

COURSE TITLE	Animals in Education
Instructor	Connie Russell, PhD
Office Hours	Meetings by appointment (in person in BL 1026, by phone at 807-343-8049, or via Skype)
Email	crussell@lakeheadu.ca

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

A critical examination of the various ways we learn about other animals and our relationships with them in various educational contexts, drawing on insights from critical animal studies, human-animal studies, posthumanism, ecofeminism, environmental philosophy, and intersectionality studies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

An examination of how other animals feature in formal and informal education opens up larger questions about how we, as humans, relate to other animals, other life, and the more-than-human in general. These questions have been of particular concern to environmental, humane, and interspecies educators, but should be considered by all educators. In this course, it is intended that you will:

- Take control of your own learning and personalize a course of study that is authentic and aids your own professional and personal growth. What are you hoping to learn and do in this course, and beyond?
- Participate actively, listen fully, and be open to learning with and from peers so that we can create a learning environment in which we can all contribute insights from our professional and personal experiences.
- Challenge yourself as a learner and as an educator, within the course itself and beyond.
- Develop a breadth and depth of understanding of how and why various ideas about human/animal relations have been taken up, or could be taken up, in education.
- Critically examine the underlying assumptions of different approaches to animal-focused education, including diverse and contested positions on human/animal relationships, the ways in which anthropocentrism and speciesism intersects with racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and sizeism, and how these assumptions impact educational theories, practices, and research.
- Identify those approaches that resonate most strongly with your own beliefs, values, and contexts, and why.
- Articulate a personal and/or professional vision for your own future that could contribute to a world where all humans, all life, and the land flourish.

COURSE READINGS

In order to ensure a diversity of perspectives, we will use readings by many different authors as well as videos and other media (see the detailed schedule that begins on page 3). **These will be made available to you on D2L or, when a URL is listed, they can be accessed for free via that link.** Many students report that printing out and marking up readings aids their recall and reflection and ultimately deepens their understanding. However you go about it, I urge you to make a significant investment in the readings in order to make the most of the course. Incorporating insights from the readings into class activities and assignments will make both of these richer. Further, I also encourage you to “read the world” (as Paulo Freire suggested) by paying attention to what it is telling you about education and our relationship with other animals. I also encourage you to think and feel through the ways in which these issues matter in your own life. These additional “readings” will help ground your inquiries and our class discussions.

OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. Animal Autobiography	10%	September 12
2. Reading Responses	30%	Weekly
3. Online Contributions	20%	Weekly
4. Final Assignment	40%	December 9 (proposal due no later than October 17)

* Detailed description of evaluation and assignments begins on page 6

APPROACH TO ONLINE LEARNING

This is an asynchronous web-based course using Lakehead's D2L system. Like you, I will be juggling various responsibilities each day, but will try to respond to queries as soon as I am available, ideally within 24-48 hours. Please note that generally I will *not* be online in the evenings or on weekends. I am also more than happy to meet with you on the phone or by Skype; email me if you would like to set up an appointment.

As the instructor, I take inspiration from critical pedagogy and see my role as a facilitator rather than a "sage on the stage." While I have substantial expertise of my own to share given I have been working in the field for over 25 years, I recognize that you too have much to offer given your own unique experiences and academic, professional, and personal backgrounds. As such, I do not intend to dominate discussions but will comment in response to online postings where appropriate, just as I do in face-to-face classroom discussions. Further, this is a graduate course and I expect you to be self-directed learners.

Weekly engagement is absolutely required. Participation is about your contributions to the social and intellectual dynamic of the group. To make the most of online discussions, it is key that you:

- listen attentively and fully;
- practice compassion and kindness and be honest and authentic;
- respect diversity so that we can identify both common ground and differences, uncover contradictions, and illuminate separate truths in different positions;
- be patient since separate and diverse truths can take time to emerge;
- take ownership, that is, speak for yourself, out of your own experiences, not what you perceive of others;
- be open to new ideas and to exploring one's own beliefs and values;
- cultivate generosity and encouragement, not competitiveness.

Just as in a traditional face-to-face class of adult learners, we are all responsible for the learning environment that we create for ourselves and for each other. Treat others respectfully and articulate yourself in a way that is engaged and passionate but not obnoxious, insulting, or dominating. The foundational standard is to behave in a professional and civil manner. If you are in doubt, do not post it. As the instructor, I reserve the right to remove any postings I deem inappropriate, unprofessional, or otherwise distracting from the course.

