

GEOG 2156B: Animal Geographies

Course Outline – Section 001 – Winter 2022

1. Course Information

1.1. Class delivery (and room location if conditions allow):

Asynchronous lectures will be posted on OWL on Mondays & Wednesdays until at least January 31. If circumstances allow a return to in-person learning in February or March, classes will occur on:

- Mondays, 12:30-2:30pm, room: AHB-1R40
- Wednesdays, 12:30-1:30pm, room: AHB-1R40

1.2. Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr. Tony Weis

Office Hours: 1 pm on Fridays at the end of each unit: optional office hours via Zoom (links posted in OWL in the Zoom tab).

Phone: 661-2111 x. 87472

Email: tony.weis@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistants:

Alyssa Aglipay (aaglipa@uwo.ca)

Suleman Saaka (ssulem@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 lecture hours, 0.5 credit. No prerequisites.

3. Readings and Documentary Films

There is no required textbook. Readings for each unit are available for free on OWL in the unit folders in the Resources tab.

In addition to the readings, you are also expected to watch a series of documentary films. Most are available for free, but for a few you will need to pay a small rental fee through iTunes, Amazon, GooglePlay, or Vimeo. The documentary films are listed here (with links to viewing details) as well as in a file posted in the Resources tab in OWL.

The PowerPoint slides that accompany the lectures will subsequently be posted as PDF files, organized by units rather than the day of the lecture. The PDF files contain an abundance of additional links to short

videos, valuable websites, reports, and news items. By including so many additional active links, I do not expect you to follow everything – my hope is that they might provide a starting point that allow you to dig into subjects you are most interested in a bit further.



A Vision of a Zoo to Preserve Wildlife | Documentaries and Reports



4. Format

The course content is organized into 5 units, as outlined below (in *Units and Schedule*), which are based upon in-person lectures, readings, and documentary films. There are 3 lecture hours per week, although the 2-hour session will rarely run the full 2-hours. All PowerPoints will be posted to OWL at pdfs shortly *after* the lecture. The readings for each of the 5 units should take about 2-3 hours, and the documentaries will take roughly 1 ½ hours per unit (required for 5 of the 6 units). You are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned readings and documentary films, and it is important to keep up with lectures, readings, and documentaries on a unit-by-unit basis. The evaluation is based on 2 tests, 5 quizzes, and a final exam (dates in the schedule).

Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your browsers frequently. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, please click [here](#). Using the right browser is important, especially when using different features integrated with OWL. If you need technical assistance, support can be found on the OWL Help page or by contacting the Western Technology Services Helpdesk (which can also be reached by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800).

5. Course delivery with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic

This course will be delivered online asynchronously until at least January 31, with lecture material posted on OWL twice weekly to be viewed at your convenience.

If the changing COVID-19 landscape allows courses to be delivered in-person in February and/or March, we will return to the classroom on Mondays and Wednesdays. The assessments, due dates, and grading scheme will not change.

When deemed necessary, tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide personal information (including some biometric data) and the session will be recorded. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

6. 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 species that are mass produced 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. It will also consider some key ways that changing interspecies relations have affected zoonotic disease risks over time.

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.

7. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should:

- 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.

8. Units and Schedule

| Date | UNIT |
|---------|--|
| Jan. 10 | Course Introduction |
| Jan. 12 | The 6th extinction spasm and defaunation |
| Jan. 17 | key subjects: extinctions in evolutionary history; present trajectory of extinction risks and population declines (focus on mammals) |
| Jan. 19 | QUIZ #1: Extinction: The Facts |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Jan. 24 | Conservation I: The primacy (and insufficiency) of parks |
| Jan. 26 | some key subjects: the origins of parks; contemporary pressures; the fast-rising scale of poaching and trade; the increasing militarization of conservation |
| Jan. 31 | |
| Feb. 2 | QUIZ #2: <i>Racing Extinction</i> |
| Feb. 7 | |
| Feb. 9 | Term test #1 (25%) |
| Feb. 14 | Conservation II: Other responses for animals on the brink, from small to big |
| Feb. 16 | primary focus: the contradictions of zoos – anachronism or conservation necessity? |
| Feb. 21-25 | Reading break |
| Feb. 28 | primary focus: re-wilding – expanding the scale of conservation |
| Mar. 2 | QUIZ #3: <i>A Vision of a Zoo to Preserve Wildlife and Wildways</i> The importance of domesticated animals in human civilization & European colonialism |
| Mar. 7 | key subjects: the uneven geography of domestication and the importance of animals in the rise of agriculture |
| Mar. 9 | QUIZ #4: <i>The Rise of the Dog and Equus: The Story of the Horse (First Riders episode)</i> |
| Mar. 14 | key subject: the importance of animals as and on resource frontiers in European expansion |
| Mar. 16 | Term test #2 (25%) |
| Mar. 21 | The expanding commodification of animal life |
| Mar. 23 | primary focus: the industrialization of livestock on a world scale |
| Mar. 28 | |
| Mar. 30 | QUIZ #5: <i>The Ghosts in our Machine</i> |
| Apr. 4 | key subjects: the intensification of fur, animal experimentation, animals in entertainment, the pet industry |
| Apr. 6 | |
| Apr. 9 | Study day |
| Apr. 10 – 30 | Final exam (35%) in examination period – date TBD |

