

VINDICATION

OF THE

RIGHTS OF BRUTES.

Literature and the Rights of Animals

FLUSH
A BIOGRAPHY

LIT 6934

Number 26252 | Section 8RM1 | TUR 2346

Instructor:

Roger Maioli (rogermaioli@gmail.com)

Meeting times:

Thursday, periods 9–11 (4:05 PM–7:05 PM)

Office hours:

Thursday, 1:30–3:30, and by appointment

Animals in literature are as old as writing. From the cats of Egypt to the serpent of Eden, and from Odysseus's faithful dog to Aesop's fables, animals have long served as feathered, scaly, and furry extras for the telling of human stories. But imaginative authors have also treated animals as protagonists in dramas of their own, poised at the threshold between the human imagination and an ineffable nonhuman world. This course focuses, from the perspective of Critical Animal Studies, on Western literary attempts to capture the experience of nonhuman animals living in a world dominated by humans. We will consider the role of literature in producing, sustaining, and questioning various forms of anthropocentrism, especially since the seventeenth century; we will examine how ideas about animals shaped human attitudes towards other humans; and we will read contemporary work on animal rights to understand some present legacies of this history. Our primary sources will include Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*, Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* (1903), Virginia Woolf's *Flush* (1933), and Karen Joy Fowler's *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* (2013). Secondary sources will include pieces by historians such as Keith Thomas and Londa Schiebinger; moral philosophers from Peter Singer to Martha Nussbaum; activists like Trish O'Kane and Christian Cooper; and animal-studies scholars such as Claire Jean Kim and Will Kymlicka. To standardize our terms we will be using Matthew R. Calarco's *Animal Studies: The Key Concepts* (2020). Finally, the course will include a visit to an animal sanctuary in Newberry and a birding trip with the Alachua Audubon Society.

Readings

In addition to a few primary and secondary sources I will make available through Canvas, we are reading a total of ten titles, in the following order:

1. Matthew R. Calarco, *Animal Studies: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2021). ISBN: 978-0367028893.
2. George Orwell, *Animal Farm*, introduction by Téa Obreht (London: Penguin, 2020). ISBN: 978-0452284241.
3. Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, ed. Peter Singer (New York: Liveright, 2021). ISBN: 978-1324091509.
4. Virginia Woolf, *Flush*, introduction by Trekkie Ritchie (San Diego: Harvest, 1983). ISBN: 978-0156319522.
5. Jack London, *The Call of the Wild, White Fang, and Other Stories*, ed. Kenneth K. Brandt (London: Penguin, 2019). ISBN: 978-0140186512.
6. Joshua Barkman, *False Knees: An Illustrated Guide to Animal Behavior* (Andrews McMeel, 2019). ISBN: 978-1449499723.
7. Gerald Durrell, *Menagerie Manor* (London: Penguin, 2007). ISBN: 978-0143038535.
8. H.G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, ed. Patrick Parrinder (London: Penguin, 2005). ISBN: 978-0141441023.
9. Karen Joy Fowler, *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* (New York: Putnam, 2013). ISBN: 978-0142180822.
10. Jonathan Safran Foer, *Eating Animals* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2009). ISBN: 978-0316069885.

For the sake of affordability, you are allowed to use a different edition of the texts in case you already have one, or to use a free online version if you prefer. But if you intend to buy a new copy, then please buy the editions listed above. **This is particularly important in the case of Apuleius, as we will be reading the paratextual materials.**)

