

E635-001
Spring 2010
Tues./Thurs. 9:30-10:45
Visual Arts F103

Prof. Michael Lundblad
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Office: 349 Eddy Hall
Office Hrs: TR 11:30-12:30

Critical Studies in Literature & Culture: Animality Studies

Course Description

Animality studies is one of the most exciting new lines of interdisciplinary inquiry within literary and cultural studies today. This course will provide an introduction to the growing field, primarily directed toward graduate students in literature, but also toward graduate students from other programs who might be interested in learning more about the relationship between discourses of animality and questions of rhetoric, ethics, and politics. Our focus will be on recent work by theorists, such as Jacques Derrida, Giorgio Agamben, Donna Haraway, and Cary Wolfe, that has brought increased attention to the site of “the animal.” This work has not only challenged traditional ways of defining the boundary between the human and the animal (at times leading to questions about the ethical treatment of animals, particularly in what is called “animal studies”), but also inspired fundamental reconsideration of issues such as human subjectivity, difference, and otherness. Animality studies, in other words, includes much more than the study of nonhuman animals from the perspective of the humanities and social sciences. Discourses of animality construct the categories of “the human” and “the inhuman,” for example, in relation to structures of power at various historical and cultural moments. In addition to reading a range of theoretical texts, we will consider the significance of animality studies in relation to two primary texts: Jack London’s *The Call of the Wild* and Peter Jackson’s 2005 remake of *King Kong*. We will also welcome to our class two internationally known professors at CSU, Bernard E. Rollin and Temple Grandin. Regardless of whether students choose to pursue advanced work in this provocative new field, the course will offer an opportunity to engage with preeminent literary and cultural theorists whose work also goes well beyond animality studies.

Texts

Required

- Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal* (Stanford UP, 2003)
- Matthew Calarco and Peter Atterton, eds., *Animal Philosophy: Essential Readings in Continental Thought* (Continuum, 2004)
- Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (Fordham UP, 2008)
- Temple Grandin and Catherine Johnson, *Animals Make Us Human: Creating the Best Life for Animals* (Houghton Mifflin, 2009)
- Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (U of Minnesota P, 2007)
- Peter Jackson, dir., *King Kong (2005)* [avail. for purchase at bookstore]
- Jack London, *The Call of the Wild* (Wadsworth, New Riverside Editions, 2003)
- *PMLA* 124.2 (March 2009)
- Cary Wolfe, *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (U of Chicago P, 2003)

Policies

ABSENCES AND LATE WORK: you are responsible for all work missed due to absence. Your grade on written work will be lowered by two-thirds of a letter grade for each day of the week that it is late (successful email submission—which means I can open and read it—should occur as soon as possible, rather than waiting until the next class).

PLAGIARISM in any form is a serious offense and will result in harsh disciplinary action, which may include a zero on the assignment/exam and/or failing the course.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES OR SPECIAL NEEDS should notify the instructor during the first week of class so that appropriate adjustments can be made.

OFFICE HOURS AND EMAIL COMMUNICATION are great ways for you to make sure you understand course readings and get the most out of this course. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me, one way or another, so that we can discuss any questions or concerns you might have. Please note that office hours are the best time for immediate assistance. Responses to your emails can often take several days. Please plan to ask for help well in advance of due dates.

Evaluation and Course Elements

- **Participation:** 20%
- **Conference Paper Abstract:** 20%
- **Book Review** (4-5 pages): 20%
- **Presentation:** 10%
- **Conference Paper** (8-10 pages): 30%
[extra credit: if you present your conference paper at the grad student symposium, your grade on your paper for this course will be raised by one-third of a letter grade, e.g., from a B+ to an A-, or from an A to an A+]

Participation: includes active participation in class discussions, diligent note-taking in class, attentive listening, and frequent willingness to ask and respond to questions in order to reveal critical engagement with course readings and lectures. I expect you always to read with a pen (or some other writing tool) in hand: underlining key and/or interesting passages, summarizing readings in your own words, making notes in the margins both to understand (and remember) what is there and to inspire your own critical responses to specific passages.

Conference Paper Abstract is a one-page assignment that offers you an opportunity to engage and respond to critical debates based upon course readings. More information will be given later about how to formulate effective abstracts. The abstract could be a starting point for your conference paper, or you could develop a different idea for the paper.

Book Review (4-5 pages, double-spaced): half summary, half evaluation, particularly focused on two chapters as examples. Your review should present not only a clear picture of the book's project and how it goes about fulfilling that project, but also an effective framing of potential objections or problems your intended audience (our class) might have in relation to the book.

