

Animal Liberation Theory & Action Reading Group

Spring 2009, Stone Soup

Overview

The goal of this 8 week reading and discussion group is to develop a strong philosophical understanding of the animal rights movement. Animal rights is a topic that is particularly well-suited for a reading group because the movement is solidly grounded in philosophy and ethics. We'll discuss why animals matters, speciesism, where animal rights and the environmental movement intersect, the legal standing of animals, the corporate and government response to effective organizing, we'll talk about strategy, compare and contrast the diverse tactics used to advocate for animals and other topics.

Logistics

The group meets weekly from Feb 12, 2009 until Apr 2, 2009. We'll read 4 books and watch 2 films. Together these books, films and our discussion will paint a picture of this diverse social movement and place animal rights in the context of the social justice and environmental movement. Each meeting will have a free dinner and lots of good discussion.

To cover the cost of using the space and materials, we'll ask for small donations for Stone Soup. But no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

Meeting Structure

At the first meeting we'll have an overview of the animal rights movement and the literature that has made a big splash. We'll also choose which 4 books we will be reading. Attached is a book list.

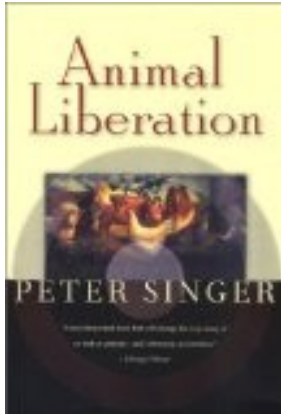
At of the remaining 7 meeting of the group we will have a somewhat structured discussion about the reading or film from the past week.

Animal Liberation Theory & Action Book List

Spring 2009

Animal Liberation by Peter Singer

The Book That Started A Revolution



Since its original publication in 1975, this groundbreaking work has awakened millions of concerned men and women to the shocking abuse of animals everywhere — inspiring a worldwide movement to eliminate much of the cruel and unnecessary laboratory animal experimentation of years past.

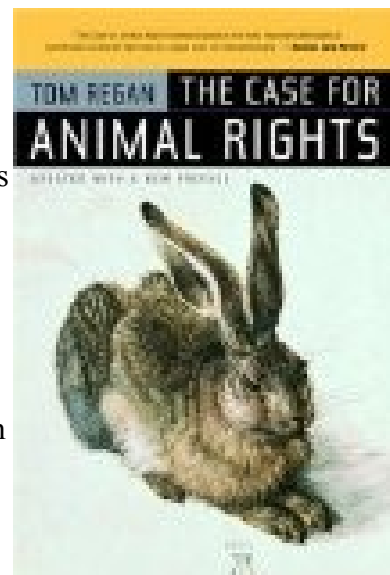
In this newly revised and expanded edition, author Peter Singer exposes the chilling realities of today’s “factory farms” and product-testing procedures — offering sound, humane solutions to what has become a profound environmental and social as well as moral issue. An important and persuasive appeal to conscience, fairness, decency and justice, *Animal Liberation* is essential reading for the supporter and the skeptic alike.

The Case for Animal Rights by Tom Regan

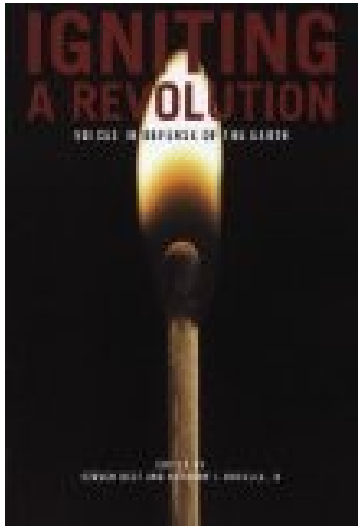
More than twenty years after its original publication, *The Case for Animal Rights* is an acknowledged classic of moral philosophy, and its author is recognized as the intellectual leader of the animal rights movement. In a new and fully considered preface, Regan responds to his critics and defends the book’s revolutionary position.

“Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Kant, Bentham, Mill: all thought seriously about the role of animals in our lives. But not until Tom Regan published *The Case for Animal Rights* did the world possess a theory of the rights of animals. When philosophy students come to this issue hundreds of years from now, they will read the greats in light of the arguments presented here.”—Gary L. Comstock, editor of *Life Science Ethics*

“Tom Regan’s now classic *Case For Animal Rights* blends careful argument with intense moral concern. For two decades, where Regan has been taken seriously, animals have been better off and people have become better persons. This new edition is a welcome sign of this influence continuing.”—Holmes Rolston, III, University Distinguished Professor, Colorado State University



Igniting a Revolution, Voices in Defense of the Earth



Global warming, acid rain, deforestation, air and water pollution are but a few of the overwhelming indicators that the earth's health is worsening. For decades, environmental groups have been resisting the destructive trends set by industry and government, but as the social and political climate has changed, popular protest movements have become less and less effective. As the earth's situation worsens, those opposing its destruction have out of necessity become increasingly militant. Corporate and federal properties have been vandalized, set ablaze—even bombed—and the government is meeting this new brand of environmental militance with an increasingly heavy hand.