TIME MANAGEMENT

The course week runs from Monday morning until Friday noon. Consequently, the assignments and your first weekly Online Contribution are each due by 10:00 am on Mondays. Each week will open on Saturday morning for those who wish to submit in advance and will close each Friday at noon.

In my experience, a typical week in an on-campus 12-week graduate course involves us spending 3 hours together in a classroom and you devoting 7-10 hours to reading and completing assignments. Given the nature of asynchronous online learning, it can be tempting to procrastinate and devote insufficient time to a course or, conversely, to allow an online course to gobble up too much of your time. To avoid either extreme, I advise planning each week to involve approximately 7-10 hours of offline preparation (i.e., completing readings and weekly assignments) and 3 hours of online activity (i.e., posting and reading and responding to others' posts) spread over the week. (The final paper will require additional time.) To make this course manageable for everyone, I also urge you to focus on the **quality** rather than the **quantity** of your posts. (Please see page 8 for more detail on expectations for Online Contributions.)

Deadlines are an unavoidable part of being a professional and this course is no exception. Please avoid any inclination to procrastinate. The Animal Autobiography, Reading Responses, and Online Contributions will **not** be accepted late because these are required for active participation in course discussions and doing so would give procrastinators an unfair advantage. If there are genuine reasons why the Final Assignment cannot be submitted on the due date, please email me well before the due date; there will be a penalty of 5% per day except in exceptional circumstances. **The last date to drop the course is November 7.** By then, you should have a sense of how you are faring in the course.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (SEPTEMBER 6- 9): INTRODUCTIONS TO THE COURSE AND EACH OTHER

Read:

- The **entire** syllabus - pay attention to detail, please! ☺

Explore:

- The D2L site. Make sure you know where to find the readings and other resources, where weekly discussions occur, and where to submit assignments.

WEEK 2 (SEPTEMBER 12-16): HUMANS AND OTHER ANIMALS

View:

- Gary Larson, *The Far Side: "And for the rest of his life, the young reptile suffered deep emotional scars"*
- Vegan Talk, *Putting Animals in Their Place* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwm3l_pXlmo&feature=youtu.be

Read:

- Plumwood, V. (1999). Being prey. In D. Rothenberg & M. Ulvaeus (Eds.), *The new earth reader: The best of Terra Nova* (pp. 76-92). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Jensen, D. (2013). Against forgetting. *Orion*. <http://www.derrickjensen.org/2013/07/against-forgetting/>
- Caduto, M., & Bruchac, J. (1991). All our relations: Of humans and animals. In *Keepers of the animals* (pp. 3-10). Saskatoon, SK: Fifth House.
- Dolby, N. (2015). Flint's story: Education and justice for animals. A commentary on the hidden curriculum of animals in education. *Teachers' College Record Online*.
- Rakestraw, M. (2013). *Whom do you pet and whom do you eat?* Retrieved from <http://humaneeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/WhomPet2013.pdf>

WEEK 3 (SEPTEMBER 19-23): SITUATING ANIMAL-FOCUSED EDUCATION

View:

- Zoe Weil, *Extending Our Circle of Compassion* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-W3xi2jMYI>

Read:

- Bone, J. (2013). The animal as fourth educator: A literature review of animals and young children in pedagogical relationships. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 38(2), 57-64.
- Spanning, R. (2016). Animals in environmental education research. *Environmental Education Research*. DOI: 10.1080/13504622.2016.1188058
- Andrzejewski, J., Pedersen, H., & Wicklund, F. (2009). Interspecies education for humans, animals, and the earth. *Social justice, peace, and environmental education: Transformative standards* (pp. 136-154). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Corman, L., & Vandrovová, T. (2014). Radical humility: Toward a more holistic critical animal studies pedagogy. In A. Nocella II, J. Sorenson, K. Socha, & A. Matsuoka (Eds.) *Defining critical animal studies: An introduction to an intersectional social justice approach to animal liberation* (pp. 135-157). New York: Peter Lang.