Presentation: on the day your book review is due, you will have 15 minutes to lead class discussion in relation to debates or issues you identify in the book. No more than 4 presentations per class; check with others presenting to avoid too much overlap.

Conference Paper (8-10 pages): Independent research required. Begin with a problem statement in order to engage with a critical debate of your own choice primarily based upon course readings. You may build upon arguments related to your abstract assignment, or start with a new problem statement. More information on this assignment will be given later in the semester. **Papers due any time between 4/17 and 5/6.**

Schedule (tentative)

Introductions

- 1/19 Course Overview and Introductions
1/21 Cary Wolfe, "Human, All Too Human: 'Animal Studies' and the Humanities," *PMLA* (2009)

Methodologies

- 1/26 Jack London, *The Call of the Wild* (1903)
1/28 **Book Review Sign-Up**
Michael Lundblad, "From Animal to Animality Studies," *PMLA* (2009)
Neel Ahuja, "Postcolonial Critique in a Multispecies World" *PMLA* (2009)
- 2/2 Laurie Shannon, "The Eight Animals in Shakespeare; or, Before the Human" *PMLA* (2009)
Una Chaudhuri, "'Of All Nonsensical Things': Performance and Animal Life" *PMLA* (2009)
Other articles from *PMLA* forum on animal studies, TBD
- 2/4 NO CLASS

Philosophical Backgrounds

- 2/9 Martin Heidegger, "The Animal is Poor in World," in *Animal Philosophy*, ed. Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco (orig. 1929-1930)
Matthew Calarco, "Heidegger's Zoontology," in *Animal Philosophy* (2004)
Emmanuel Levinas, "The Name of a Dog, or Natural Rights," in *Animal Philosophy* (orig. 1974; 1986)
Peter Atterton, "Ethical Cynicism," in *Animal Philosophy* (2004)

- 2/11 Michel Foucault, "Animality and Insanity," in *Animal Philosophy*, ed. Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco (orig. 1961)
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "Becoming-Animal," in *Animal Philosophy*, ed. Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco (orig. 1980; 1975)
- 2/16 Hélène Cixous, "Birds, Women and Writing," in *Animal Philosophy*, ed. Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco (orig. 1990)
Luce Irigaray, "Animal Compassion," in *Animal Philosophy* (2004)
- 2/18 *Animal Philosophy*, cont.'d [not Derrida]; **book reviews and presentations**
- 2/23 Marie Louise-Mallet, "Foreword," *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet (2008)
Jacques Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)," *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet (orig. 1999)
- 2/25 Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)," cont.'d
- 3/2 Problem Statements and Abstracts
- 3/4 Derrida, cont.'d; **book reviews and presentations**
- 3/8 Abstracts due for CSU Graduate Student Symposium**
- 3/9 **Abstract due**
Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal* (orig. 2002)
- 3/11 Agamben, cont.'d
- 3/16 NO CLASS
- 3/18 SPRING BREAK

Inter-Species and Inter-Racial Relations

- 3/23 Donna Haraway, "When Species Meet: Introductions," *When Species Meet* (2008)
- 3/25 Haraway, "Value-Added Dogs and Lively Capital"; "Sharing Suffering: Instrumental Relations between Laboratory Animals and Their People"
- 3/30 Haraway, "Training in the Contact Zone: Power, Play, and Invention in the Sport of Agility"
- 4/1 Haraway, "Cittercam: Compounding Eyes in Naturecultures"; "Chicken"
- 4/6 Haraway, "Parting Bites: Nourishing Indigestion"
- 4/8 Haraway, cont.'d; **book reviews and presentations**
- 4/13 Peter Jackson, dir., *King Kong* (2005)
- 4/15 *King Kong*, cont.'d
- 4/17 CSU Graduate Student Symposium**

Animal Rights, Animal Welfare, and Posthumanism

- 4/20 Bernard E. Rollin, "Animal Rights as a Mainstream Phenomenon" (to be distributed)
Class visit by Rollin
- 4/22 Cary Wolfe, "Introduction," *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (2003)
- 4/27 Temple Grandin and Catherine Johnson, *Animals Make Us Human: Creating the Best Life for Animals* (2009)
Class visit by Grandin
- 4/29 Wolfe, "Conclusion: Postmodern Ethics, the Question of the Animal, and the Imperatives of Posthumanist Theory"
- 5/4 Wolfe, cont.'d; **book reviews and presentations**
- 5/6 Recapitulations