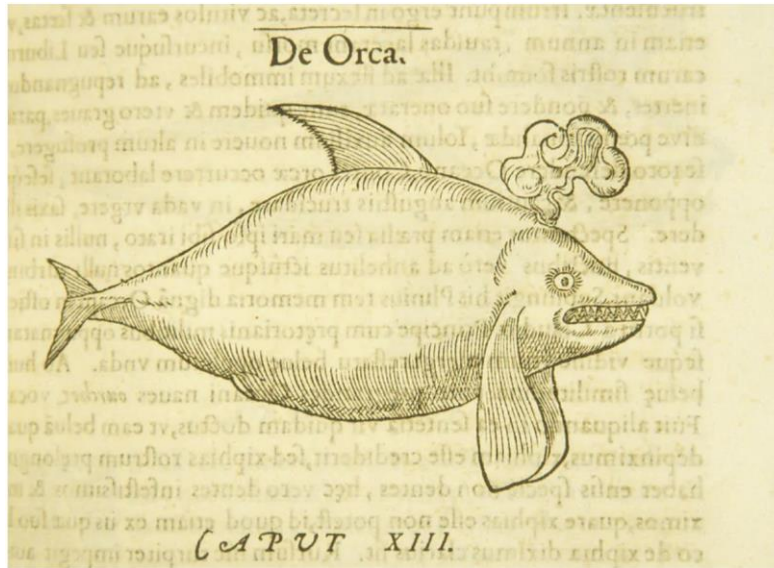


LIT 2110: Survey of World Literature: Ancient to Renaissance

Fall 2025

#13619, 4C93



“De Orca,” Guillaume Rondelet (1507-1566) [National Library of Medicine](#)

Caylee Weintraub	Class Meeting Times/Locations:
cayleeweintraub@ufl.edu	T, 11:45-1:40 (TUR B310)
Office: TBA	R, 12:50-1:40 (MCCA 2186)
Office Hours: T& R, 2:00-3:00	

Required Texts

- All readings will be provided on Canvas in the modules.

Course Description

“Once you allow yourself to identify with the people in a story, then you might begin to see yourself in that story even if on the surface it’s far removed from your situation. This is what I try to tell my students: this is one great thing that literature can do — it can make us identify with situations and people far away. If it does that, it’s a miracle.” Chinua Achebe

“We should venture on the study of every kind of animal without distaste; for each and all will reveal to us something natural and something beautiful.” Aristotle, Parts of Animals, 1.5

This course surveys world literature from the ancient world to the 1600s. We will be exploring canonical works that represent major civilizations of the world; many of them continue to hold a special place in national and global culture to this day. These works reflect and even reinforce collective values of the present time with their canonical status, and a close examination of their textual contents will allow us to better understand not only the past but also the present of the peoples who canonize them.

Throughout the course, we will follow the philosophy that literature has the power to build empathetic understanding toward other people and nonhuman animals, and by immersing ourselves in the world of literature we may cultivate empathy for those who are different from us and whom we will never have the opportunity to meet. We will attempt to compassionately engage with the minds of people in other temporal and cultural spaces by reading their literary works and studying the contexts in which these works were created, and we will be looking for what we can take away from these works to build our own present and future.

We will pay particular (although not exclusive) attention to the role of nonhuman animals in these texts. Animals were key figures in the ancient world as messengers, divine powers, companions, food, labor, and metaphors. We will use animals as a lens to consider what it means to be human, what it means to be animal, and how the nonhuman world has played a part in cultural imaginaries for centuries.

Guiding Questions

- 1) How can empathy transport us directly to the heart and soul of other people, or can we at best imagine about the experience of other people through our empathy?
- 2) Is it possible to attain a deep understanding of foreign cultures and history, or is there no way to make sense of them without the inference of our modern bias?
- 3) What recurring ideas appear in ancient and contemporary texts? How do these ideas alchemize, metamorphosize, and/or metastasize over time?
- 4) How do nonhuman animals offer insight into the human condition?
- 5) How do we inherit certain notions about animals from these texts?

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Read and analyze ancient texts with consideration to their specific socio historical circumstances.
2. Understand the role of animals in ancient literature and culture.
3. Research, write, and produce essays with a focused argument and incorporate secondary sources.

