

Animals in American Literature and Culture

AML 4453 Section 07A6

Fall 2016, T 5-6 (11:45am–1:40pm) and R 6 (12:50pm–1:40pm) in TUR 2336

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Course Description

This is an interdisciplinary, discussion-based course that explores animals and human animality in American fiction, culture, and philosophy. Americans have and continue to use animals in a variety of ways—as companions, food, commodities, metaphors, spectacle, entertainment, projections of the self, etc. The course examines how relationships between humans and other animals have been conceived and challenged in American works. Some questions the course will explore include:

- How do animals and human animality in American works intersect with historical constructions of race, ethnicity, gender, sex, and class?
- What do animals and animalized humans in the course texts reveal about American identities, biopolitics, and ethics?
- How do American conceptions of animals or “the animal” circulate in and influence conversations about economies, exploitation, disability, the Anthropocene, and the post- and non-human turns?

By answering these and related queries, we might turn our attentions to the human-animal divide and consider alternative conceptions of being and ways that humans might engage with other animals. In addition to introducing students to the emerging field of animal studies and its applications in American literature, this course helps students to develop their critical thinking, reading, and writing skills through class assignments and service-learning.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course, students will have learned and demonstrated their ability to:

- Identify and discuss the major themes of a literary work.
- Understand, apply, and critique theoretical concepts.
- Write a well-organized and developed persuasive essay that synthesizes academic research and provides appropriately formatted citations.
- Understand and reflect upon their contributions to local communities.

Required Texts

The texts listed below are necessary for completing the course assigned reading. All other assigned readings are available on Canvas. Films will be screened during class time.

- *The Norton Book of Nature Writing*, Eds. Finch & Elder, W. W. Norton & Co., 2002.
ISBN 0393946347
- Matthew Calarco, *Thinking through Animals*, Stanford Briefs, 2015.
ISBN 0804794049
- Brian K. Vaughan and Niko Henrichon, *Pride of Baghdad*. Vertigo, 2008.
ISBN 1401203159
- Donna J. Haraway, *Manifestly Haraway*. University of Minnesota Press, 2016.
ISBN 0816650489
- Edward Albee, "The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?" Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 2004.
ISBN 082221976X
- Clifford D. Simak, *City*. Open Road Media Sci-Fi & Fantasy, 2015.
ISBN 1504013034
- T. S. Eliot, *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*. Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1982.
ISBN 0151686564
- Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely, *We3*. Vertigo, 2014.
ISBN 1401243029
- Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Del Rey, 1996.
ISBN 0345404475

Recommended Texts

The *MLA Handbook 8th Edition* and William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White's *The Elements of Style* are not required for this course, but they can be useful resources for academic writing.

Assignments

Written assignments must be uploaded to Canvas before 11:59 pm on their due date in one of the following file formats: .doc, .docx, or .rtf. Include your last name and first initial in the file name.

Late papers are not accepted unless the instructor has issued an extension. Extensions should be requested at least a week before due dates. Double-space essays, use Times New Roman font (12-point), and format in 8th Edition MLA. Word counts do not include footnotes, endnotes, or works cited pages. **Submissions that do not meet the minimum word count will receive a zero.**

Final papers should be polished and include citations. Assignments are described below briefly. **Detailed instructions and rubrics are on Canvas.**

Service-Learning (20 hours minimum, 200 points)

From the list provided by the instructor, select an organization dedicated to animal advocacy, animal rescue, and/or animal care. Serve the organization as a volunteer during the semester. Log all service hours using the forms provided by the instructor. Be prepared to discuss your volunteer experiences in class on the designated days.

Service-Learning Social Media Project (5 posts minimum, 50 points)

Access the class page and contribute a photo with a caption that reflects on your volunteer service. See the social media guidelines sheet for further instructions.

Midterm: Animal Portrait (1500 words minimum, 250 points, due 10/13)

Review the animal portraits read during the semester. After identifying common elements among them, use these patterns as a guide to compose an animal portrait. As you write, consider the course critical texts and your experiences to give your narrative a clear argument. Include a one-page cover letter that defines the animal portrait genre, explains your writing process, and summarizes the aim(s) of your essay.

Final: Synthesis Essay (1500 words minimum, 250 points, due 12/6)

Select two literary texts from the course and perform an analysis of their animals. Essays should have a thesis about how the animals operate and to what end(s), making claims about what we learn by reading these works *together*. Arguments should be supported with evidence from the texts and by synthesizing course critical readings.

Preparation, Participation, and Engagement (250 points)

Attend class sessions and complete the course readings on time. When the instructor lectures, listen and contribute insightful questions or comments. During discussion, be attentive to your peers' contributions and offer productive examinations. Discussions should be an engaging and enjoyable dialogue in which the class listens and responds to one another with courtesy and care.

Course Policies

Attendance is mandatory. Therefore, three or more unexcused absences will result in a full letter grade drop. Missing the course double-block will count as two absences. **Students who miss six class periods or more will fail the course.** Absences related to university events or organizations, religious holidays, family emergency, and health issues are excused provided that the instructor receives official documentation regarding the absence. Additionally, tardiness will not be tolerated. Three class tardies equate to one unexcused absence that will count towards the allotted three unexcused absences.

Grading for this course will be rigorous. Assignments that exhibit a disregard for spelling, grammar, formatting and citation guidelines, instructions, or a general carelessness in the writing will not receive a passing grade. Students are responsible for keeping track of the points they receive on class assignments.

