

Preface

After finding out about human-animal studies (HAS) in 2002 and throwing myself into the field, I thought that a textbook would be useful for the development and spread of the field. In particular, the initial drive to complete this book came from my work with the Animals and Society Institute (ASI) and my role on the Human-Animal Studies Executive Committee, which was founded in 2004 by about a dozen scholars who met during the International Compassionate Living Festival to discuss this rapidly growing field and our roles in it. At that first meeting, we strategized about the further development of HAS and how we could help to enhance the presence of this newly developing discipline in academic institutions across the country.

Following that meeting, our committee went on to create the Human-Animal Studies Fellowship program, which continued for almost ten years and has since been replaced by the Summer Institute in Human-Animal Studies, now held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. We also wrote an edited collection, *Teaching the Animal: Human-Animal Studies Across the Disciplines* (DeMello 2010), which includes concrete information on teaching HAS in a variety of natural science, social science, and humanities courses.

In the years since publication of the first edition of this book, the field of HAS has exploded. There are now more courses offered at more colleges and universities than ever before, more conferences devoted to HAS, and more college programs, institutes, journals, list servers, veterinary programs, legal centers, and organizations. I like to think that the initial publication of this book played at least a small part in the spread of human-animal studies and the exposure of countless students to the importance of animals in our lives.

This new edition is intended to continue serving the field by giving professors an updated overview of the field and by giving students an easy-to-read text covering many of the issues related to the question of animals in human society. In addition, this new edition has less of a North American and more of a global focus, which I hope will make the text more relevant to non-U.S. audiences. I also continue to hope that this text will encourage more professors to develop new courses that focus on the human-animal relationship. But I especially hope that readers—both students and instructors—will recognize that there is an important place within the college curriculum for looking at animals, their relationship with humans, and the very real implications of those relationships.