

GEOG 2156B: Animal Geographies Course Outline – Winter 2019

1. Course Information

1.1. Classroom Location:

Mondays, 12:30-2:30pm, room: SSC 2028

Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30pm, room: SSC 2028

1.2. Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr. Tony Weis

Office: SSC 1413

Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30-3:30pm or by appointment

Phone: 661-21411 x87472

Email: tony.weis@uwo.ca

2. Calendar Description

Investigates the fast-changing geographies of animals in relation to global environmental change. The initial focus is on extinctions, endangerment, and broad population declines occurring among many wild animal species. The subsequent focus is on the soaring populations and conditions of life for a few species of domesticated animals.

3. Overview

This course examines the fast-changing geographies of both wild and domesticated animals. The basic context for this is the crashing populations of many wild animal species on one hand, and the soaring populations of a small number of domesticated species on the other. Most attention is given to mammals, followed by birds, with occasional references to amphibians and fishes. A core premise of the course is that human-animal *interspecies relations* are a central and often underappreciated aspect of environmental change, and essential to understanding contemporary conservation challenges and prospects for a more humane and sustainable world. Related to this, the course will repeatedly pose questions about the differential spheres of moral concern associated with these relations.

The first half of the course focuses on the positions of animals within shrinking and modified habitats. This section pivots on an overview of contemporary patterns of endangerment and extinction risk, and the rapid population losses occurring among many non-threatened species and non-domesticated vertebrates as a whole – a process that some conservation scientists have described as ‘de-faunation’. Endangerment and extinctions are then examined in relation to major threats facing parks and protected areas, the ‘flagship’ of modern conservation, in particular efforts to contain poaching and growing black markets in endangered live animals and

body parts. This is followed with a discussion of the evolution of (some) zoos, and debates about the roles that zoos and other small enclosures might play in conservation. The first section culminates with an introduction to big visions of re-wilding.

In the second half of the course, attention turns to how animals are variously used or embraced in human societies, from the long history of domestication to contemporary dynamics of industrial production and relations within our homes. This section begins with the crucial role of animal domestication and labour in human societies for most of the history of civilization and agriculture. Another foundation is a review of the role of animals as both important commodities to be harvested on colonial frontiers and key sources of labour in remaking colonial landscapes. Attention then shifts to the vast and growing populations of a few species that are raised for human consumption, the dramatically changing conditions of life these animals face, and the land and resources this entails. This is followed by an assessment of the place of animals in other aspects of production, and associated ethical debates, before turning to the handful of companion species which inhabit intimate positions in human households.

4. Format

3 lecture hours per week. This course is based upon lectures, readings, and some videos, and is structured to encourage ongoing engagement with course material on a weekly basis. It follows the thematic outline on the following page.

5. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will:

- be able to understand and explain how human relations with other species relate to major dynamics of environmental change;
- be capable of critically engaging with debates, conflicts, and policy issues surrounding biodiversity conservation and the use of animals in human societies;
- have a conceptual basis for further studies in conservation, agriculture and food, and critical animal studies;
- be inspired to think about questions surrounding environmentalism, trajectories of animal life, and interspecies responsibilities, and how these relate to one another.

6. Readings

An online reader is provided on OWL.

Along with lectures and readings, you are expected to follow and reflect on links provided in the weekly PowerPoints and to watch 2 documentary films.

7. Schedule

Date	Topic
Jan 7-8	Course Introduction + The 6 th extinction spasm & defaunation
Jan 14-15	The 6 th extinction spasm & defaunation
Jan 21-22	Conservation under siege
Jan 28-29	Conservation under siege
Feb 4-5	Zoos and other enclosures Mid-term test #1 – Feb 5
Feb 11-12	Bigger visions: re-wilding
Feb 18-22	READING BREAK
Feb 25-26	Domestication in human civilization: multifunctionality and co-evolution
Mar 4-5	Animals on/as resource frontiers
Mar 11-12	Animals on/as resource frontiers Mid-term test #2 – March 12
Mar 18-19	Animals as food: 70+ billion, going on 120 billion
Mar 25-26	Animals in other forms of production
Apr 1-2	Animals in our families
Apr 8-9	REVIEW
Apr 10	Study day
Apr. 11.30	EXAM PERIOD

8. Evaluation

Evaluation Components	Percentage of Course Grade	Assignment Schedule
Weekly memos	20%	weekly
Mid-term test #1	20%	Tues. Feb. 5
Mid-term test #2	20%	Tues. Mar. 12
Final exam	40%	In exam period: Apr. 11-30

WEEKLY MEMOS (20%)

You are expected to bring a short (½ page), typed reflection to class every week that:

- 1) identifies at least three key points you have taken from the lecture material
- 2) draws on at least one of the stories or short video links contained in the PowerPoints

Memos can also include questions that you hope have clarified.

Memos will only be received the week after the lecture material being discussed was presented – they will not be accepted in batches (i.e. you cannot catch up after multiple weeks of neglect).

2 TERM TESTS (20% each)

The term tests involve a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. If you fail to write either test on the scheduled time you will be given zero, unless you communicate with me *prior to* the exam, in which case you will require a note from your physician (see note on special examination policy below).

In addition to the lecture material and readings, you are also expected to watch one documentary film in preparation for each midterm, and will be tested on an aspect of the film that relates to central course themes.

FINAL EXAM (40%)

The final exam combines multiple choice, short answer, and paragraph questions, and will cover the course content as a whole.

9. Make-up Examinations

Makeups will be granted with approved documentation only. All documentation for missed exams must be provided the Academic Counselling Office and Instructor within 48 hours of the scheduled exam. For missed exams, you must take your documentation to Academic Counselling within 48 hours of the exam. Otherwise, the instructor will assign a grade of zero. The format and content of make-ups may differ substantially from the scheduled test or examination.

For Western's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC please refer to the [Academic Handbook](#).

9. Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a [Scholastic Offence](#).

10. Use of Electronic Devices

No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations.

11. Western's Commitment to Accessibility

The Department of Geography strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. [Information regarding accommodation of exams](#) is available on the Registrar's website.

More information about ["Accessibility at Western"](#) is available.

12. Medical Issues

You can find Western's Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC) in the [Academic Handbook](#). Student Services also provides information about the University's policy on [medical accommodation](#).

If you are seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for a missed test, exam, or assignment you must apply to the Academic Counselling office in your home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or by the Geography department.

In the event of illness be sure to contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. Counsellors will determine whether or not accommodation should be requested and will contact instructors about the accommodation. Once a decision about accommodation has been made, the student should contact instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

13. Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit Western's [Health and Wellness website](#) for more information on mental health resources.

14. Support Services

[Student Support Services](#)

[Student Development Services](#)

15. Important Dates

January 7: Classes resume

January 15: Last day to add a second term half course

February 5: Geo 2156 test #1

February 18: Family Day holiday – Department Office Closed

February 18-22: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

March 7: Last day to drop a second term half course without penalty

March 12: Geo 2156 test #2

April 9: Last day of classes

April 10: Study day

April 11-30: Examination Period

April 30: Spring term ends