Animals and the Law (LAWF 3780)

Winter 2020

**PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION / ADVOCACY EXERCISE**

**Purpose.** For this assignment, you will use your legal research, writing and persuasion skills to explain an issue or a controversy in animal law in a way that adds to public knowledge, raises awareness, and (for some of the options) advocates for legal reform.

**Grading.** This assignment is worth 20% of the final grade for students who select Option Two on the syllabus (*i.e*., those of you who elect to write a shorter paper). I will grade your assignments using the grading rubric provided (see the Assignments channel in Mattermost).

**Timing.**  Your assignment is due **by 5 pm on March 5.** Please clear the topic and format of your assignment with me by **February 13**.

**Submitting your assignment.** Please submit using your assignments channel on Mattermost. Submit the assignment in the appropriate format (a link to your website, an audio file, etc., as applicable). If you have a file that’s too big to submit on Mattermost, let me know and make other arrangements (such as e-mail).

**Late Policy.** If your assignment is late, 2 points will be deducted from your grade out of 20 per day or part of a day that it is late.

**Options.** You have a choice of the following options for your assignment:

1. An op-ed. Choose a publication (print or online) that accepts unsolicited op-ed submissions. Prepare an op-ed on a topic related to animal law. Follow the submission guidelines, including word count, of the publication. Your goal is to submit the op-ed and get it accepted for publication (but this is not mandatory, if you prefer to keep your work private). Choosing a topic that is timely and being discussed in the news will improve your chances of acceptance. When you submit your assignment to me, please attach or provide a link to the submission guidelines.
2. A pamphlet. Create a three-fold pamphlet that could be handed out to members of the public, explaining your issue. Use images and design elements as well as text to present the information clearly and effectively.
3. A website. Build a website that explains your issue. You can use images, design elements, hyperlinks, etc. to present the information clearly and effectively.
4. An audio segment (podcast). Prepare a short audio segment, not more than 10 minutes, explaining your issue. You can use interviews, music, and any other audio elements you choose.
5. A video explainer. Prepare a short video segment, not more than 10 minutes, explaining your issue. In your video you can use slides, images, interviews, footage of adorable and/or majestic animals, and any other suitable elements you choose.

**Topic.** The topic can be anything that interests you that is relevant to animal law. For options 1-5, current controversies or legal reform efforts in animal law would be especially suitable.

Here are a few suggestions for possible topics (just ideas to get you started):

* Whale and dolphin captivity and Bill S-203
* “Ag gag” legislation
* The Save movement
* Breed-specific legislation (pit-bull bans)
* Sled dog welfare
* Reforming Canadian criminal law on bestiality
* Should there be a “best interests of the animal” standard in family law?
* Shark finning
* Improving enforcement of animal welfare law

**Instructions**. All written parts of your assignment should be written in clear, plain language that is easy to read and appropriate to the audience you are trying to reach. Any information you present must be accurate and supported by appropriate sources. If you are advocating for your audience to take action, provide clear directions for that action (e.g., sign and share a petition, e-mail a legislator, boycott a product…).

**Link to Research Paper.** You may choose to write your research paper on the same topic as this assignment, and build on your research and work for this assignment when you write your paper. This is optional. If you prefer, you may write your research paper on something unrelated. If you choose to do this assignment and the research paper on the same topic, you may wish to incorporate your final product from this assignment into your presentation on your research paper. Please keep in mind that your presentation is a separately graded assignment, so you can’t just present this assignment (for example, if you make a video you can’t just show the video to the class and be done), but you can show off your work to the rest of the class and explain how your research paper is related to and builds on what you’ve done in this assignment.