

PHI 4938: Seminar for Majors (Topic: Animal Cognition)
Florida State University

Course Description

This course offers the opportunity to explore philosophical questions related to nonhuman animal minds. Topics we will consider include skepticism, consciousness, mental representations, reasoning, empathy, mindreading, culture, and morality.

The primary objective of this course, as I think of it, is simply to foster some exposure to areas of philosophical research that are infrequently discussed in undergraduate courses – in this case, animal cognition.

But there's also a practical objective, since this is a seminar for majors completing their degrees. The assignments mimic the structure of professional conferences and/or promote independent research – both of which will clearly benefit those of you who plan to stay in academia. However, even if you aren't planning to go to graduate school or work in a university setting, many of the relevant skills (e.g., public speaking, charitable engagement with colleagues, professional independence) are readily transferable outside of academia.