General Education Objectives

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) or Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- A minimum grade of C is required for General Education credit.
- Composition courses provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.

- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

General Education Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Course Policies

1. **Completion:** You must complete all assignments to receive (C)omposition credit.
2. **Attendance:** Attendance is compulsory and will be taken on a daily basis. Every absence after the third one will result in a deduction of 10 points each. Six absences over the course of the semester will lead to automatic failure of the course. Absences will be excused only in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable reasons include illness, religious holidays, military

obligation, and those absences covered by UF's twelve-day rule.

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx> Students are expected to arrive to class on time. Late arrivals (more than 10 minutes late) will be counted as half an absence. Attendance will require not merely the physical presence of the student but also the maintenance of classroom decorum, failing which you will be marked absent.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies.

3. **Paper Format & Submission:** Papers will need to be submitted online on Canvas in the form of word files (doc. and docx.). The assignment boxes will be activated well before the submission deadline. Student's must submit papers on Canvas. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered. Students may request to submit a traditional analytical essay or any other academic style essay that suits their educational goals. Submitted assignments short of the minimum word count will receive zero credit.
4. **Late Papers/Assignments:** Late submissions will be accepted only if the student has informed the instructor of her/his inability to submit the assignment on time. The student will be allowed a window of two days following the deadline to make the submission, during which period, the student will incur a penalty of 10 points per day. Failure of technology will not be accepted as an excuse. Accommodations can be made for extenuating circumstances, but you must communicate with me.
5. **Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code.
6. **Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages requesting that you do this online: <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>
7. **Accommodations:** Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Minor Assignments

Active Attendance and Participation 10% (100 pts)

Attendance and regular (daily) participation is expected, as is completing the reading. I will ask you to come to each class with at least one comment or question written down in a place you can readily access in class. I will randomly call on people to share their thoughts.

On occasion, we may have reading quizzes at the beginning of class to ensure comprehension of the text (such as plot development, character relations, recurring symbols, etc.). Included in active attendance are the occasional posting of notes on discussion boards as noted on the syllabus. There will be no makeup assignments for participation due to absences, foreseen or otherwise, as participation is an in-class activity.

6.25 % (62.5 points) - Text Introduction and Discussion Facilitation (250 words x 2=500)

In Week 2, you will sign up to introduce two readings of your choice. You will provide a **brief**, 5-7 minute presentation introducing the context of the reading, information about the author, and any relevant details. You should provide 1 visual. You will also prepare one well-formed discussion questions and a response to this question. I will model an example in class.

6.25 % (62.5 points) - 1st Analytical Response Paper (500 words): (Re) Reading Animals

After reading Erica Fudge's "Reading Animals," students will select a text to apply Fudge's ideas. This paper should have a clear paragraph structure and engage with Fudge's main points and arguments. Further details to follow on Canvas.

6.25 % (62.5 points) -2nd Analytical Response Paper (500 words): Expect the Unexpected

Throughout this course, we will encounter texts that affirm assumptions about classical literature, yet we will also encounter texts that disturb such preconceptions. Select one text we have read that defies a personal expectation about classical literature. For this essay, you should make a clear and persuasive argument as to how this text challenges views we hold about the ways in which gender, race, nation, friendship, love, animals, environment, or any other thematic component operates in older texts. State clearly why this piece upends your assumption and then clearly show HOW it does so using specific textual details. Further details to follow on Canvas.

6.25 % (62.5 points) - 3rd Analytical Response Paper (500 words): Medieval Bestiary

We will discuss the role, purpose, and design of the medieval bestiary in class. Then, students will craft a medieval bestiary entry and also provide an image (hand-drawn, **no AI**, it doesn't have to be Michelangelo). Further instructions will be provided closer to the due date.

Major Writing Assignments

10% (100 points) - Essay 1: In Conversation (750 words)

In this major writing assignment, students will select two works we have read in class and put them in conversation. The goal of this paper is to recognize the different contexts and values of the two pieces you are examining, and then to determine crossovers or divergences. Students should not compare/contrast and be reductive in their treatment, but to evaluate how the texts illuminate one another. Provide a clear and persuasive analysis with a thesis statement and traditional paragraph structure. Further details to follow on Canvas.

