

Animals and Society



American Sociological Association

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ANIMALS & SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

JAN/FEB 2012

NOTE FROM THE CHAIR – JESSICA GREENEBAUM

Dear Section Members,

Happy New Years! I hope your holiday season was filled with good health and great cheer. I have been enjoying my time as section chair and look forward to seeing you all this summer in Denver.

Tracey Harris did a terrific job as chair last year and the conference in Las Vegas was a huge success. The Section Session on “Human Consumption Practices and the Exploitation of Other Animals” and the “Thematic Session on Human/Animal Conflict: Sociological Considerations,” organized by Janet and Steven Alger, were both a huge success. The papers were thought provoking and noteworthy. The most exciting aspect of the conference for me was to see many new people eager to be involved in the section. The graduate students in the field, in particular, are doing some exciting research and show the future growth in our field of study.

We are now reviewing the proposals submitted for the 2012 meeting in Denver and will soon be seeking nominations for the Distinguished Scholarship Award (journal article), Distinguished Graduate Student Scholarship Award, and the new Clifton Bryant Animals & Society course award.

Thanks to Nicole Owens, our Section’s Facebook page is up and running:
<http://www.facebook.com/AnimalsAndSocietyASA>. Please “like” it and post frequently.

I think 2012 will be a great year for our field. More than ever before, humans’ relationships with animals are in the forefront of our culture’s consciousness. In 2011, investigations uncovered animal abuse in various industries and environmentally related mass deaths of birds. Veganism as a diet and lifestyle broke into the mainstream, and cat videos went viral causing an Internet sensation!

Finally, I would like to thank Justin Goodman for editing our newsletter.

All the best in the new year,

Jessica B. Greenebaum
Section Chair

2012 JANE GOODALL FELLOWSHIP WINNERS

The Animals and Society Section's Jane Goodall Fellowship annually recognizes two graduate students working in human-animal studies by providing ASA membership and section dues for one year.

Michelle Lute (Michigan State University) and **Nicole Owens** (University of Central Florida) are the 2012 winners of the Jane Goodall Award. Both are working on several projects within human-animal studies. Take a moment to get in touch and welcome these ambitious scholars into our membership.

Michelle is examining several dimensions of the relationship between humans and wolves. Her aim is to emphasize the better aspects of our co-existence and move past conflict toward a sustainable and ethical relationship with wolves. She argues that to move past conflict and find an acceptable way to live with wolves, reasoned interests that address the reality of wolf recovery must replace special interests. The results of such efforts can provide the groundwork for sustainable coexistence with many wildlife species. You can reach Michelle at lutemich@msu.edu.

Nicole is currently working on three projects related to animals in society. Nicole's Master's thesis examines how veterinarians negotiate the disconnect in saving and treating certain animals while simultaneously eating others. She is also working on a project, with Dr. Liz Grauerholz, on the challenges of teaching about animals in the sociology classroom. She has also created a Facebook page for our Animals and Society section to help us maintain a connected community of researchers, activists, teachers, and students to gain support and feedback on ideas relating to animals and society. You can get in touch with Nicole at owens.nicole.ucf@knights.ucf.edu.

Both Michelle and Nicole have pieces published later in this newsletter that give more details about their interesting scholarship.

OTHER MEMBERS' NEWS

- **Clinton Sanders** (University of Connecticut) received the prestigious George Herbert Mead Award for career achievement from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction at its 2011 meeting.
- In the Fall 2011 issue of *Sociological Viewpoints*, **Helene Lawson** (University of Pittsburgh) published an [article](#) titled, "Defining Fish."
- In the January 2012 issue of *The Sociological Quarterly*, **Leslie Irvine** (University of Colorado at Boulder) published an [article](#) titled, "Confrontations and Donations: Encounters between Homeless Pet Owners and the Public."
- **Kate Calamatta** (University of Sussex) completed her Ph.D. dissertation titled, "A Qualitative Study of Gender and Work in a British Riding School". For more information, contact Kate at katecalamatta@gmail.com.
- **Justin Goodman** (Marymount University/PETA), **Casey Borch** (University of Alabama-Birmingham) and **Elizabeth Cherry** (Manhattanville college) won Best Poster Award at the Eighth World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences for their work titled, "Americans' attitudes toward animal testing: 2001-2011."

