanticizations of indigenous peoples that have far less to do with the indigenous peoples than with someone’s wish for an idyllic universe free of problems and human greed (in Abram’s “The Ecology of Magic,” for example, there are references at page 21 to facile teaching about shamans).

Dismissals and romanticizations aside, there are diversities and riches beyond belief in the myriad indigenous cultures of which we are aware in one way or another—but, sadly, even today both ignorance and apathy prevail. One scholar recently observed, “More groups of indigenous peoples have likely been destroyed during our age than in any other comparable time period.” (Goldhagen, Daniel Jonah, 2009. *Worse than war: genocide, eliminationism, and the ongoing assault on humanity*. New York: PublicAffairs, at p.54.)

Assigned Reading: (1) Paulson, Ivar 1964. “The Animal Guardian: A Critical and Synthetic Review.” *History of Religions* 3/2 (1964): 202-219; (2) *Communion* Grim’s “Knowing and Being Known by Animals” (pp.373-390); (3) Excerpt (pages 1-4) from Brightman, Robert A. 1993. *Grateful Prey: Rock Cree Human-Animal Relationships*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press—look in particular at opening pages (1-3). (4) “Native Fantasy: Germany’s Indian Heroes” by Axel Gerdau, Erik Olsen and John Woo, *The New York Times*, August 17, 2014

Focus Questions

- (1) What strikes you as the greatest differences between, on the one hand, the views of animals held by the indigenous peoples mentioned in the

assigned readings and, on the other hand, the views that now prevail in our society?

- (2) The readings we consider give a primary place to *stories* about humans and other animals—in your experience, is telling stories *more* effective than our science-based facts at getting people to care about other animals, or less effective?

Week 9 Discussion Board

- Post your thoughts on the Focus Question 2. As usual, keep your post in the range of 200 words. Post by end of the day before this week’s synchronous session.

Synchronous Session

We will discuss both the assigned readings and your posts at the Discussion Board.

Week 10 (Oct 31 – Nov 5). Indigenous Peoples—Stories, Facts and Meaning.

Based on the prevalence of story in the lives of our ancestors, we look at the dance of stories and factual claims as each of us seeks to understand our own views and those of others about animals of all kinds. Consider our own stories, such as human exceptionalism, or the claim that some cultures, such as the Euro-American tradition, are better than others.

As we do this work, we address how the field of animals and religion much deal regularly with major issues like “social construction,” situated knowledge, relation-based notions of personhood, and humans’ repudiation of our own animality.

I will also make points about why major scholars such as Claude Levi-Strauss, Paul Shepard and Jacques Derrida, as well as contemporary thinkers such as Laura Hobgood-Oster and Graham Harvey, suggest in various ways that interaction with other animals is a key ingredient in humans’ healthy development.

Assigned Reading: (1) “The Ecologically Noble Savage Debate”, *Annual Review of Anthropology* 36:177–90 (2007)

(2) *Animal Studies—An Introduction* mentions Derrida at pp. 56, 65, 182-5; Shepard at 41, 56-57, 67, 75, 135 (quote at Footnote 30), and 146; Levi-Strauss at pp. 27 and 310, Note 26.

(3) Handout with passages from contemporary scholars Hobgood-Oster and Harvey.

(4) Recommended only—excerpt (Chapter 6) Krech, Shepard 1999. *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*. New York: W.W. Norton.

(5) Recommended only—Vine Deloria’s review of Krech 1999

Focus Question

- (1) What is your take on the debate over romanticization of indigenous peoples?
- (2) What is the role of narrative, story, or myth (in the respectful sense that this term is used by comparative religion scholars) in the views of animals held by peoples in, respectively, small-scale societies and modern industrialized societies?

Week 10 Discussion Board

- Post your thoughts on Focus Question 2. As usual, keep your post in the range of 200 words. Post by end of the day before this week’s synchronous session.

Synchronous Session

We will discuss both the assigned readings and your posts at the Discussion Board.

Week 11 (Nov 7-12). Contemporary Outreach by Religious Groups on Animal Protection.

We consider two kinds of outreach—(i) the efforts of certain groups that parallel animal protection nonprofit work (recall the reading during the OCC about HSUS’s outreach efforts), and (ii) “religion and ecology” as a major form of animal protection.