15% (150 points) - Essay 2: Bringing to the Present (1,000 words)

No text can be removed from the time and place it is read. As we have learned, readers in the past understood these texts in their own historic context. In this class we are doing the same but in 2025. Furthermore, many of these texts had real life ramifications. Choose a text from recent units (or an outside text with instructor approval) and bring it to the present. This essay should address how we can understand our current moment through the text, how the text is engaged with by present readers, and what remains relevant (or irrelevant) today. Provide a clear and persuasive analysis with traditional paragraph structure. Further details to follow on Canvas.

20% (200 points) - Essay 3: Research Essay (1,250 words)

Part 1: Prospectus (250 words)

The prospectus will present your idea for the Researched Critical Essay. This should present your tentative thesis and detail at least three sources, and descriptions of the source and how you intend to use it in your paper

Part 2: Essay (1,200)

This essay will be a sustained formally researched critical analysis in which you will make an original argument about one or two literary text(s) through a theoretical, historical, or critical lens. This essay must contain 2-3 critical academic sources.

20% (200 points) Essay 4: In-Class Exam (1,000 words)

To fully synthesize the work you've done this semester, the final assignment of this course is an in-class exam. The format will be short-answer questions asking you to make connections between readings and apply course themes to your analysis.

Grading Distribution

Assignment	Points	Words
Participation	100	n/a
Minor Assignments (x4)	62.5 x 4=250	500x4=2,000
Essay 1	100	750
Essay 2	150	1,000
Essay 3	200	1,000
Essay 4 (Exam)	200	1,250
Totals	1,000	6,000

Grading Scale

The writing assignments for this course are designed to meet the minimum requirements of the University Writing Requirement credit. To satisfy this requirement, every assignment's word count must be fulfilled. Submitted assignments short of the minimum word count will receive zero credit.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade
A	100-92.5
A-	92.4-89.5
B+	89.4-86.5
B	86.4-82.5
B-	82.4-79.5
C+	79.4-76.5
C	76.4-72.5
C-	72.4-69.5

D+	69.4-66.5
D	66.4-62.5
D-	62.4-59.5
E	59.4-0

Grading Rubric

A- to A: You did what the assignment asked for at a high-quality level, and your work shows originality and creativity. Work in this range demonstrates all the qualities listed below for a B; but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a verbal style or visual design, without error and/or infelicities.

B- to B+: You did what the assignment asked of you at a high-quality level. Work in this range needs little revision, is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style and visual design. May contain a few errors and/or infelicities.

C- to C+: You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range tends to need some revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style and visual design are straightforward but unremarkable.

D- to D+: You did what the assignment asked for at a low-quality level. Work in this range tends to need significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Verbal style and visual design are often non-existent or chaotic.

E: Failure means the assignment requirements were not met. If you gave an assignment an honest try and still received an 'E,' you may not be ready to succeed in this course.

For information on UF Grading policies, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> Grade Appeals. In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Please contact Ms. Blount at cblount@ufl.edu Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

	Course Schedule (tentative and subject to change) Please note this class is both reading and writing intensive.	Due Dates and Presenters
Week 1	Introduction	
R, 8/21	Course Introduction Homework for next class:: -Italo Calvino, “Why Read the Classics” Choose one point to discuss in class. -John Berger, “Why Look at Animals?” Choose one paragraph to discuss in class.	

Week 2	Unit One: Ancient Animals	
T, 8/26	Italo Calvino, “Why Read the Classics” John Berger, “Looking at Animals”	
R, 8/28	<i>Genesis</i> , 1-3	

Week 3	Unit Two: Animals and World Religions	
T, 9/2	Rare Book Collection Visit (Located on the 1st Floor of Library East)	
R, 9/4	Erica Fudge, “Reading Animals” <i>Genesis</i> , 4-8	

Week 4		
T, 9/9	<i>Job</i> 38-41 Jaques Derrida, “The Animal that Therefore I Am” (selection on Canvas)	
R, 9/11	Zhuang Zhou, <i>Zhuangzi</i> , Butterfly Dream Laozi, <i>Daodejing</i> (selections on Canvas)	1st Analytical Response: (Re) Reading Animals

Week 5		
T, 9/16	Guest Speaker: Vivian Lantow (Ph.D. Candidate Art History, focus: Chimú feather textiles) Reading: TBD	
R, 9/18	Zen Master Dōgen, “Mountains and Rivers Sutra” Jataka Tales: “Starving Tigress” Animal Symbols in Buddhism	

