

Instructor: Kristin Voigt (Philosophy & Institute for Health and Social Policy)  
Office: Institute for Health and Social Policy, Charles Meredith House, room 303  
Office hours: Thu, 1:30-3pm

**PHIL446 – Political philosophy and non-human animals**  
**Winter 2014**

**Course description:** While the status of non-human animals has been discussed by moral philosophers for some time, this issue has gained interest among political philosophers only very recently. Should non-human animals be included as part of a theory of justice? Can current theories of justice be extended to include animals and if so, how? In what ways can animals be understood as ‘members’ of political communities? How would a just society approach the interests of animals, including domesticated and wild animals, and the relationship between humans and animals? In considering these questions, students will be introduced to major strands in current thinking about justice in contemporary political philosophy.

To provide background for subsequent reading, the course begins with a brief introduction to John Rawls’ main works on justice, *A Theory of Justice* and *Political Liberalism*. The main texts for this course are Robert Garner’s *A Theory of Justice for Animals* (2013) and Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka’s *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights* (2011).

**Class days and times:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:35-3:55pm, starting January 6. Please note that the following sessions will conclude at 3:30 because of departmental meetings: January 6; February 3; March 10; April 7.

**Location:** Leacock Building, Room 15

**Course materials:**

Robert Garner, *A Theory of Justice for Animals* (Oxford, 2013). This book is available through Oxford Scholarship Online (start from <https://webvpn.mcgill.ca> => eResearch gateway => search for Oxford Scholarship Online).

Sue Donaldson & Will Kymlicka, *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights* (Oxford, 2011). This book is not available online and must be purchased (paperback around \$30).

Additional readings will be made available through myCourses.

**Assignment and evaluation:**

Participation (10%). Participation includes class attendance as well as your participation in class discussion. You are expected to come to class having read and thought about the assigned text. Please come prepared to each session with at least two questions (in writing) about the readings that you would like to discuss.

Response papers (20% each). Two short response papers (up to 750 words each), discussing one of the readings/book chapters assigned for the course. These can be submitted at any point during the semester but must be submitted within one week of the day that the piece you are responding to was discussed in class.

Final paper (50%), up to 2,500 words. Essay questions will be made available by March 28 through myCourses. *Final papers are due by midnight on April 11.* **[NB: this is a change from the previously posted version of the syllabus!]**

**Submission of work:** All work must be submitted via email to [kristin.voigt@mcgill.ca](mailto:kristin.voigt@mcgill.ca), as a PDF or MS Word file. Please do *not* leave submissions in my department mailbox.

**Late submissions:** Late submissions incur a grade penalty. Essays turned in late without an extension will be penalized at the rate of 1/3 of a grade (e.g., from a B to a B-) per *calendar day* of lateness. Submission of corrupted files or files that cannot be opened do **not** count as submission of your work.

**Extensions:** Requests for extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and only if supported by a medical note or other appropriate documentation.

**Resources:**

- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://plato.stanford.edu/>
- Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy [available as eBook through McGill library]
- International Encyclopedia of Ethics [online access through McGill library]
- Tips and suggestions on writing philosophy papers:
  - [http://cstl-cla.semo.edu/hill/writing\\_a\\_philosophy\\_paper.htm](http://cstl-cla.semo.edu/hill/writing_a_philosophy_paper.htm) [also see further links at bottom of page]
  - <http://www.mcgill.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/advising/writing>
  - Vaughn & McIntosh, *Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian Students*. Available as 3-hour reserve loan at the library. [selected chapters available through myCourses]

**Language policy:** In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

**Academic integrity:** McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information).

**Access:** If you have a disability please feel free contact me to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you could also contact the **Office for Students with Disabilities** ([www.mcgill.ca/osd](http://www.mcgill.ca/osd)) at 514-398-6009 to make them aware of any requirements you may have.

**Course outline:**

**Week 1**

6 January. Introduction

8 January. Garner, Introduction (ch. 1)

**Week 2**

13 January, S. Mulhall & A. Swift, 'Rawls's original position', from their *Liberals and Communitarians*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) [myCourses]

15 January. Selection from John Rawls's *Theory of Justice*, from Cahn, *Political Philosophy: The Essential Texts*. [myCourses]

### **Week 3**

20 January, Mulhall & Swift, 'Rawls's political liberalism', from their *Liberals and Communitarians*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) [myCourses]

22 January, Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, pp. 3-28 from Chapter 1 ('Fundamental Ideas') [myCourses]

### **Week 4**

27 January, Garner, ch. 2

29 January, Garner, ch. 3

### **Week 5**

3 February, Garner, ch. 4

5 February, Garner, ch. 5

### **Week 6**

10 February, Garner, ch. 6

12 February, Garner, ch. 7

### **Week 7**

17 February, Garner, ch. 8

19 February, Garner, ch. 9 + Conclusion

### **Week 8**

24 February, D&K, ch. 1

26 February, D&K, ch. 2

**\*\* Reading week – 3-7 March \*\***

### **Week 9**

10 March, D&K, ch. 3

12 March, D&K, ch. 4

### **Week 10**

17 March, D&K, ch. 5, pp. 101-121

19 March, D&K, ch. 5, pp. 121-155

### **Week 11**

24 March, D&K, ch. 6, pp. 156-179

26 March, D&K, ch. 6, pp. 179-209

### **Week 12**

31 March, D&K, ch. 7, pp. 210-230

2 April, D&K, ch. 7, pp. 230-251 + ch. 8 (Conclusion)

### **Week 13**

Conclusion to course, Q&A for final paper.