Whether you're drawn by frustration with environmental strategies that, to date, have been ineffective against this growing ecological crisis, or simply by curiosity (Who are these people? Why are they doing this? What do they hope

to gain?), *Igniting a Revolution* offers a fascinating and compelling look at the emerging movement of revolutionary environmentalism.

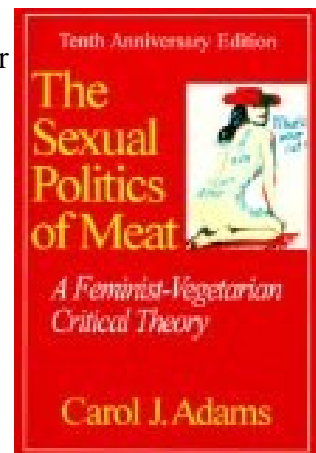
Includes essays by Marilyn Buck, Robert Jensen, John Zerzan, Ashanti Alston, Jeffrey "Free" Luers, Derrick Jensen, Ann Hansen, and a preface by Bron Taylor.

Animal Factories by Jim Mason

This book raised a storm of controversy upon its original publication in 1980. Now authors Mason and Singer have updated their animal rights classic for the 1990s. More than 50 black-and-white photographs.

The Sexual Politics of Meat by Carol Adams

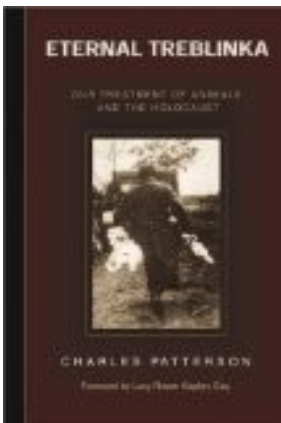
Many cultures equate meat-eating with virility, and in some societies women offer men the "best" (i.e., bloodiest) food at the expense of their own nutritional needs. Building upon these observations, feminist activist Adams detects intimate links between the slaughter of animals and violence directed against women. She ties the prevalence of a carnivorous diet to patriarchal attitudes, such as the idea that the end justifies the means, and the objectification of others. In *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley made her Creature a vegetarian, a point Adams relates to the Romantics' radical politics and to visionary novels by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Dorothy Bryant and others. Adams, who teaches at Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, sketches the alliance of vegetarianism and feminism in antivivisection activism, the suffrage movement and 20th-century pacifism. Her original, provocative book makes a major contribution to the debate on animal rights.



The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery by Marjorie Spiegel

Spiegel, executive director of the Institute for the Development of Earth Awareness, has revised her 1989 book to present an in-depth exploration of the similarities between the violence humans have wrought against other humans and our culture's treatment of animals. Using considerable scholarship, she makes a strong case for links between white oppression of black slaves and human oppression of animals. Her thesis is not that the oppressions suffered by black people and animals have taken identical forms but that they share the same relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. These comparisons include the brandings and auctions of both slaves and animals, the hideous means of transport (slave ships, truckloads of cattle), and the tearing of offspring from their mothers. Her illustrative juxtapositions are graphic, e.g., a photograph of a chimpanzee in a syphilis experiment beside a photo of a black man in the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. As Alice Walker writes in the preface, "This powerful book... will take a lifetime to forget." Chilling yet enlightening, this provocative book is vitally important in our efforts to understand the roots of individual and societal violence. It belongs in all libraries.

Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust



Isaac Bashevis Singer first suggested that "for the animals, it is an eternal Treblinka." Charles Patterson (*Anti-Semitism: The Road to the Holocaust and Beyond*) expands on that risky analogy in his latest book, *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*. Patterson hypothesizes a risky causal relationship, too, when he writes, "since violence begets violence, the enslavement of animals injected a higher level of domination and coercion into human history by creating oppressive hierarchical societies and unleashing large-scale warfare never seen before." Was human "enslavement" of animals the first step on the road to the Holocaust? Patterson doesn't say as much, but it's clear that he feels our inhumanity to the nonhuman is one of our greatest evils.

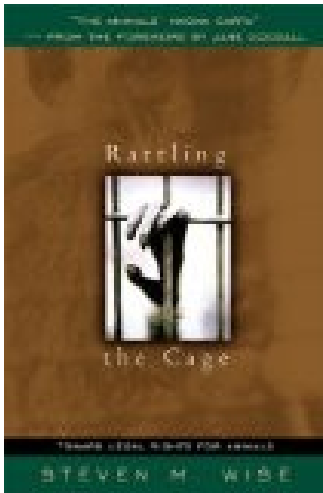
Free the Animals: The Story of the Animal Liberation Front by Ingrid Newkirk

The shattering account of one woman's struggle against the forces supporting the abuse of animals, *Free the Animals* is the best-selling and action-packed story of underground adventure, as well as an eloquent plea for the rights of nonhuman animals.