Grading Scale

			<u>Points</u>				<u>Points</u>
A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-760
A-	3.67	90-92	900-920	C-	1.67	70-72	700-720
B+	3.33	87-89	870-890	D+	1.33	67-69	670-690
B	3.0	83-86	830-860	D	1.0	63-66	630-660
B-	2.67	80-82	800-820	D-	0.67	60-62	600-620
C+	2.33	77-79	770-790	E	0.00	0-59	000-590

A-range essays: Establish and sustain a complex argument that demonstrates sophisticated engagement with course themes, contexts, and readings. Provide attentive close readings of the language and themes in their texts. Well-organized, well-supported, well-developed, and written in engaging and clear prose.

B-range essays: Are competent, but could be made stronger with either better organization, a more complex thesis or line of development, more sustained examples, a stronger prose style, or less recurrent grammatical or mechanical problems.

C-range essays: Are passable and often promising, but have multiple areas that need considerable improvement (thesis strength, argument focus, level of analysis, organization, style, grammatical, etc.) to make the paper clear and persuasive.

D-range essays: Are not yet “there” as far as conceptualizing, organizing, and sustaining a viable argument in readable prose, but hold promise.

F-range essays: Fail to meet the basic criteria of argument, organization, and mechanics, or may fail to respond to the assignment by being off topic, or contain passages that are plagiarized.

University Policies

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and and sexual harassment. For more about these issues, see:

<http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/policies-2/sexual-harassment/>

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

Course Schedule

W1, 8/22 - Introduction

- T Course Syllabus
In-Class Activity: Pre-Learning Letters
- R Pattiann Rogers, "[Animals and People](#)" (1997)

W2, 8/29 - Thinking Through Animals

- T Matthew Calarco, *Thinking Through Animals* (2015)
- R *Norton Book of Nature Writing* (2002), both introductions, 15-31
Alexander Wilson, *American Ornithology* (1808-1814), 76-81

W3, 9/5 - Nature Writing and the "Nature" of Animals

- T William Bartram, *Travels Through...* (1791), 64- 76
John Hay, "The Common Night" (1959), 539-541
---, "The Dovekie and the Ocean Sunfish" (1969), 541-545
Maxine Hong Kingston, "A City Person Encountering Nature" (1987), 787-790
- R Thomas Nagel, "What is it Like to Be a Bat" (1974)
Linda Hogan, "The Bats" (1995), 966-971

W4, 9/12 - Dreadful Comparisons

- T Vicki Hearne, "Calling Animals by Name" (1986), 1034-1038
Faith McNulty, "Mouse" (1980), 554-560
Service Reflection
- R Alice Walker, "Am I Blue?" (1993), 863-86
Marjorie Spiegel, *The Dreaded Comparison* (1988) excerpts

W5, 9/19 - Hunters, Trappers, Whalers, and Other Predators

- T Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (1851):
(32) "[Cetology](#)" and (41) "[Moby Dick](#),"
(64) "[Stubb's Supper](#)" and (65) "[The Whale as Dish](#)"

(67) [“Cutting In,”](#) (69) [“The Funeral,”](#) and (70) [“The Sphynx”](#)
(82) [“The Honor and Glory of Whaling,”](#) (87) [“The Grand Armada,”](#) and
(105) [“Does the Whale’s Magnitude Diminish?—Will He Perish?”](#)

- R Ray Gonzalez, “The Third Eye of the Lizard” (1993), 1027-1033
- Robert Finch, “Death of a Hornet” (2000), 841-844

W6, 9/26 - Captives and Captivity

- T Gabriela Cowperwaithe, *Blackfish* (2013)
- R Brian K. Vaughan and Niko Henrichon, *Pride of Baghdad* (2006)

W7, 10/3 - Fresh from the Farm

- T Noel Perrin, “Pig Tales” (1980), 644-650
- Robert Kenner, *Food Inc.* (2008), Part I
- R Edward Albee, “The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?” (2002)

W8, 10/10 - Manifestly Haraway

- T Donna Haraway, *Manifestly Haraway* (2016), Intro and C.S. Manifesto
- R **Service Reflection**
Midterm Essay Due

W9, 10/17 - Dogs, Death, and Dystopia

- T Sherryl Vint, *Animal Alterity* (2010), excerpt
- Clifford D. Simack, *City* (1952)
- R Lewis Thomas, “Death in the Open” (1974), 533-538
- John Updike, [“Dog’s Death”](#) and [“Another Dog’s Death”](#)

W10, 10/24 - The Curious Case of the Cat

- T Stanescu & Twine, “Post-Animal Studies” (2012), excerpt
- Edgar Allan Poe, [“The Black Cat”](#) (1843)
- R T. S. Eliot, *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats* (1939)
- Bryan Lufkin, [“Why Cats Rule the Internet Instead of Dogs”](#) (2015)

W11, 10/31 - Wards and Watchers of the Wild

T Bob Landis, *In the Valley of the Wolves* (2007)
Freeman House, "In Salmon's Water" (1999), 766-772

R TBA, **Service Reflection**

W12, 11/7 - The Posthuman and Posthumanism

T Rupert Wyatt, *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (2011)

R Cary Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* (2010), excerpt

W13, 11/14 - Couplings and Kinships

T Donna Haraway, *Manifestly Haraway* (2016), Cyborg Manifesto and Interview
--- Haraway, "Anthropocene...Chthulucene: Making Kin" (2015)
Patricia Cadigan, "The Girl-Thing Who Went Out for Sushi" (2012)

R Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely, *We3* (2004)

W14, 11/21 - Thanksgiving Week

T Online Research Assignment: The Presidential Turkey Pardon

R **Turkey Day (No Class)**

W 15, 11/28 - Androids and the Last of the Animals

T Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968)

R Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968)

W 16, 12/5 - Final Week

T Course Wrap-Up
Service Reflection
Final Essay Due