

PHI 4905: Animals, Empathy, and Ethics  
University of North Florida

#### Course Description

This directed individual study focuses on the relationship between empathy and ethics when considering nonhuman animals. The goal is to explore not only questions about the presence of empathy in other species (and what this means for them), but also to discuss empathy's role (or lack thereof) in some human attitudes about other species.

Thus, this course is divided into six sections. Section 1: *Nonhuman Empathy and Emotion* includes readings about the presence of empathy and altruism, as well as other related emotions (like sympathy and concern), in animals. Section 2: *Nonhuman Animal Practices* includes readings involving normative practices and higher-order moral practices in animal communities. Section 3: *Nonhuman Animal Minds* includes readings about attributing mental states to animals and the dynamic relationship between cognitive ethology and ethics. Section 4: *Human Attitudes about Nonhuman Animals* includes readings involving the development of various attitudes about animals in children, human responses of disgust to animals, and framing effects that influence the adoption or rejection of some attitudes about animals in adults. Section 5: *Questionable Human Practices Involving Nonhuman Animals* includes readings from philosophers in both the animal rights and animal welfare camps about common practices involving animals that may not be ethically permissible (including eating meat and keeping animals in captivity in zoos). Section 6: *Nonhuman Animal Entitlements* includes readings from ethicists involving what entitlements nonhuman animals have that we should respect.