WEEK 4 (SEPTEMBER 26-30): COMPANION ANIMALS

Read:

- Walsh, F. (2009). Human-animal bonds I: The relational significance of companion animals. *Family Process*, 48(4), 462-480.
- Russell, J. (2016). "I remember everything": Children, companion animals, and a relational pedagogy of remembrance. In M. DeMello (Ed.), *Mourning animals: Rituals and practices surrounding animal death*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.
- Kuhl, G. (2011). Human-sled dog relations: What can we learn from the stories and experiences of mushers? *Society and Animals*, 19(1), 22-37.
- Hammerly, T., & DuMont, B. (2012). The environmental impact of pets. *Green Teacher*, 95, 25-28. [The entire issue is on D2L, scroll down to the article.]

•Krause, P. (2013). *Too many kittens*. Retrieved from <http://humaneeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/TooKittens2013.pdf>

WEEK 5 (OCTOBER 3-7): COMMON AND FAMILIAR ANIMALS

Listen:

•Robbie Robertson, *Twisted Hair* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSB4amfJYyE> [Listen and then read this excerpt of an interview with the featured opera singer, Bonnie Jo Hunt: <http://hearingvoices.com/transcript.php?fID=142>]

View:

•Gary Larson, *The Far Side: "Free the Mayonnaise Jar 7"*

•Rachel Carson & Zen Pencils, *The Importance of Maintaining a Sense of Wonder and Excitement*

<http://www.filmsforaction.org/articles/the-importance-of-instilling-children-with-a-sense-of-wonder-and-excitement/>

Read:

•Fawcett, L. (2014). Kinship imaginaries: Children's stories of wild friendships, fear, and freedom. In G. Marvin & S. McHugh (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of human-animal studies* (pp. 259-274). New York, NY: Routledge.

•Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., & Nxumalo, F. (2015). Unruly raccoons and troubled educators: Nature/culture divides in a childcare center. *Environmental Humanities*, 7, 151-168.

•Caduto, M., & Bruchac, J. (1991). Why possum has a naked tail. In *Keepers of the animals* (pp. 173-188). Saskatoon, SK: Fifth House.

•Guyton, J., & Connington, L. (2013). Connecting with bugs. *Green Teacher*, 100, 3-6. [The entire issue is on D2L, scroll down to the article.]

•Russell, C.L. (2003). Park identities. *Pathways: Ontario Journal of Outdoor Education*, 15(1), 28. [The entire issue is on D2L, scroll down to the article.]

READING WEEK: OCTOBER 10-14

WEEK 6 (OCTOBER 17-21): DISSECTION

Read:

•Oakley, J. (2009). Under the knife: Animal dissection as a contested school science activity. *Journal for Activist Science & Technology Education*, 1(2), 59-67.

•Oakley, J. (2013). 'I didn't feel right about animal dissection': Student objectors share their science class experiences. *Society and Animals*, 21, 360-378.

•Selby, D. (1995). Dissecting dissection. In *Earthkind: A teachers' handbook on humane education* (pp.266-268). Oakhill, UK: Trentham.

View:

•PETA, *Beyond Dissection: Digital Frog 2.5* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mb1mgSOaG6I>

WEEK 7 (OCTOBER 24-28): ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM

View:

•Mountain Lake PBS, *Spotlight: Therapy Dog for Reading* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rve1DukX3Mo>

•Buzz 60, *Kids Reading Books to Shelter Dogs Is Helping Them Get Adopted*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEU2QgIEZmw>

Read:

•Daly, B., & Suggs, S. (2010). Teachers' experiences with humane education and animals in the elementary classroom. *Journal of Moral Education*, 39(1), 101-112.

•Hatch, A. (2007). The view from all fours: A look at an animal-assisted activity program from the animals' perspective. *Anthrozoos*, 20(1), 37-50.

•Lyman, K. (2014). Lessons from a garden spider: How Charlotte transformed my classroom. In B. Bigelow & T. Swinehart

(Eds.), *A people's curriculum for the earth* (pp. 48-51). Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

•Stone, R. (2015). Teaching empathy through animals. *Green Teacher*, 107, 38-40. [The entire issue is on D2L, scroll down to the article.]

WEEK 8 (OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 4): FOOD ANIMALS

View:

- Gary Larson, *The Far Side*: "Framer Brown froze in his tracks..."
- Gary Larson, *The Far Side*: "That was incredible..."

