

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2019-20**

**Philosophy 3991F: Nonhuman Minds and Human Morals:
Animals, Bacteria, and Plants**

Fall 2019

**Tuesday 2:30-3:30, Thursday 2:30-4:30
P&AB 117**

Instructor: Vicente Raja

Office Number: WIRB 7134

E-mail: vgalian@uwo.ca

DESCRIPTION

Does your dog remember where you hide her ball? Does your cat love you? Do sunflowers know the position of the sun? Many nonhuman animals, bacteria, and plants have ways and maybe some of them deserve to be labeled as “intelligent” or “cognitive”. In this course we will consider different philosophical and scientific approaches to the mental attributes of nonhuman organisms and some ethical debates that fall out of them. Animal minds have been a matter of discussion since Ancient Philosophy and Darwin himself, for example, was defending the attribution of some intelligent capacities to plants already in the 19th century. During the 20th century, these ideas have developed across the sciences of the mind and some of them have informed debates regarding the way to treat nonhuman animals, their moral status, etc. This course will address these and other issues by first considering some traditional questions regarding nonhuman minds before turning to a consideration of some of the contemporary debates regarding the mental capacities of nonhuman organisms—e.g., tool use, conceptualization, language—in the cognitive sciences. Then, the ethical debates that emerge from these issues will be addressed.

TEXTS

A combination of philosophical and scientific (i.e., methodological, research, and review papers) approaches

REQUIREMENTS

Regular Attendance and Participation	20%
4 Online quizzes	20% (5% each)
Midterm Paper	25%
Final Paper	35%

Online Quizzes — Quizzes will have between 5 and 6 questions that may be either multiple-choice or short-answer questions. Students are expected to answer each quiz during the week it is assigned. Answering a quiz after the week it is assigned will be considered as late work.

Midterm Paper (1000 words circa.) — Students are expected to write a historical paper in which they analyze one historical proposal on animal cognition. The paper should sketch the principles and main arguments of the selected proposal. This paper is due by Week 7. Submitting the paper after Week 7 will be considered as late work.

Final Paper (3000 words) — Students are expected to write an argumentative paper concerning one position addressed along the course. It is expected that the student claims against the selected position. The paper should have four parts: (i) a short introduction where the main thesis defended by the student is clearly stated, (ii) an explanatory section in which the argument faced is analyzed, (iii) a discussion section in which the student defends and arguments in favor of her thesis, and (iv) a conclusion summing up the results of the argumentation. This paper is due last week. Submitting the paper after last week will be considered as late work.

* Everyone is welcomed and encouraged to contact the instructor for help with any of the assignments.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES

The Department of Philosophy Policies which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

ACCOMMODATION

SELF- REPORTED ABSENCE FORM

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-