ANIMALS AND SOCIETY ISSUES IN THE NEWS

- The *New York Times* published [an extensive article](#) about the growing academic field of animal studies.
- The *Los Angeles Times* [wrote about](#) a new lawsuit alleging that a federal law designed to protect businesses that use animals is unconstitutional.
- Media outlets around the world [covered](#) a lawsuit alleging that keeping orcas captive at SeaWorld and forcing them to perform is a violation of the thirteenth amendment of the Constitution, which prohibits slavery.
- A [landmark report](#) by the Institute of Medicine that was prompted by public concern about the U.S.'s continued use of chimpanzees in experiments concluded that, "most current biomedical research use of chimpanzees is not necessary." The National Institutes of Health subsequently suspended all funding for future experiments on chimpanzees and estimated that as many as 50% of currently-funded projects would lose government support. [Federal legislation](#) that would ban the use of chimpanzees in invasive experiments and retire more than 600 federally-owned chimpanzees to sanctuaries has attracted more than 160 co-sponsors in Congress.
- NBC's *Rock Center with Brian Williams* featured a [story](#) about the growing controversy surrounding the use of chimpanzees in experimentation in the U.S.
- National Public Radio [reported](#) on the unlikely alliance between the world's largest animal protection organization and the egg industry to lobby for federal laws to change housing standards for chickens.
- The Associated Press [wrote about](#) how exotic animal owners are coping with stricter enforcement of laws banning ownership of wild animals.

NEW RESOURCES

- The International Network for Humane Education (InterNICHE) relaunched its website and features an [extensive database](#) of studies from sociology and other fields examining issues surrounding the use of animals in testing, training and education.
- [Animals](#), a new international, interdisciplinary open access journal is still seeking submissions and articles submitted during 2012 will be made available free to the public .
- The [latest issue](#) of the *Journal for Critical Animal Studies* is now available.
- The Animals and Society Institute has created a [Scholar program](#) that offers Scholar members a webpage on the ASI site and discounts on journals and books.

NEW ANIMAL STUDIES PROGRAM

Drury University's Animal Studies Minor

At Drury University, the new Animal Studies minor is designed for those who are interested in gaining an in-depth understanding of diverse ways in which the lives of animals and humans intersect. The interdisciplinary nature of the minor, which consists of six classes (18 hr), allows students to consider historical and contemporary interactions between humans and animals from a range of perspectives.

Animal Studies Courses (18 hr)

ANML/PHIL 212: Animal Ethics; ANML 310: Animals in Literature; ANML/SOCI 303: Animals and Society; ANML/CRIM 305: Animal Law ; ANML/SOCI 306: Social Movements; and ANML 380/480: Undergraduate Internship Experience.

Contact Information

If you are interested in learning more about the new minor in Animal Studies, contact Dr. Patricia McEachern at 417-873-7875 or by email at pmceache@drury.edu.

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENTS

Women, Destruction, and the Avant-Garde: A Paradigm for Animal Liberation

By Kim Socha
Rodopi

This interdisciplinary study fuses analysis of feminist literature and manifestos, radical political theory, critical vanguard studies, women's performance art, and popular culture to argue for the animal liberation movement as successor to the liberationist visions of the early twentieth-century avant-gardes, most especially the Surrealists. For more information visit <http://www.rodopi.nl/senj.asp?BookId=CAS+1> or email info@rodopi.nl. This book is offered at a 30% discount until February 29th.

Animals and Public Health: Why Treating Animals is Better is Critical to Human Welfare

By Aysha Akhtar
Palgrave Macmillan

This interdisciplinary book explores the lives of animals in violent homes, factory farms, experimental laboratories, the entertainment industry and the wildlife trade. Dr. Akhtar reveals how their poor treatment is both directly and indirectly related to some of the most significant and urgent health issues we face today. This timely book draws from examples as diverse as domestic violence, Michael Vick's dog-fighting ring, the world's most ominous infectious diseases, animal attacks, high-profile drug failures and global warming. The result is a powerful and compelling argument on the critical need to improve our treatment of animals not only to alleviate their suffering but also to alleviate our own. For more information: <http://www.palgrave.com/products/title.aspx?pid=399974>