Course Schedule

WEEK	READINGS and ASSIGNMENTS
1. Aug 27	<div>Reading load: 70 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cary Wolfe, “Human, All too Human: ‘Animal Studies’ and the Humanities” (8 pages) ■ John Simons, selections from <i>Animal Rights and the Politics of Literary Representation</i>, Chapters 1 and 2 (41 pages) ■ Sue Donaldson and Will Kimlicka, selections from <i>Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights</i> (21 pages)
2. Sep 3	<div>Reading load: 141 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ George Orwell, <i>Animal Farm</i> (94 pages) ■ John Simons, selections from <i>Animal Rights and the Politics of Literary Representation</i>, Chapter 6 (24 pages) ■ Robert McKay, “Contemporary Animal Form and Zoontology” (15 pages) ■ Calarco, “Introduction,” “Anthropocentrism,” “Anthropomorphism” (8 pages)
3. Sep 10	<div>Reading load: 215 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Apuleius, <i>The Golden Ass</i>, ed. Peter Singer, plus the essays by Singer and Finkelpearl (211 pages) ■ Calarco, “Animal Liberation,” “Animal Welfare and Animal Rights” (4 pages)
4. Sep 17	<div>Reading load: 185 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Thomas Taylor, <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes</i> (103 pages) ■ Keith Thomas, selections from <i>Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500–1800</i> (34 pages) ■ Londa Schiebinger, selections from <i>Nature’s Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science</i> (40 pages) ■ Calarco, “Feminism,” “Race” (8 pages)

5. Sep 24	<div>Reading load: 221 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Virginia Woolf, <i>Flush</i> (161 pages) ■ Donna Haraway, selections from <i>The Companion Species Manifesto</i> (53 pages) ■ Calarco, “Companion Species,” “Pets” (7 pages)
6. Oct 1	<div>Reading load: 192 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Joshua Barkman, <i>False Knees</i> (140 pages—comics) ■ Trish O’Kane, selections from <i>Birding to Change the World</i> (20 pages) ■ Christian Cooper, selections from <i>Better Living through Birding: Notes from a Black Man in the Natural World</i> (32 pages)
7. Oct 8	<div>Reading load: 185 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Jack London, <i>The Call of the Wild</i> (just the titular novella) (86 pages) ■ Craig Womack, “There Is No Respectful Way to Kill an Animal” (17 pages) ■ Jack Davis, “The Bald Eagle” (33 pages) ■ Calarco, “Wildlife,” “Hunting” (5 pages)
8. Oct 15	<div>Reading load: 221 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gerald Durrell, <i>Menagerie Manor</i> (184 pages) ■ Martha Nussbaum, selections from <i>Justice for Animals</i> (32 pages) ■ Calarco, “Zoos,” “Captivity” (5 pages)
9. Oct 22	<div>Reading load: 232 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ H.G. Wells, <i>The Island of Doctor Moreau</i> (131 pages) ■ Philip Armstrong, selections from <i>What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity</i> (24 pages) ■ Peter Singer, selections from <i>Animal Liberation Now</i> (77 pages)
10. Oct 29	<div>Reading load: 345 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Karen Joy Fowler, <i>We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves</i> (326 pages) ■ Matthew Calarco, “Boundary Issues” (19 pages)

11. Nov 5	<div>Reading load: 124 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ J. M. Coetzee, <i>The Lives of Animals</i> (54 pages), plus the essays by Singer and Doniger (22 pages) ▪ Cora Diamond, “The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy” (44 pages) ▪ Calarco, “CAFO” (4 pages)
12. Nov 12	<div>Reading load: 3 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visit to Peacefield ▪ Calarco, “Shelters and Sanctuaries” (3 pages) ▪ Work on your prospectus
13. Nov 19	<div>Reading load: 284 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jonathan Safran Foer, <i>Eating Animals</i> (267 pages) ▪ Carol Adams, selections from <i>The Sexual Politics of Meat</i> (17 pages) ▪ Prospectus workshop
14. Nov 26	<i>Thanksgiving. No class meeting, and no weekly response.</i>
15. Dec 3	<div>Reading load: 38 pages</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maneesha Deckha, “Postcolonial” (10 pages) ▪ Claire Jean Kim, “Multiculturalism Goes Imperial” (14 pages) ▪ Will Kymlicka and Sue Donaldson, “Animal Rights, Multiculturalism, and the Left” (14 pages)

Coursework

In addition to doing the readings, your work for this course will involve:

- Attending seminar meetings during periods 9–11.
- Posting weekly reading responses to a Canvas discussion thread starting on Week 2.
- Giving at least one in-class presentation paper resembling a conference paper.

- Reading and commenting on your peers' presentation papers.
- Researching and writing a brief prospectus for a final paper.
- Giving two of your peers written feedback on their final paper prospectuses.
- Writing and submitting a final paper **by December 14**.