Free the Animals, with a foreword by Chrissie Hynde, is the story of Valerie, a 23-year-old police officer in Montgomery County, Maryland, whose world was turned upside down when she learned about the abuses of animals in laboratories. The book describes how this law-abiding woman came to challenge the system by taking direct action and examines why ordinary people are moved to do extraordinary things on behalf of animals.



Rattling the Cage: Toward Legal Rights for Animals by Steven M. Wise



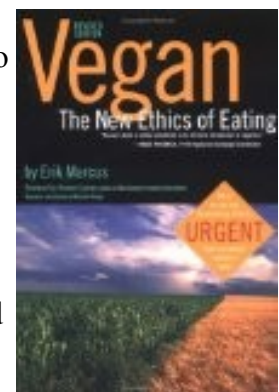
In a groundbreaking study, Harvard lecturer Wise argues that chimpanzees and bonobos (sometimes called “pygmy chimpanzees”) should be granted the status of legal personhood to guarantee the basic protections of bodily integrity and freedom from harm. A lawyer who lectures on animal rights law, Wise has spent 20 years fighting for the interests of nonhuman primates, dolphins, deer, cats, dogs, bald eagles, goats and other species. Documenting the treatment of our close primate cousins, which are routinely kidnapped for biomedical research, slaughtered for their meat and caged in roadside zoos, Wise notes that chimpanzees and bonobos are nearing annihilation. Their DNA structure is a 99% match to humans’, and our brain structures are incredibly similar. Furthermore, Wise cites studies of primate social life revealing that chimps exhibit keen sensitivity to others, conflict resolution, reciprocal exchanges and toolmaking abilities; “enculturated” chimps can add numerals and learn

abstract symbols.

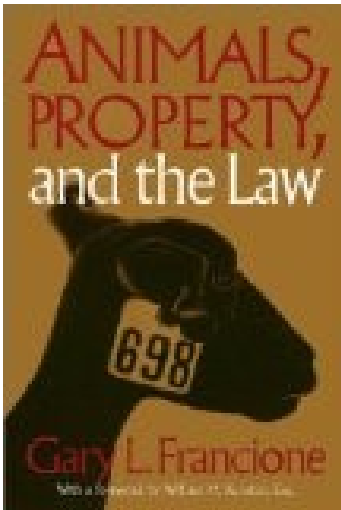
Indeed, an increasing number of biologists insist that chimpanzees and humans should be grouped in the same genus, Homo. Ten years ago this book would have been ridiculed or ignored, but the tide is turning: in 1996, the British government banned the use of great apes in biomedical research, and respected international law commentators now support whales’ legal right to life. Although one could argue that overlegislation is not the best way to combat society’s maltreatment of animals, Wise’s proposal to accord animals fundamental legal rights could some day be adopted (as chimpanzee expert Goodall believes it will be). This impassioned, closely argued brief presents a formidable challenge to the treatment of animals perpetrated by agribusiness, scientific research, the pharmaceutical industry, hunters, live-animal traders and others. It’s a clarion call for rethinking the animal-human relationship.

Vegan: The New Ethics of Eating by Erik Marcus

In this book, you will find the latest information about how what you eat affects your health, the environment, and the existence of the animals who share this planet. Vegan explains clearly how simple but significant the switch to an all-plant diet can be. Adding weight to marcus’s own arguments are in-depth discussions of ground-breaking work by these internationally respected experts: Heart specialist, Dean Ornish, M.D.; Nutrition scientist, T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D.; Weight loss expert, Terry Shintani, M.D.; Farm Sanctuary founders, Gene and Lorri Bauston; Vegetarian nutritionist, Suzanne Havala, R.D.; Population analysis, David Pimentel, Ph.D.; Mad Cow disease expert, Stephen Dealler, M.D.; Rangeland activist, Lynn Jacobs.



Animals, Property, and the Law by Gary L. Francione



“Pain is pain, irrespective of the race, sex, or species of the victim,” states William Kunstler in his foreword. This moral concern for the suffering of animals and their legal status is the basis for Gary L. Francione’s profound book, which asks, Why has the law failed to protect animals from exploitation?

Francione argues that the current legal standard of animal welfare does not and cannot establish fights for animals. As long as they are viewed as property, animals will be subject to suffering for the social and economic benefit of human beings.

Exploring every facet of this heated issue, Francione discusses the history of the treatment of animals, anticruelty statutes, vivisection, the Federal Animal Welfare Act, and specific cases such as the controversial injury of anaesthetized baboons at the University of Pennsylvania. He thoroughly documents the

paradoxical gap between our professed concern with humane treatment of animals and the overriding practice of abuse permitted by U.S. law.