January TBA, 2022: Last day to add a second-term half course

March 7, 2022: Last day to drop a second term half course without penalty

9. Communication

- if you have questions you wish to discuss beyond the class, Dr. Weis is typically available after each class and you can attend the optional Friday drop-in session
- if Friday doesn't work, you can also schedule an individual zoom meeting via email if necessary.
- you are encouraged to check the OWL site every 24 – 48 hours
- you should post general course-related queries (whether content or logistics) to the Forums tab in OWL, so that the clarifications can be seen by everyone; posts will get monitored daily and you can expect to

receive a response in 24 – 48 hours be organized

- Forum posts will be organized into folders as the term unfolds
- some communications about the course will arrive through your university email account. It is your responsibility to ensure that email received from the University at your UWO address is attended to in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#).

10. Evaluation

| Component | Weight | Date |
|---|--------|----------------------------|
| Quiz #1 <i>Extinction: The Facts</i> | 3% | Weds., Jan. 19 |
| Quiz #2 <i>Racing Extinction</i> | 3% | Weds., Feb. 2 |
| Mid-term test #1 Units 1 & 2 | 25% | Weds., Feb. 9 |
| Quiz #3 <i>A Vision of a Zoo to Preserve Wildlife and Wildways</i> | 3% | Weds., Mar. 2 |
| Quiz #4 <i>The Rise of the Dog and Equus: The Story of the Horse</i> | 3% | Weds., Mar. 9 |
| Mid-term test #2 Units 3 & 4 | 25% | Weds., Mar. 16 |
| Quiz #5 <i>The Ghosts in our Machine</i> | 3% | Weds., Mar. 30 |
| Final exam | 35% | In exam period: Apr. 10-30 |

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).

5 DOCUMENTARY FILM QUIZZES (3% each = 15% of course grade)

On 5 specified days, you are expected complete a short quiz (available on OWL in the Tests and Quizzes tab) about the documentary film that accompanies the unit.

FINAL EXAM (35%)

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

11. Online Participation and Engagement

- students can attend on-line office hours at the conclusion of each unit
- students can post questions and thoughts in the Forums tab in OWL, and expect a response within 24 – 48 hours

12. Professionalism, Privacy, and Online Etiquette

Western students are expected to follow the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course:

- students are expected to follow online etiquette expectations provided on OWL
- all course materials created by the instructor(s) are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared
- recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission
- be courteous toward the instructor and your peers in optional synchronous sessions
- be professional and scholarly in all online postings in Forums: the exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment. “Flaming” is never appropriate.

13. Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student’s final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student’s final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see:

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

For the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

14. How to be successful in this class

Students enrolled in this class should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.

- 1) Invest in a planner or application to keep track of your courses. Populate all your deadlines at the start of the term and schedule time at the start of each week to get organized and manage your time.
- 2) Make it a regular habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.
- 3) Take notes as you go through the lesson material. Treat this course as you would a face-to-face course. Keeping handwritten notes or even notes on a regular Word document will help you learn more effectively than just reading or watching the videos.
- 4) Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, post questions in the Forums tab and follow the responses there.
- 5) Attend the optional end-of-unit synchronous sessions.
- 6) Reward yourself for successes. It is often easier to motivate ourselves knowing that there is something waiting for us at the end of the task.

15. 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](#).

Written components of exams may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. Support Services

Western's Support Services
Student Development Centre

19. Important Dates

January 10: Classes resume

January 14: Last day to add a second term half course

February 21: Family Day – Department Office Closed

February 21-25: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

March 14: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

April 8: Classes end

April 9: Study day

April 10-30: Examination Period