

## GEOG 2156B: Animal Geographies

### Course Outline – Winter 2023

This course is taught in-person



### 1. Course Information

	Delivery Mode	Day/Time	Location
Lecture	In-person	Mondays 12.30-2.30	AHB-1R40
Lecture	In-person	Wednesdays 12.30-1.30	AHB-1R40

Course Instructor	Contact Information	Office hours
Dr. Tony Weis	tony.weis@uwo.ca	Wednesdays 3-4 pm, SSC 1403
Teaching Assistants		
Sulemana Saaka	ssulem@uwo.ca	
Martin Sinel	msinel@uwo.ca	

Classes Start	Reading Week	Classes End	Study days	Exam Period
January 9	Feb. 18–26	April 10	April 11–12	April 13–30

January 17, 2023: Last day to add a second-term half course

February 20, 2023: Family Day

March 7, 2023: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

## 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.

You are also expected to watch a number of documentary films and short videos. 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 in a file posted in the Resources tab in OWL.

In addition to the readings, films, and short videos, the PowerPoint slides provide an abundance of links to encourage you to dig deeper into subjects you are most interested in, and these links are also intended to provide sparks for the online discussion segment of the course.

## 4. Format

The course outline is indicated below in *Units and Schedule*. There are 3 scheduled lecture hours per week, although the 2-hour session will rarely run the full 2-hours. PowerPoint slides will be posted to OWL as pdfs shortly *after* each lecture. The readings for each unit are available OWL, and you should budget roughly 2-3 hours per week to complete the readings, watch the documentary films, and follow some links of interest on the PowerPoint slides. The evaluation is designed in a way that you must keep up with the course content on a week-to-week basis, with quizzes and discussion forums beginning in the second week of classes. You will also need to budget time every Friday to take a 15-minute online quiz at some point between 9 am and 11.55 pm, and to post on the discussion forums at some point between Wednesdays at 3 pm and Mondays at noon.

[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. 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, with significant attention to those being intensively produced. Most attention is given to mammals, followed by birds. A core premise of the course is that the *interspecies relations* between humans and animals are a central and often underappreciated aspect of global

environmental change, and that this is essential to understanding contemporary conservation challenges and prospects for a more humane and sustainable world.

The first four segments of the course focus on the positions of animals within rapidly shrinking and modified habitats, and the increasingly desperate contexts of conservation facing a growing array of animal species, with a particular focus on large mammals. This begins with an overview of both historical and 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 referred to as ‘de-faunation’ by conservation biologists. Endangerment and extinctions are then examined in relation to major threats facing parks and protected areas, with a focus on efforts to contain poaching and growing black markets in endangered live animals and body parts. This is followed with an overview of the roles that zoos and wildlife sanctuaries play in relation to contemporary conservation challenges, before considering some of the major issues associated with re-wilding.

The remainder of the course focuses on the small array of animal species whose populations are growing and which occupy a large and growing amount of land. This starts with an overview of the long history of animal domestication and the crucial role that animal labour has played in human societies for most of the history of civilization and agriculture. Attention next turns to the importance of animals in European imperialism, both as harvested commodities and as indispensable sources of labour mobilized in the remaking of landscapes and the extraction of various resources. From this point on, the focus shifts to the contemporary conditions of animals in production, starting with the industrialization of livestock (which comprises a large and growing share of all mammalian and bird biomass on earth today) before brief examinations of fur, vivisection, and aquaculture. Units 10 and 11 draw upon earlier material in the course; first in assessing the key reasons why changing interspecies relations are amplifying zoonotic disease risks, and next in examining important moral and environmental issues associated with the proliferation of companion animals. The concluding unit reviews some recent developments in the field of ethology and urges reflection on how our fast-improving understanding of animal intelligence and behaviour relates to the sorts of interspecies relations examined in the course.

## 6. 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.

## 7. Units and Schedule

Units	Dates	SUBJECT
	Jan. 9	Course Introduction
1	Jan. 11 Jan. 16 Jan. 18	Animals in the biodiversity crisis QUIZ #1: Jan. 20
2	Jan. 23 Jan. 25	The growing scale of wildlife poaching and trade QUIZ #2: Jan. 27
3	Jan. 30 Feb. 1	Zoos and wildlife sanctuaries QUIZ #3: Feb. 3
4	Feb. 6 Feb. 8	Re-wilding: expanding the scope of conservation QUIZ #4: Feb. 10
5	Feb. 13 Feb. 15	Animal domestication in human civilization QUIZ #5: Feb. 17
Feb. 20-24		<b>Reading break</b>
	Feb. 27	Animal domestication in human civilization, continued
7	Mar. 1 Mar. 6 Mar. 8	Animals on/as European settler colonial frontiers QUIZ #6: Mar. 3 QUIZ #7: Mar. 10
8	Mar. 13 Mar. 15	The intensification of livestock production QUIZ #8: Mar. 17
9	Mar. 20 Mar. 22	The intensification of other animal production QUIZ #9: Mar. 24
10	Mar. 27 Mar. 29	The trajectory of animal life and zoonotic disease risks QUIZ #10: Mar. 31
11	Apr. 3 Apr. 5	Companions: animals in our homes and families QUIZ #11: Apr. 6-7
12	Apr. 10	Major currents in ethology and our moral responsibilities to animals
	Apr. 11-12	<b>Study day</b>
	Apr. 13-30	<b>Final exam (40%) in examination period – date TBD</b>