Week 6	Unit Three: The Animal Other	
T, 9/23	Workshop: Thesis and Close Reading <i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> , Tablets I-V	
R, 9/25	<i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> , Tablets VI-X	Essay 1: In Conversation

	Neo-Assyrian animal carvings and Enkidu representations	
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Week 7		
T, 9/30	Homer, <i>The Odyssey</i> , book 5, 9, 10 Timeline of the Odyssey	
R, 10/2	Homer, <i>The Odyssey</i> , book 18, 23, 24	

Week 8	Unit Four: Metamorphoses	
T, 10/7	Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> , “The Python,” “Daphne,” “Io (1 and 2),” “Arachne,” “Pythagoras,” “Lycaon” Porphyry , “On the abstinence from eating flesh” (1.1-1.6)	
R, 10/9	Multiple Authors, <i>One Thousand and One Nights</i> “The Tale of the Husband and the Parrot” “The Ebony Horse” Student’s Choice: Post your notes on discussion thread	2nd Analytical Response: Expect the Unexpected

Week 9		
T, 10/14	Lais of Marie de France, “Laustic” and “Prologue” Hildegard von Bingen, vision 6	

R, 10/16	<p>Lais of Marie de France, “Bisclavret”</p> <p>Jeffery Jerome Cohen, “Thesis III: The Monster is a Harbinger of the Category Crisis”</p> <p>Hildegard von Bingen, <i>De Animalibus</i> (selections on Canvas)</p>	

Week 10	Unit 4: Human “Animals”: Gender, Race, Nation	
T, 10/21	<p>The “Animality” of Medieval Women: Christine de Pizan, <i>Book of the City of Ladies</i>, sections 1-4</p> <p>Watch: Women in Medieval Times</p>	
R, 10/23	Christine de Pizan, <i>Book of the City of Ladies</i> , sections 14, 37, and 38	Essay 2: Bringing to the Present

Week 11		
T, 10/28	<p>Workshop: Writing a Good Paragraph</p> <p>Watch: Descartes and the Cartesian Divide and post your notes to Canvas discussion thread Rene Descartes - Machines, Animals, and Rational Beings (Discourse pt. 5) - Philosophy Core Concepts</p>	
R, 10/30	Michel de Montaigne, “Of Cannibals”	

Week 12		
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T, 11/4	Workshop: Identifying a Research Topic and Formulating Research Questions Shakespeare, The Tempest (watch in class)	
R, 11/6	Shakespeare, The Tempest (watch in class)	3rd Analytical Response Due: Medieval Bestiary Entry

Week 13		
T, 11/11	NO CLASS	
R, 11/13	Discuss <i>The Tempest</i> Sign-Up for Paper Conferences	Essay 3, pt. 1: Prospectus

Week 14		
T, 11/18	Conferences about Paper	
R, 11/20	Peer Review Workshop	Essay 3, pt. 2: Research Essay

Week 15	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
T, 11/25	NO CLASS	
R, 11/27	NO CLASS	

Week 16		
T, 12/2	Essay 4: In-Class Exam	
R, 12/4	NO CLASS	

University Policies

V. University Policies and Resources

Attendance policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Students requiring accommodation

Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF course evaluation process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens.

Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

University of Florida students are bound by the Honor Pledge. On all work submitted for credit by a student, the following pledge is required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Student Honor Code and Conduct Code (Regulation 4.040) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code, as well as the process for reported allegations and sanctions that may be implemented. All potential violations of the code will be reported to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. If a student is found responsible for an Honor Code violation in this course, the instructor will enter a Grade Adjustment sanction which may be up to or including failure of the course. For additional information, see <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

In-class recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party-note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Procedure for conflict resolution

Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Margaret Galvan (mgalvan@ufl.edu, (352) 392-6650). Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1308) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1261).

Resources available to students

Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).
- University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call [866-281-6309](tel:866-281-6309) or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- [Teaching Center](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, Call [352-392-2010](tel:352-392-2010), or to make a private appointment: [352-392-6420](tel:352-392-6420). Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, [352-846-1138](tel:352-846-1138) | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; [Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information](#).
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information](#).