Assigned Reading:

- (1) Animal Protection Ministries: A Guide for Churches” (HSUS, 2011)
- (2) two *Communion* essays by Mary Evelyn Tucker (“Heritage of the Volume” at 1-3, and “A Communion of Subjects and a Multiplicity of Intelligences” at 645-647)
- (3) Excerpts from the guiding spirit of the contemporary religion and ecology movement (Thomas Berry) from *The Great Work* and they are Chapters 2 and 5 (.pdf files at course website)

Focus Questions

- What, if any, is/are the relationship(s) of environmental concerns to the concerns of religious traditions for compassion for other living beings?
- (2) What approaches might a religious believer take in ordinary, day-to-day life so that she can learn about other animals? What I’m after is day-to-day activities. Your answer can include topics that go under headings like “environment” or “ecology” but, if you can, relate any broad topic of this kind to our believer’s engagement with actual animals.

Week 11 Discussion Board

- Post your thoughts on Focus Question 1. As usual, keep your post in the range of 200 words. Post by end of the day before this week's synchronous session.

Synchronous Session

We will discuss both the assigned readings and your posts at the Discussion board.

Week 12 (Nov 14-19). Ever the Touchstone—Animals “In and of Themselves”

The written portion of your Assignment #2 is due this week.

In this session, we explore where in previous readings there are approaches that make the realities of other animals an important factor in religious/ethical approaches to other-than-human animals. This will be done in light of the fact that we have already seen in the ANZO 501 course that there are many different ways to address other animals' actual realities (not only science, of course, but also empirical evidence from one's day-to-day life, as well as implications from common sense, language, traditional notions we have inherited, literature and more).

Assigned Reading: (1) excerpt from Edward Armstrong 1973
(2) Wikipedia article (2014 August 22) re Edward Armstrong
(3) Review Week 6 reading from Debbie Blue's *Consider the Birds: A Provocative Guide to Birds of the Bible*.
(4) Review previous readings to see if you can identify passages or specific references of some kind that explicitly *or implicitly* make other animals' actual realities a key issue.

Focus Questions

- (1) Consider the readings from different traditions we have seen so far in the course—have you found that any of them have employed methods or approaches that would disclose other animals' realities to adherents of those traditions?
- (2) Do any religions, in your opinion, have techniques that nurture individual believers' abilities to notice and take seriously the minds of any nonhuman animals?

Week 12 Discussion Board

- Post your thoughts on Focus Question 2. As usual, keep your post in the range of 200 words. Post by end of the day before this week's synchronous session.

Synchronous Session

We will discuss both the assigned readings and your posts at the Discussion

Board.

Week 13 (Nov 21-23, Thanksgiving Week). **Student Presentations on Assignment #2 during synchronous session.**

No Week 13 Discussion Board

Week 14 (Nov 28 – Dec 4). **Student Presentations on Assignment #2 during synchronous session.**

No Week 14 Discussion Board

Week 15 (Dec 5-9). **Viewing the Past as Prologue, Can We Say “The Future is Open”?**

We use the Course Objectives listed at the beginning of this Course Syllabus to look backward and forward, asking about both the past we have inherited *and* future directions and possibilities as we choose our own immediate and more distant futures and thereby impact future generations of both humans and nonhumans alike. As we discuss this, we will try to summarize what we have seen. I’ll also ask, Should we venture to claim “the future is open”? Or is there a strong(er) argument that “the future is closed”?

Assigned Reading: Review generally what we have been through during Weeks 1-14.

Focus Questions

- (1) Do you feel that religious communities might bring good things to any segment of the worldwide animal protection movement?
- (2) What about education/Animal Studies/Anthrozoology?
- (3) What about harms that religious communities might bring to any segment of the worldwide animal protection movement?
- (4) Is your sense that the academic community’s embrace of “religion and animals” as a specific topic will help people understand humans’ possibilities and current practices with other animals, or that this work is really only a minor development relative to other developments you consider major?
- (5) You have now read more than a dozen scholars’ take on various religion and animals issues—is it your sense that the scholars are writing realistically about religion or, instead, “giving religion a pass” (that is, they treat it too gently)
- (6) What approaches might a single religious believer take to the study of other animals and topics that go under headings like “ecology,” “endangered species,” and “animals’ social realities”?

- (7) What, if any, is(are) the relationship(s) of environmental concerns to the concerns of religious traditions for compassion for other living beings?

No Week 15 Discussion Board

Synchronous Session on normal schedule

Final Paper will be **due on date agreed upon by class, but by December 14 at the latest** (final grades **MUST** be submitted to Canisius' Registrar by December 21, 9AM)

draft 16.8.11