



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

SLUkurs

Syllabus

PVG0028 Animal ethics, 4.5 credits

Syllabus approved

2015-05-06

Subjects

Animal Science

Education cycle

Third cycle

Grading scale

Pass / Failed

The requirements for attaining different grades are described in the course assessment criteria which are contained in a supplement to the course syllabus. Current information on assessment criteria shall be made available at the start of the course.

Language

English

Prior knowledge

Admitted to a postgraduate program in animal science, biology, veterinary medicine, food science, nutrition, medicine, nursing, or a related subject, or to a residency program in veterinary medicine.

Objective, including learning outcomes

After the course the students will be able to:

- Detect, describe and develop an ethical discernment of ethically relevant aspects of animal use in society in general, and in the own doctoral work.
- Distinguish between ethics and legislation, and identify implicit ethical norms in regulations.
- Identify elements in solid argumentation, including the role of emotions, facts and ethical norms
- Explain the ethical relevance of solid science in relation to use of animals in research.
- Explain the relation between animal science and animal ethics.
- Describe and use a number of normative ethical theories (e.g. utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, relational ethics) on issues such as livestock production, veterinary medicine and/or care taking, or interaction with companion animals.
- Formulate an ethical standpoint and argue for it in a concrete problem of animal ethics.

Content

The course is structured in two parts: section A plus an optional section B. Section A (3 ECTS) contains lectures and mandatory seminars giving an overview of differences between ethics and legislation, elements in ethical argumentation, relation between animal science and animal ethics, description of normative ethical theories used in animal ethics, and an introduction to relevant issues e.g. historical and societal overview of human-animal interaction, reasons for human use of animals, ethical aspects of this use in terms of un/necessary suffering, integrity, responsibilities, limits, interests, behaviour and needs (for both humans and animals). Aspects of participant's doctoral projects will be included, when applicable, in the elaboration of these issues. In order to 'learn' ethics practice in listening to other's opinions, formulating relevant questions and exercise in ethical discernment is necessary. Hence the course offers mandatory seminars for discussion of different themes where active participation is required to create a learning community over the course period. Further there will be a web-based task for discussion and interaction on a topical animal ethics issue.

Section B (1,5 ECTS) contains a small writing task preferably on an ethical issue in the participant's own project. If applicable, it might be structured to fit into the doctoral thesis (either in the introduction of the book, or in one of the scientific papers). This section starts with a seminar discussing possible topics, and continues with individual work while supervision is available from course teacher.

Requirements for examination

Section A: Attendance and active participation in at least 80% of the seminars and fulfilling the web-based interaction task.

Section B: approved individually written assignment on an animal ethics issue chosen after contact with teacher. Hereby the student is to show ethical discernment by mapping relevant aspects, capacity to formulate a solid argumentation for a certain position by showing acquaintance with core concepts mentioned above under 'Content', and, if useful, by using one or more normative ethical theories.

Additional information

Uppsala with possibility to use video link or Jabber to other SLU campuses

Responsible department

Department of Animal Environment and Health