In the rest of this syllabus you will find detailed instructions on each of these components.

Weekly responses

Deadline: Each Wednesday at 9 AM, beginning the second week of class.

I will be creating a weekly discussion thread on Canvas where everyone will post responses to the readings. I will read the responses prior to class and use them to identify common topics of interest, issues requiring clarification, or questions for the table. I will probably have a few things in mind to add to our class discussion, but for the most part our conversations will focus on topics that you highlighted in your responses.

Each response should be 250-400 words and accomplish one of four things: offer a personal reading of our primary source, take a stance towards a secondary source, make a connection between primary and secondary sources, or identify something in our sources in need of analysis. Make your response primarily about the reading (resist the temptation to use them just as a springboard towards something else) and keep it focused on something manageable (i.e. don't try to write about everything at once).

You do not need to provide footnotes or a bibliography, but please give page numbers whenever you quote the texts (and you should quote). Please stick to the length limit.

Important: On the week when you are giving a paper you are not required to post a response.

Presentation papers

Format: Word document, double spaced

Length: 1400–1700 words

Font: Times New Roman size 12, double-spaced

Deadline: Tuesday before class, by 6 PM

Each of you will write, circulate via email, and read in class one short presentation paper on one of our primary sources; your presentation will be followed by a question and answer (Q&A) session. I will poll everybody on your preferences and create a schedule accordingly.

The primary purpose of your presentation is to develop a reading of our primary source in conversation with secondary sources. The secondary source may ideally be the one we are reading that week, but you are welcome to work with others. You may find the bibliography in *Animal Studies: The Key Concepts* useful to that end. Consider, as well, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Animals*.

Responding to a presentation

On weeks when you are not giving a paper, you are responsible for reading your colleagues' papers before class and thinking ahead of questions to ask or suggestions to make. You will still listen to the paper in class, but comprehension goes up substantially when you encounter a paper for the second rather than the first time. So, do read it at home prior to class.

When thinking of how to respond to a paper given by a colleague, keep the big picture in mind. Before hyper-focusing on the author's word usage or on a particular sentence on page 4, ask yourself: What is the main argument of this paper? Can I articulate it to myself? If not, then what exactly is unclear to me? If yes, then do I agree with the argument? If I do, then how can it be made even better? If I don't, then why not? Working with questions such as these will make sure that you are actually helping the author improve their work. Sometimes merely asking, "Are you trying to argue that X?" can be a great conversation starter. Maybe they are not explaining themselves well at crucial junctures, or maybe they are overlooking important passages in the primary source that would help them make a stronger case or require them to revise their views.

There is a well-known tendency for conference attendees to ask questions that hijack the paper's topic towards their own areas of interest: "This paper makes me think of Foucault's notion of discipline." This may be a productive insight for the person asking the question, but you should consider whether the paper under discussion actually needs it. If you cannot explain how the

paper's argument would benefit from pursuing some approach you care about, then maybe that is not the most helpful feedback to give the author.

Needless to say, let's be nice to one another. In order to be helpful readers we must be critical, but frame your criticism graciously and constructively. And if you sincerely admire a paper, say it. We all spend a lot of time and labor on the things we write, and sincere appreciation is always welcome.

The prospectus

Format: Word document, double spaced

Length: 700–1200 words

Deadline: Monday, November 17 by 6 PM

Font and documentation: Follow the guidelines style recommended by the journal you are working with. (See below for details.)

The prospectus is a short writing assignment indicating what your final paper will be about. You will be writing it towards the end of November and workshopping it in class with two of your peers.

Please refer to the following guidelines before you start working on your prospectus. The guidelines depend on whether you are a PhD or MFA student.

1. The prospectus, PhD version

Think of this prospectus as the introductory pages of your final paper *plus* a cover sheet. The cover sheet **does not** count towards your word limit.

In the cover sheet you will identify a journal that publishes work on the topic of your paper and summarize their submission requirements. Your prospectus as well as your actual final paper must conform to those guidelines in terms of length, documentation style, whether to use footnotes or endnotes, and so on. The purpose here is to give you the experience of researching journals and following their requirements when submitting articles to them.