CONFERENCES

Animals, Ethics and Law Symposium

March 2-3, 2012

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

This two-day interdisciplinary event will bring together academics from the social and life sciences to explore and discuss our complex relationships with other animals. For more information: <http://philosophy.utk.edu/ael/main.html>

11th Annual North American Conference for Critical Animal Studies

March 2 -4, 2012

Canisius College, Buffalo, NY

The theme of this year's annual conference is based on inquiry into how economic markets locally, regionally, nationally and globally affect nonhuman animals. For more information: <http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org/conference-for-critical-animal-studies/north-american-conference-for-cas/>

Minding Animals Conference 2012

July 1-6, 2012

Utrecht University, the Netherlands

This conference is the second in a series of conferences about scientific, ethical and social issues related to human interactions with and uses of animals. The aim of the conference is to bring together academics from different areas (animal welfare, animal ethics, and animal studies in general) with politicians and a broad variety of interest groups. The conference offers a platform for exchange of information about research developments, debates about controversial political and ethical issues concerning the treatment of animals and a variety of cultural activities around animals. For more information: <http://www.uu.nl/faculty/humanities/EN/congres/mindinganimals/Pages/default.aspx>

Exploring Animal Minds lecture series

Throughout 2012

Hunter College, New York City

From the website: "Our flagship program will be a monthly lecture series, *Exploring Animal Minds*, in New York City, which will bring the latest scientific research to the public in an exciting and lively series of lectures, debates, panel discussions, and children's activities. This 10 month series will include renowned scientists in the fields of cognition, ethology, comparative psychology, communications, biology, evolutionary behavior, and neuroscience, and is designed to enlighten and inspire the audience with what scientists now know about the ways animals think and behave. It will afford members of the public unique and entertaining opportunities to learn about animal intelligence and the roots of our own behavior, and to be inspired to participate in fostering the conservation and well-being of other species." For more information: <http://www.thinkinganimals.org/home.html>.

JANE GOODALL FELLOWSHIP AWARDEE ESSAY**The Veterinarians' Oath: Distinctions and Interpretations**

By Nicole Owens (owens.nicole.ucf@knights.ucf.edu)

I am incredibly honored to be the recipient of the 2012 Jane Goodall Fellowship. Upon joining the Animals and Society Section of the American Sociological Association, I found true encouragement and support from a community of scholars dedicated to researching human-animal interactions. Throughout my graduate school experience, I have found that an honest acceptance of this research area is limited and many of my peers do not understand the sociological importance of expanding this emerging subfield within sociology. I continually am grateful to be a part of an organization that fosters the development of human-animal studies and look forward to adding to this body of knowledge throughout the rest of my sociology career. Furthermore, an award that bears Jane Goodall's name makes the honor even more meaningful, as her work has been a source of inspiration for me since I was a young girl aiming to understand the environment in which we live and all the species that inhabit it.

As a Master of Arts student in the Applied Sociology Program at the University of Central Florida, I have had the opportunity to study a few of the many complex relationships existing between human and nonhuman animals. After deliberating, reorganizing, and narrowing down ideas, I focused my energy on understanding how professional socialization and culture affect veterinarians' attitudes toward animals. Veterinarians arguably work the closest with animals in our society, yet they are situated within a culture where meaning and value assigned to animals varies by time, place, and interaction. I was curious to learn how veterinary medical schools' emphasis on distancing techniques structure the way these individuals interact with animals, regardless of whether they are a patient or not.

To learn more about the way veterinarians think and interact with animals, I am in the process of interviewing a minimum of twenty veterinarians throughout the state of Florida. Veterinarians selected for the research study are generated from a convenience and snowball sample. The veterinarians interviewed thus far have a diverse range of practices and specialties from companion animal predominate and exclusive, mobile equine, academic, pro bono work at a spay-neuter clinic, and post-veterinary education in specialty areas such as large animal, marine animal, neurobiology, and surgery. Demographic information of veterinarians is diverse with an equal number of men and women participating, ages ranged from late twenties to upper sixties, and education has varied from veterinary school graduates to interns, residents, and board-certified specialists.

