



Brock
University

DEPARTMENT
OF SOCIOLOGY

**CRITICAL
ANIMAL
STUDIES**

Concentration in Critical Animal Studies, Department of Sociology

The Concentration in Critical Animal Studies (CAS) explores the role of animals in human societies through a sociological lens. This area of study draws on multidisciplinary research to develop new ways of thinking about human-animal relationships, animal cultures, representation, and ethics. Critical Animal Studies scrutinizes the boundaries between humans and other animals, challenges discrimination and exploitation in a variety of forms, and inspires positive social change. Graduates of the CAS Concentration apply their education in NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), legal fields, social services, media, the natural and social sciences, and a range of other exciting employment milieus.

Students in the Critical Animal Studies (CAS) Concentration...

- Investigate the relationships between animal issues and social justice
- Explore how economic, social, and cultural forces shape the treatment of animals
- Examine the status of animals in history and cross-culturally
- Study the emotional, social, and cultural lives of animals
- Learn about humane philosophies and ethics
- Think critically about animal practices and associated ideologies
- Develop research skills in Critical Animal Studies and Sociology more generally
- Discover how to advocate and improve the treatment of animals

Requirements

Students outside of the Concentration can and are encouraged to take CAS courses as electives; however, the Concentration in Critical Animal Studies (CAS), is only an option for the Honours Sociology majors. Once admitted as a Sociology major, students must first achieve 70% in SOCI 1F90 (required first year Introduction to Sociology) to declare the Concentration at the end of year one. In years two, three, and four, students take Critical Animal Studies courses as elective Sociology courses alongside required Sociology courses, including theory, research methods, and statistics. These courses are part of a (twenty-credit) four-year Sociology Honours degree.

Critical Animal Studies Courses

Courses critically examine the economic, ethical, and sociological aspects of human-animal relations. These courses offer a social justice approach to animal ethics and politics, informed by political economy, as well as anti-racist, decolonial, and feminist analyses. Collectively, the courses address the exploitation of animals within the context of interlocking systems of oppression.

For example, in CAS courses, students explore the institutional exploitation of animals in circuses, rodeos, zoos and laboratories. They investigate animal objectification and commodification, and interrogate contradictory philosophical positions that shape society's valuation of some animals over others. Courses on animals and the law examine the legal status of animals and ways to improve their protection. Other courses analyze visual representations of animals, asking how these images affect our treatment of them. By challenging the status quo, Critical Animal Studies calls for fundamental transformations of our epistemological, moral, and political universes.

Example Critical Animal Studies Courses:

2nd Year Level – Animals and Human Society: This required course examines the relationships between animals and human societies from various theoretical perspectives. Topics may include cultural attitudes, symbolism, social meanings, animal advocacy, animals as food, entertainment, and experimental subjects. Sociology students select additional electives from the following options:

Animals at Work
Sociology of Eco-Terrorism
Sociology of Dogs and Other Canids
Critical Animal Studies

Animals and the Law (3rd & 4th year levels)
Animals in Cross-Cultural Perspective
Sociology of Wildlife
Animals and Human Societies (4th year level)

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Facebook: Critical Animal Studies (Brock University)

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