January 17, 2023: Last day to add a second-term half course

March 7, 2023: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

## 8. Communication

- if you have questions you wish to discuss beyond the class, Dr. Weis is typically available after every Monday class and during office hours every Wednesday
- you are encouraged to check the OWL site every 24 – 48 hours and to read each announcement carefully
- every announcement will arrive through your university email account in addition to appearing in the Announcement tab on OWL. 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](#).
- you are encouraged to post general course-related queries (whether content or logistics) to the Forums tab in OWL, which will ensure 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)
- the online discussion will be organized into 2 groups based on last names, with folders clearly marked in the Forums tab in OWL.

## 9. Evaluation

Assessment	Format	Weighting	Dates
Online quizzes	Occurs in the <b>Tests and Quizzes</b> tab in OWL	30% (11 quizzes; top 10 count)	<b>FRIDAYS</b> (starting Jan. 20) Opens: 9 am Closes: 11.55 pm
Online discussion	Occurs in the <b>Forums</b> tab in OWL	30%	<b>WEEKLY</b> (starting Jan. 18) Opens: Wednesdays @ 3 Closes: Mondays @ noon
Final exam	Short answer and paragraph responses	40%	<b>TBA in exam period:</b> April 13-30

### ONLINE DISCUSSION (30% of course grade)

The PowerPoint lecture slides regularly highlight contemporary news stories, reports, animations, and short videos. The PDFs of the PowerPoint slides contain an abundance of embedded links to these additional resources, and the online discussion challenges you to dig further into the subjects within the unit that most interest you.

The basic expectation for this segment of the course is that you will post at least one reflection per unit (of at least 200 words) that discusses one or more of the links contained in the slides. These posts can summarize key aspects of a story, report, animation, or video to your peers, and why it is important, and might also discuss multiple links in relation to each other or indicate key concerns or questions that you have. Be sure to mark your post with clear explanatory headings, and if the item you intend to comment on has already been written about by one of your peers at the time you are posting, you should add to that thread, in which case the point is not simply to agree or disagree but to add something constructive to the conversation – and do so in a respectful manner.

The opportunity to comment on the material for each unit will **open at 3 pm on Wednesdays and close at noon on Mondays**. Participation will be assessed over the term as a whole, and top marks will be awarded to those who consistently make meaningful contributions over the course of the entire term (your participation will be evaluated over 10 units, meaning that you can take 1 unit off).

Note: Because there are almost 5 full days to engage in the weekly discussion and there is flexibility to take off 1 unit, no accommodations are provided for missed discussion participation; when the folder is locked at noon on Monday it will not be reopened and posts will not be received as emails.

### **WEEKLY QUIZZES (30% of course grade)**

On every Friday (starting on January 20; see *Units and Schedule*, pg. 4) you are expected complete a short quiz (available on OWL in the Tests and Quizzes tab). Some of these will cover documentary films and short videos, as indicated. There will be 11 quizzes, and your top 10 marks will count.

Note: No accommodations are provided for missed quizzes since the lowest score will be dropped. Quiz answers will not be posted, and if you have questions you can speak to Dr. Weis after class or during office hours.

### **FINAL EXAM (40%)**

The final exam combines short answer and paragraph questions and covers the course content as a whole. An outline and example questions will be provided near the end of the term.

### **Notes on grading**

- click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The following table outlines the University-wide grade descriptors:

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

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.

## **10. 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:

- 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.

## 11. 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

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters.

However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course (i.e. the final exam) shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

Further, because of the volume of the assessments in this course (small quizzes and discussion forums), the relative flexibility of the time-lines, and the fact that students can miss both one quiz and one discussion post and still achieve full grades, there will not be any make-up assessments. However, if you have a protracted health problem that impedes your ability to keep up with the coursework during the term, please contact your Academic Counsellor and Dr. Weis as soon as possible.

### Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness - Undergraduate Students

#### Student Medical Certificate (SMC)

### 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](#).

## 12. How to be successful in this class

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

- 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.
- make it a regular habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class, and to review the lecture slides as quickly as possible after they get posted.
- take notes as you go through the lesson material. Keeping handwritten notes or even notes on a regular Word document will help you learn more effectively than just reading or watching the videos.



- do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, ask questions in class, afterwards, or post questions in the Forums tab and follow the responses there.

### **13. 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.

### **14. 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.

### **15. 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.

### **16. Support Services**

Western’s Support Services  
Student Development Centre

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at this survivor support website. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

### **17. Important Dates**

Monday January 9: Classes resume

Tuesday January 17: Last day to add a second term half course

Monday February 20: Family Day – Department Office Closed

February 18 to February 26: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

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

Friday April 7: Good Friday – Department Office Closed

Monday April 10: Classes end

April 11 and 12: Study days

April 13-30: Examination Period