Read:

- Harper, A. B. (2016). Sistolot vegan lunchbox: Lessons about gender, sexual orientation, and eating animals. <http://www.sistahvegan.com/2016/02/17/sistolot-vegan-lunchbox-lessons-about-gender-sexual-orientation-and-eating-animals/>
- Rowe, B., & Rocha, S. (2015). School lunch is not a meal: Posthuman eating as folk phenomenology. *Educational Studies*, 51(6), 482-496.
- Russell, C., & Semenko, K. (2016). We take "cow" as a compliment: Fattening humane, environmental, and social justice education. In E. Cameron & C. Russell (Eds.), *The fat pedagogy reader: Challenging weight-based oppression through critical education* (pp. 211-220). New York: Peter Lang.
- Pontius, J. B., Greenwood, D. A., Ryan, J. L., & Greenwood, E. A. (2013). Hunting for ecological learning. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 18, 80-95.
- Canadian Wildlife Federation. (2001). What did your lunch cost wildlife? In *Project Wild activity guide* (pp. 335-336). Ottawa: Canadian Wildlife Federation.

WEEK 9 (NOVEMBER 7-11): CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND MEDIA

Read:

- Bell, A., & Russell, C. (1999). Life ties: Disrupting anthropocentrism in language arts education. In J. Robertson (Ed.), *Teaching for a tolerant world: Grades K-6 essays and resources* (pp. 68-89). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Timmerman, N., & Ostertag, J. (2012). Too many monkeys jumping in their heads: Animal lessons within young children's media. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 16, 59-75.
- Burke-Hicks, B. (2013). *Word power*. Retrieved from <http://humaneeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/WordPower2013.pdf>
- Canadian Wildlife Federation. (2001). And the wolf wore shoes. In *Project Wild activity guide* (p. 254). Ottawa: Canadian Wildlife Federation.
- Selby, D. (1995). Big bad wolves. In *Earthkind: A teachers' handbook on humane education* (pp. 125-127). Oakhill, UK: Trentham.

WEEK 10 (NOVEMBER 14-18): WILD AND CAPTIVE ANIMALS

View:

- Nick Park, *Creature Comforts* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCOWE0EiCyo> [for background information on the source of the voices in this short, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creature_Comforts]
- Bill Watterson, *Calvin & Hobbes*: "Mom wants to know if we'd like to go to the zoo today."
- Gary Larson, *The Far Side*: "Drive, George, drive!"

Read:

- Bell, A. C., Russell, C. L., & Plotkin, R. (1998). Environmental learning and the study of extinction. *Journal of Environmental Education*, 29(2), 4-10.
- Lloro-Bidart, T., & Russell, C. (in press). Learning science in aquariums and on whalewatching boats: The hidden curriculum of the deployment of other animals. In M. Mueller, D. J. Tippins, & A. J. Stewart (Eds.), *Animals and science education*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Selby, D. (1995). Zoo diamond ranking. In *Earthkind: A teachers' handbook on humane education* (pp. 241-243). Oakhill, UK: Trentham.
- Cloues, R. (2014). Polar bears on Mission Street: 4th graders take on climate change. In B. Bigelow & T. Swinehart (Eds.), *A people's curriculum for the earth* (pp. 157-160). Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

WEEK 11 (NOVEMBER 21-25): PUBLIC PEDAGOGY

View:

- Bored Panda, *22+ Shocking Illustrations Reveal How Animals Feel By Switching Them With Humans*
<http://www.boredpanda.com/satirical-animal-rights-illustrations-parallel-universe/> [warning: some of the images are gruesome]

Read:

- McKenzie, M., Russell, C., Fawcett, L., & Timmerman, N. (2010). Popular media, intersubjective learning, and cultural production. In R. Stevenson & J. Dillon (Eds.), *Environmental education: Learning, culture and agency* (pp.147-164). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Newman, L. (2015). The effects of *The Cove* and *Bold Native* on audience attitudes towards animals. *Animal Studies Journal*, 4(1), 77-98.
- Freeman, C., Bekoff, M., & Bexell, S. M. (2011). Giving voice to the “voiceless”: Incorporating nonhuman animal perspectives as journalistic sources. *Journalism Studies*, 12(5), 590-607.
- Canadian Wildlife Federation. (2001). Does wildlife sell cigarettes? In *Project Wild activity guide* (pp. 270-271). Ottawa: Canadian Wildlife Federation.

