2012

Animal Cognition, the Importance of Touch, and the CIT

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ANIMAL COGNITION, THE IMPORTANCE OF TOUCH, AND THE CIT

Deirdre Yeater
Goals

- Originally planned to create a 2-3 day learning module of lesson plans & in-class discussions for PSCC103.
- Currently, have created 5 in class discussions comparing human and non-human species, particularly dolphins, with an emphasis on the CIT and the importance of touch.
- Plan to use part of the lesson plans in FY125 as well.
- Plan to expand this module in the future after attending the Animal Ethics Seminar hosted by Fordham University in November.
Class 1

- **Film:**
  - "Charles Darwin and the Tree of Life"

- **Readings:**
  - Pope John Paul II's Address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (October 22, 1996) *Truth Cannot Contradict Truth*
  - *Adam, Eve, and Evolution* from Catholic Answers
  - Richard Hughes, *Christian Faith Can Sustain the Life of the Mind*

- **Discussion**
Class 2

- In class debate on human nature.

- Readings:
  - Chapter 2, *Human Evolution from the Nanda and Warms Cultural Anthropology*
  - Donald Griffin’s *Animal Minds, In Human Nature* by Barash

- Discussion
Class 3

- **Film:**
  - "Clever Monkeys"

- **Readings:**
  - New York Times article *Scientist Finds the Beginnings of Morality in Primate Behavior*
  - New Scientist article *Death in dolphins: do they understand they are mortal?*

- Discussion
Class 4

- Lecture:
  - Summary of "The Marvelous Connection of Things": Tomas Aquinas and Nonhuman Animals

- Readings:
  - Chapter 10 Cooperation and Chapter 11 Kindness in The Moral Lives of Animals by Dale Peterson

- Discussion
Lecture:

- Touch: Communication and Reconciliation related to the CIT
  - A. Catholic sacraments
  - B. Touch as a form of greeting
  - C. Functions of touch in animals
  - D. Touch as a mode of dolphin emotional expression
  - E. Reconciliation in dolphins
  - F. Healing power of touch from the Bible
  - G. Touch as therapy/alternative medication
  - H. Summary of Thomas White’s *In Defense of Dolphins: The New Moral Frontier*
Leaning Module Assignment

- Watch the online documentary "Ape Genius" online by NOVA/PBS
- Students will write a 2-3 page reaction paper to the video
  - Must also relate the paper to the CIT, the class material from the module, and at least one of the common core questions