Semi-structured interviews lasting approximately one hour were initially influenced by a symbolic interactionist framework, however, the methodology morphed into a grounded theory approach as new themes have emerged during the interviews indicating that emotion work may be the most pressing and multilayered phenomenon in the field. That is to say, my findings are too complex to satisfy my initial research question about the paradox between caring for some animals, while intentionally or unintentionally causing harm to others by engaging in socially acceptable cultural activities that are harmful to animals. All veterinarians interviewed have consistently expressed the lack of training on how to handle individual emotions that arise when being confronted with death on a daily basis to doing grief counseling for patients. Most veterinarians enter the profession because they love studying animal diseases and enjoy curing and caring for animals. What they did not anticipate and were not prepared for prior to starting a career in veterinary medicine, is the level of human interaction and how to handle complex feelings and emotions surrounding these situations.

I plan to continue interviewing veterinarians over the next month and will search for more themes as I transcribe the audio recorded interviews. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on professional socialization and emotion work in the medical fields. I will be presenting initial findings at the Sociologists for Women in Society Winter Meeting in St. Petersburg Florida in February. I also intend on expanding this work on the veterinary profession and related areas in a doctoral program starting fall of 2012. I hope to make a difference in the lives of professionals that work so intently on helping the voiceless of our society, the nonhuman animals.

JANE GOODALL FELLOWSHIP AWARDEE ESSAY**Wolf Management in Western Society**

By Michelle Lute (lutemich@msu.edu)

I would first like to thank the Animals and Society Section of the American Sociological Association for selecting me as a recipient of the Jane Goodall Fellowship and for the opportunity to showcase my work here. My PhD dissertation on the wolf-human relationship encompasses many issues germane to animals and society, namely conflict, symbolism, and challenges of modern conservation. How are we to treat animals and what considerations will ultimately prove most important? Ethics or economics? Science or politics? How we answer these questions has the potential to redefine our relationship with animals.

The history and current debate over wolf management in western society embodies these issues. Over the past several centuries, conflict has surrounded the human-wolf relationship as humans sought to push back wolves and the wilderness they symbolized to make way for civilization and agriculture. Throughout their historical range, wolves were eradicated as part of anti-predator campaigns. In 1995, reintroduction efforts commenced, and in keeping with history, these efforts were not without controversy. Outcry came from many who viewed wolves as threats to human safety and competition for resources while environmentalists lauded efforts to reintroduce a top predator to help restore vastly altered ecosystems. Over the past two decades contention continues, while wolves recolonize regions throughout North America and Europe. Much of this conflict occurs because people differ in their perceptions of wolves and what they symbolize. Many people view the wolf as a symbol of wilderness and beauty, of endangered species and now recovered ones. Yet others view the wolf as a harbinger of government intrusion against individual and states' rights. Wolf management has also been characterized by polar attitudinal extremes (i.e., pro- and anti-wolf) and conflict over reintroduction, control and potential recreational hunting and trapping. Various hunting practices (e.g., use of poisons, snares, leg hold traps and helicopters) have and will continue to be contentious because stakeholders disagree about ethical justifications for various control and hunting methods. Therefore, wolves provide an excellent case study for exploring and applying conservation ethics to management of a species whose successful, sustained recovery requires understanding a multitude of influences (i.e. social, political, ethical, economic issues).

Some scholars have proposed integrating empirical ethics into conservation to improve the robustness and sustainability of decision-making. Given that conservation ethics is in its infancy, the effectiveness of this approach is not totally known. My dissertation will contribute to the conservation ethics knowledge base using wolves and their management in Michigan. I will address various factors related to wolf management by integrating normative and affective dimensions with social identity theory to create a more comprehensive framework for understanding ethics of human-animal relationships. Deeper understanding about public attitudes, behaviors and the underlying ethics toward wolves in a post-recovery climate and factors influencing such attitudes can contribute to more resilient decision-making regarding wolves as well as other species with the potential to be delisted in the future. Quantifying such social dimensions can help inform how wildlife managers reconcile differences in stakeholder opinions in the face of scientific uncertainty, political debate, and extensive media coverage.

The wolf can also be thought of as a symbol of the best and worst aspects of humans' relations with nature. What we do to emphasize the better aspects and move past conflict toward a sustainable and ethical relationship with wolves will provide the groundwork for sustainable coexistence with many wildlife species. To move past conflict and find an acceptable way to live with wolves, reasoned interests that address the reality of wolf recovery must replace special interests. Such an effort would constitute real success and serve as the precedent for other contentious wildlife issues.

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American Sociological Association

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