WEEK 12 (NOVEMBER 28-DEC 2): LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

View:

- Zoe Weil, *The World Becomes What You Teach* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5HEV96duY>

Read:

- Selby, D. (1995). Humane futures. In *Earthkind: A teachers' handbook on humane education* (pp. 289-306). Oakhill, UK: Trentham.

EVALUATION

Alternative grading practices are encouraged in this course! Please ponder the alternatives below and let me know by **September 12** if you would like to give one a try. Many MEd students have done so in the past to free themselves from the tyranny of “what did I get?” (I can provide readings on this topic if you would like.) Some possibilities include (but are not limited to):

- a) Comments only: I give you feedback via qualitative comments on your work with no grades recorded on your work to distract you from your learning. (I would let you know if I was giving you anything below B+ (75%) if you wanted.)
- b) Contracted grade: We agree on a grade you want to aim for. If you are out of close range of it, I return your work for improvement until you meet that grade (within limits because I won't have time to mark multiple iterations). If you struggle to meet your initial target, we would negotiate a new grade.
- c) Class mark: Since the success of the class depends on all members, you could choose as a group to have class members share the same grade (provided it is equitable and everyone contributes fully).

In general, evaluations in this course will be based on depth of engagement with the course questions, readings, and discussions, lucidity of thought, intellectual curiosity, scholarly generosity, self-reflexiveness, critical and creative thinking, and quality of writing. Here is how I interpret letter grades when assessing MEd work:

	Letter Grade	Percentage Range
<i>Exceptional Work:</i> Demonstrates exceptional comprehension, exceptional depth of inquiry and originality of thought, deep self-reflexivity, and exceptional critical and creative thinking. Always makes highly insightful and thought-provoking connections to contemporary and/or historical events and to ideas beyond the course. Writing or representation is of such quality that it is nearing readiness for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals.	A+	90-100

<i>Outstanding Work:</i> Demonstrates outstanding comprehension and significant depth of inquiry. Consistently applies a very high level of critical scrutiny to texts and discussions and offers highly original and creative insights. Demonstrates outstanding self-reflexivity and critically evaluates one's own thinking and learning processes. Consistently makes highly insightful and thought-provoking connections to contemporary and/or historical events and to ideas beyond the course. Consistently excellent writing/ representation.	A	85-89
<i>Excellent Work:</i> Demonstrates excellent comprehension and significant depth of inquiry. Consistently applies a high level of critical scrutiny to texts and discussions and offers original and often creative insights. Demonstrates a strong degree of personal engagement and critically evaluates one's own thinking and learning processes. Consistently makes insightful connections to contemporary and/or historical events and to ideas beyond the course. Consistently excellent writing/representation.	A-	80-84
<i>Very Good Work:</i> Demonstrates solid comprehension and very good depth of inquiry. Frequently applies a high level of critical scrutiny to course readings and discussions and offers thoughtful insights. Frequently makes insightful connections to contemporary and/or historical events and to ideas beyond the course. Solid evidence of critical reflection, questioning, and creativity. Very good writing/representation.	B+	77-79
<i>Satisfactory Work:</i> Demonstrates solid comprehension of course readings and shows sufficient depth of inquiry. Regularly applies critical scrutiny to course readings and discussions and offers thoughtful insights. Regularly makes insightful connections to contemporary and/or historical events and to ideas beyond the course. Good evidence of critical reflection, questioning, and creativity. Good writing/representation.	B	74-76
<i>Just Satisfactory Work:</i> Demonstrates good comprehension of course readings and shows sufficient depth of inquiry. Applies sufficient critical scrutiny to course readings and discussions and offers some thoughtful insights. Occasionally makes insightful connections to contemporary and/or historical events and to ideas beyond the course. Good evidence of critical reflection, questioning, and creativity. Satisfactory writing/representation.	B-	70-73
<i>Unsatisfactory Work:</i> Demonstrates spotty comprehension of course readings. Shows limited depth of inquiry. Applies minimal critical scrutiny to course readings and discussions. Articulates few original or critical insights. Makes basic connections to contemporary and/or historical events. Some evidence of going beyond the assigned readings. Some evidence of critical reflection and questioning. Writing/representation unclear or not at the level required for MEd-level work.	C+ or lower	Below 70

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. ANIMAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Due Monday, September 12 by 10:00 am

