

GEOG 2156B: Animal Geographies

Course Outline – Section 001 – Winter 2020

1. Course Information

1.1. Classroom Location:

Mondays, 12:30-2:30pm, room: SEB 1200
Wednesdays, 11:30-12:30pm, room: SEB 2200

1.2. Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr. Tony Weis
Office: SSC 1403
Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30-3:30pm or by appointment
(and usually some flexibility after class Mondays)
Phone: 661-2111 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, short readings, videos, and documentary films. 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

Readings are available via links on the PowerPoints and a few are also posted on OWL.

Mandatory links are highlighted (). There are also plenty of optional readings that allow you to dig more deeply into subjects you are most interested in.

PowerPoint slides are posted after every class.

7. Schedule

Date	Topic
Jan 6, 8	Course Introduction + The 6 th extinction spasm & defaunation
Jan 13, 15	The 6 th extinction spasm & defaunation
Jan 20, 21	Conservation under siege
Jan 27, 29	Conservation under siege
Feb 3, 5	Zoos and other enclosures Mid-term test #1 – Feb 5
Feb 10, 12	Bigger visions: re-wilding
Feb 17-21	READING BREAK
Feb 24, 26	Domestication in human civilization: multifunctionality and co-evolution
Mar 2, 4	Animals on/as resource frontiers
Mar 9, 11	Animals on/as resource frontiers Mid-term test #2 – March 11
Mar 16, 18	Animals as food: 70+ billion, going on 120 billion
Mar 23, 25	Animals in other forms of production
Mar 31, April 1	Animals in our families
Apr. 6-26	EXAM PERIOD

8. Evaluation

Component	Weight	Date
Mid-term test #1	25%	Weds., Feb. 5
Mid-term test #2	25%	Weds., Mar. 11
Final exam	50%	In exam period: Apr. 6-26

2 TERM TESTS (25% 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 mandatory readings and videos, you are also expected to watch a documentary film in preparation for each midterm (you will be tested on an aspect of the film that relates to a major issue discussed in the course).

FINAL EXAM (50%)

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

9. Requesting Academic Consideration

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

- (i) Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form provided that the conditions for submission are met;
- (ii) For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or
- (iii) For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration in order to be eligible for academic consideration. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Counselling unit to clarify what documentation is appropriate.

Students seeking academic consideration:

- are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;
- are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (upset stomach) or upsets (argument with a friend) are not normally an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;
- **must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence.

Academic consideration is not normally intended for the following circumstances:

- **Students who require academic accommodation based on an ongoing physical or mental illness (recurring or chronic) or an existing disability.** Students with an ongoing physical illness or mental disorder (recurring or chronic) or an existing disability are responsible, in consultation with their doctors or other health professionals, to determine if they are capable of pursuing their studies and, if so, with what accommodations. Students are expected to seek and arrange reasonable accommodations with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible in accordance with the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disability. Students with pre-existing accessibility plans arranged through SAS may not need to provide additional documentation when seeking academic consideration where such request for consideration relates to their disability and where their accessibility plans allow for coursework deferral or deadline extensions.
- **Students who experience high levels of stress related to academic performance** (including completing assignments, taking part in presentations, or writing tests or

examinations). Students with academic or exam stress should access supports through [Student Health and Wellness](#) and [Learning Skills Services](#) in order to deal with this stress in a proactive and constructive manner.

Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need. It is important to monitor your performance in the course. Remember: *You* are responsible for your grades in this course.

Please refer to Western's [Policy on Accommodation for Illnesses](#) and the Academic Calendar's section on [Academic Rights and Responsibilities](#).

10. Make-up Examinations

Makeups will be granted with approved documentation only. All documentation for missed exams must be provided to the Academic Counselling Office within 48 hours of the scheduled 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](#).

11. Use of Electronic Devices

No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations.

12. 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.

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

[Western's Support Services](#)
[Student Development Centre](#)

16. Important Dates

January 6: Classes resume

January 10: Last day to add a second term half course

February 5: Geo 2156 mid-term test #1

February 17: Family Day holiday – Department Office Closed

February 18-23: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

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

March 11: Geo 2156 mid-term test #2

April 3: Classes end

April 4-5: Study days

April 6-26: Examination Period