



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

SLUkurs

Syllabus

PVG0037 Animal ethics, 4.5 credits

Syllabus approved

2017-05-10

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 natural or social science, or humanities or arts, or to a residence program in e.g. 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, and feminist relational ethics) on issues such as livestock production, veterinary medicine and/or care taking, or interaction with companion animals.
- Chose an ethically relevant issue in animal-human-interaction , formulate an ethical standpoint how to handle the issue, followed by a discussion of pro and contra arguments for this position.
- If applicable, elaborate on ethical aspects in her/his own doctoral project.

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).

Participant's doctoral projects will be presented and included 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.

Two guest lecturers will be invited to present their specific field of competence (The Link (human-animal abuse), and Critical animal studies).

Section B (1,5 ECTS) contains a 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) or a conference paper. This section starts with a seminar discussing possible topics, and continues with individual work while supervision is available from course teacher, and ends with presentations of the individual ethical elaborations during a seminar open to all course participants.

Requirements for examination

Section A: Attendance and active participation in at least 80% of the seminars and fulfilling the web-based interaction task, and to write two short individual assignments during the course period. Section B: approved individually written assignment on an animal ethics issue chosen after agreement 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

Possibility to participate through video link or the like for participants from other SLU campuses

Time plan:

There will be one lecture and one seminar (à 2 hrs) each week over a period of seven weeks. Please see attached schedule from 2015. In addition a seminar on how to write an essay is offered, and students give their presentations at a final seminar attended also by students taking the 3 ECTS-course in Animal ethics. If students agree, this seminar can be offered openly at SLU.

Responsible department

Department of Animal Environment and Health