10%

How did other animals feature in your elementary, secondary, or post-secondary education? How did other animals feature in your childhood/youth more generally? Is there a significant experience in childhood or adulthood with another animal that fostered your desire to learn more about human relationships with other animals? If so, when and where did they occur? Was this experience "facilitated" by an adult (parent, teacher, mentor)? Are there particular animals who stand out in your memory as being important? If so, how did the relationship with that particular animal influence who you are today? Remember that positive, negative, and contradictory experiences can all have profound impacts. This assignment helps me to get acquainted with each of you as well as offers me a glimpse of where we, as a class, may be starting. I also hope that this activity provides you with an opportunity to reflect on your own personal and educational experiences from which to ground your inquiries in this course. **Maximum length: 1000 words.** Images or other forms of representation are welcome too. Evaluation will be based particularly on quality of writing/representation, attention to detail, and depth of engagement.

2. READING RESPONSES (10 in total)

Due each Monday in Weeks 2-11 by 10:00 am

30%

Section One: Summarize the overall gist of the week's readings. First, what is the *ostensible meaning* of each reading? That is, what is the primary claim each author is making, and what courses of action are being suggested, either explicitly or implicitly? Are all the week's authors communicating similar messages? Second, what are the *assumptions* underlying the authors' arguments and/or what *theories* underpin their positions? **Maximum for this section: 250 words.**

Section Two: Is there something in the week's readings that especially appealed to you, intrigued you, moved you, or annoyed you? How might your *positionality* (e.g., your identity, context, academic or professional background) have influenced this response, and why is that important? Do not comment on all the readings in this section nor on everything that drew your attention; rather, develop one thought in some depth. **Maximum for this section: 250 words.**

You do not need to cite the particular week's readings. If you make connections to other sources, please reference them following APA 6th.

These weekly reading responses provide me with evidence that you have read and reflected on the readings, including how they connect (or not) to your own experiences. These responses also help ensure that everyone can actively participate in online discussion of the readings each week since they likely will inform some of your contributions. **Please respect the maximum total word length of 500 words. Doing so while still conveying something of substance is a challenging task, but honing your skill at being precise and concise in your writing is a highly worthwhile endeavour.** Evaluation will be based on quality of writing, depth of engagement, originality, and evidence of critical analysis and self-reflexivity.

3. ONLINE CONTRIBUTIONS

First Postings due by 10:00 am Mondays each week

20%

As noted on page 2, ongoing active participation is a requirement of this course. This means posting your own thoughts about the weekly topics, commenting on others' ideas, and responding to questions about your own postings. We are covering contentious issues in this course and emotions can run high. **In all discussions, please be supportive of, and generous with, your colleagues, but not to the extent that you avoid pointing out flaws in their comments, arguments, understanding, research, and so on. Now is an ideal time to hone your skills at being "critical friends."**

Consider your time commitment to online discussions to be critical to your success as a learner as well as to the success of the course. You are expected to participate throughout the week; do not clump your postings all together, especially at the end of the discussion period. I anticipate that the bulk of our discussion will occur between Monday morning and Thursday evening. Our discussions will be organized by readings and other assigned content (i.e., video, comic, song, classroom activity idea). I expect you to read/listen/watch all content and thus to be able to jump into conversations in any thread. In the interests of keeping everyone's workload manageable, however, you can choose to hone in on threads that particularly interest you. You must post on at least two different **readings** on each theme, but are welcome to post on more as well as on the other content (videos, etc.) if desired. **Your initial posting should be no more than 200 words and be precise, concise, and clear.** Ensuing discussion will build on these initial postings and should focus not only on places of convergence but also divergence. You will be required to comment at least 2 other times each week; **additional posts should generally be no more than 50 words.** Some weeks I will facilitate an additional thread to generate further discussion (e.g., sharing insights from autobiography and final assignments); I will provide specific directions when I post these.