The rest of the prospectus should provide (1) an introduction to your topic, explaining what you find worthy of analysis in your chosen primary source; (2) a description of the debate in animal studies you intend to intervene in; and (3) a brief description of the thesis you envision pursuing and of how it contributes to existing debates.

2. The prospectus, MFA version

There is a lot of flexibility for MFA final assignments, and hence the prospectus will also be a lot more flexible. My recommendation is that you choose a venue that publishes the kind of work you are producing and see if they have submission guidelines. In a single document, provide a cover sheet indicating the title of the venue and reproducing their submission requirements; then, starting on Page 2, provide a written description of your prospectus together with a short sample. I will not specify length because that will vary a lot depending on whether you are writing a short story, a poem, or something involving visuals. It is up to you to decide how much you should provide to give your peers a sense of what you are going for.

The prospectus workshop

The purpose of your prospectus is not only to give yourself a quick start on writing the paper; it is also to give your peers an opportunity to read your work and give you feedback at an early stage of the process.

I will divide the class into small groups of 3 people. You will circulate your prospectus to the other members of your group by 6 PM of November 17. They will read it and provide comments in writing, and you will do the same. On November 19 we will dedicate the first hour of our seminar to a group workshop. Each prospectus will be discussed for 20 minutes.

In giving feedback, seek a balance between encouragement and constructive criticism. This is the right stage for interrogating a questionable assumption or for pointing out overlooked evidence, as the author still has time to rethink the prospectus and work out something better. Praise is also good, but make it concrete: “I agree with your argument up to this point,” “Your reading of this scene is compelling for this reason,” and so on. This is helpful for the author, whereas “your paper is beautiful” is not. Remember that agreement is also a good way of providing feedback: it

encourages the author, identifies areas of strength, and potentially suggests ways for making them even stronger.

In every case, frame your recommendations in relation to the author's purposes. Instead of saying "Why don't you write about this scene?" go for "This scene would be relevant for developing this aspect of your thesis." If you can't explain why exactly the author should attend to something, that probably means it is not as important as you first thought.

After the workshop, I will ask you to revise the prospectus and send it to me at rogermaioli@gmail.com. Please do so by the end of November 21.

The final paper

Format: Word document, double spaced

Length: 5,000–7,000 words

Deadline: December 14

Font and documentation: Follow the guidelines style recommended by the journal/magazine you are working with.

You will be writing your final paper/creative piece *as if* you were submitting it to the journal/magazine of your choice. For that reason, write it following their style guidelines. Academic articles are usually longer than the length limit for this paper, but you will find it easier and more productive to stick to 5,000–7,000 words at this stage. I will give you feedback on your paper, and if you decide to revise it and eventually submit it for publication, you will find it convenient to have that extra space at your disposal.

Two things to keep in mind:

- Your paper must have a title.
- Submit a cover sheet with your paper identifying the journal/magazine and their guidelines. If you are a PhD student, include a short abstract in the cover sheet as well.

Grading policy

I know that a good grade is important for you, and for that reason I will not assign grades to individual assignments. This will allow you to try and experiment with topics and approaches without worrying about how a specific weekly post or presentation paper will affect your grade in the long run. Instead, you will receive a grade based on your overall work for the course. Do not be afraid of making mistakes; we learn from our mistakes, and you are here to learn.

Additional Course Policy

Plagiarism: All written assignments should be your own work. **No use of generative AI is allowed.** Plagiarizing the work of others (by copying printed or online sources without acknowledgement) is illegal, and you may fail the course if you plagiarize. If you have questions about how to document your sources, or if you want to make sure you are not committing plagiarism without realizing it, please ask me.

Special accommodations: Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the Office of Student Service in order to determine appropriate accommodation. I will be pleased to provide accommodation, but students are responsible for notifying me at the beginning of the semester.

UF Online Course Evaluation Policy: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last 2-3 weeks of the semester. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Counseling and Mental Health Resources: Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling may seek the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center.

Sexual Assault and Harassment: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are civil rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources [here](#).