To ensure that this course does not become overwhelming for all of us, it is vital that you emphasize **quality** rather than **quantity** when posting. While it is relatively easy to post numerous, non-substantive comments (e.g., "I really like what Jane Doe said"), doing so will only generate tons of postings that we will all have to wade through and will not deepen our understanding. It is thus important that you make the effort to *only* post insightful, meaningful comments that move the discussion forward. Please ensure that you post **substantive** comments that demonstrate investment of thought, research, reflection, and critical analysis. For example, a meaningful post might:

- Clarify the ostensible meaning of course readings
- Suggest a different interpretation of the readings
- Encourage perspective-taking by illustrating how others might react to the readings or a colleague's response
- Pose a critical question
- Clarify the positionality of authors by identifying common ground and/or differences amongst authors
- Identify the assumptions and theoretical frameworks underlying each author's arguments
- Provide concrete examples of theoretical ideas, perhaps grounded in your own professional or personal experience
- Identify possible implications (e.g., pedagogical, ethical, social, environmental) of particular ideas
- Make connections between issues being discussed

- Offer an intersectional analysis that makes clear the connections between relevant animal, environmental, and social justice issues
- Engage in intertextuality by suggesting other relevant readings that might help extend understanding of the issues
- Identify practical ways in which ideas from the course are currently being embodied (e.g., in curriculum, teaching activities, pedagogical practices, films, art, websites, newspaper articles, activist projects, etc.), or propose your own creative suggestions for applying these ideas in formal or informal learning contexts.

Evaluation of your online contributions will be based on both the **timeliness** and the **quality** of your postings. I will provide you with feedback at the halfway mark (i.e., in Week 7).

4. FINAL ASSIGNMENT

Proposal due no later than October 17 at 10:00 am

Final Assignment due December 9 by 10:00 am

40%

Choose **one** of the following assignments or propose something else. To help you make this decision, ponder what you would like to learn more about and how you want to demonstrate that learning.

You must submit a maximum 200-word proposal of what you intend to do for your final assignment by October 17. This proposal should include a description of the proposed work and list at least 5 relevant scholarly articles, books, or book chapters beyond the course readings that will inform your work.

Option 1: Academic Essay

Focus on a topic related to animals in education that particularly interests you. This may be an area that you would like to pursue in an MEd thesis or portfolio or it may be a topic that you wish to explore for scholarly, professional, or personal reasons. You will need to formulate a well-organized and articulated argument and draw from both the course readings and other scholarship to support your position. **Maximum length: 3000 words.**

Option 2: Portfolio

Create a portfolio of 2-4 pieces related to course ideas, one of which must be a short academic paper. (A proposal of tasks and weighting must be submitted by October 17 and approved.) Pieces could include two or more of the following:

- one or two short academic papers about specific issues related to the course content (1500 words each) that draw on readings both from the course and beyond the course
- a paper suitable for publication in a teachers' journal such as *Green Teacher* (1000 words)
- a review of a relevant book or other teaching resource that would be suitable for publication in an academic or teachers' journal (500 words)
- a detailed description of a proposed workshop, including a theoretical and pedagogical rationale (500 words)
- a poem, a drawing, a comic strip, or other creative form of representation of a course idea.

This is not an exhaustive list so if you have other ideas, pitch them to me.

Total maximum length: 3000 words.

Option 3: Pitch Another Idea

If you have another suggestion for a final assignment that would be useful to you, pitch it to me. Make clear what learner outcomes would be met and how they would be demonstrated, and we'll go from there.

Whatever option you choose, please use APA 6th as your style guide and do not exceed the **maximum of 3000 words**; it is important to be precise and concise while saying something of substance. Evaluation will be based particularly on quality of writing, depth of engagement with course ideas, originality, demonstration of critical analysis and synthesis, and use of appropriate academic references both including and beyond course readings.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The 6th edition of APA's Publication Manual (2010) is available in the library. Please note that some websites offer examples of APA style such as: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Plagiarism Tutorials available here: [Acadia University](#); [Indiana University](#)

Graduate Education Library Guide: <http://libguides.lakeheadu.ca/content.php?pid=348763>

An online tutorial on Library Search Skills is available on this page: <http://library.lakeheadu.ca/?pg=1057>

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY POLICIES

INCOMPLETE STANDING (University Regulation, V Standing)

Learners are responsible for reviewing and becoming familiar with the regulations related to Incomplete Standing. Click [this link](#) and scroll down to **V Standing** to review the policy.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT (University Regulation, IX Academic Misconduct)

Learners are responsible for reviewing and becoming familiar with the regulations related to Academic Misconduct. Click [this link](#) and scroll down to **IX Academic Misconduct** to review the policy.

TIMELY FEEDBACK (University Regulation, XII Timely Feedback)

Review the [regulations on timely feedback](#) by scrolling down to **XII Timely Feedback**, and ensure that you are familiar with the [academic withdrawal dates](#) for this course.