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 M 1- 2pm, W 4-5 pm & by appointment

ENG 494/594
 Winter 2011
 M & W 2.00-3.50pm
 PSC 218

Critical Animal Theory

The March 2009 issue of the *Publications of the Modern Language Association* included a special section on “Animal Studies.” From one point of view the study of animals within the humanities seems like an analogue of every other study of a particular set of issues: animal studies follows naturally from Marxist criticism, feminist criticism, postcolonial studies, gender studies, black studies, critical race theory, queer studies, and so on. From another point of view, however, animal studies is clearly the odd one out in this list: what on earth are humanities scholars doing studying *animals*?

This course begins from the premise that animals are not and have never been either naturally and fully in the humanities or naturally and fully alien to it. “The proper study of humankind” has always been humankind’s difference from animals, and it is the humanities’ job to produce this difference. The present humanistic study of animals, however, submits this difference to scrutiny. Is the difference between the human and the animal simple, single, and of the nature of an opposition? Is it given in nature rather than invented by culture? Is this difference simply ontological or is it originarily ethical? If the human needs this difference to constitute itself, to what extent is the animal indifferent to this need?

This course introduces students to the theoretical underpinnings of animal studies, understood as a critical elaboration of the question of the animal within western culture. We will focus our attention on different elaborations of the question of the animal within twentieth- and twenty-first-century theory and literature.

Required books

J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* (Princeton UP, 2001)
 Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (Fordham UP, 2008)
 Matthew Calarco, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*
 (Columbia UP, 2008)

All books are available at the PSU bookstore. All other readings will be available on electronic course reserve through the PSU Millar Library.

Assessment

Participation	20
Presentation	10
Response Papers	20
Critical Essay #1	20
Critical Essay #2	30
Total	100

N.B. You must complete all assignments, and complete them in a timely manner, in order to be eligible to earn a passing grade for the course.

Course Expectations

Attendance For anyone registered in this class, attending class meetings is not an option; it is an obligation. I expect perfect attendance. In the extraordinary event that you do miss a class, I can only assume that it is for unimpeachable reasons. Please do not disabuse me of this belief by telling me why you miss classes. Missing more than two class meetings prevents you from passing the course.

Participation Your participation grade will be assessed on the basis of both the quantity and the quality of your work—not on mere attendance. Participation comprises principally preparedness for and contributions to in-class discussions and peer review workshops, but it can also include engagement in office-hours meetings. Class meetings will be run largely as seminar discussions. I will do my best to make you feel at ease and welcome to contribute to the class conversations. You are expected to come to class having completed the assigned readings, having reflected upon them thoughtfully, and being prepared to discuss them.

Late Work All assignments are to be submitted in class on the due date. Work that is late will receive a lower grade. Exceptions can only be arranged with me prior to the due date. Absence from class on the date due does not excuse the lateness of your assignment.

Academic Dishonesty I expect that all work you produce for the course will be your own. If you plagiarize any material from outside sources for your written work or presentation in this course, it will result in a failure of the entire course. There are no exceptions to this and no second chances.

Disability Resource Center Portland State University provides accommodations for any students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability that may have an impact on your work in this class, please get in touch with me early in the semester so that we can work together to adapt assignments to meet your needs and the requirements of the course. You will also need to contact the Disability Resource Center is located in Room 116 of the Smith Memorial Student Union. Phone: 503-725-4150. Website: <http://www.drc.pdx.edu/>

Format for Written Work Follow Modern Language Association (MLA) formatting guidelines. These include the following features: • double-spacing • 12-point font • 1-inch margins on all four sides • last name and page number in upper-right corner of every page • single-spaced header in upper-left corner of the first page with each of the following on separate lines: your first and last name, ENG 458, assignment name, date of completion • a title, centered and printed in normal style font (no italics, no underlining, and no font size changes). Please do not use a separate title page.

Course Calendar

I. The Question of the Animal

- 1/3 Course introductions
 1/5 Peter Singer, "All Animals Are Equal"; Cary Wolfe, "Introduction" to *Animal Rites*

II. Zoontologies

- 1/10 Martin Heidegger, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (185-200), "Letter on Humanism" (219-34, 247-48)
 1/12 Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (141-60); Matthew Calarco, "Metaphysical Anthropocentrism: Heidegger"
 1/17 Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (1-51); "Violence Against Animals"
 1/19 Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (1-51), Matthew Calarco, "The Passion of the Animal: Derrida"; Critical response #1 due
 1/24 Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (52-118)
 1/26 Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (52-118); Cary Wolfe, "In the Shadow of Wittgenstein's Lion"

III. Zoopolitics

- 1/31 Giorgio Agamben, *The Open* (§ 1-11); Rainer Maria Rilke, "The Eight Duino Elegy"
 2/2 Giorgio Agamben, *The Open* (§ 12-20); Matthew Calarco, "Jamming the Anthropological Machine: Agamben"; Critical essay #1 due
 2/7 Nicole Shukin, "Rendering's Modern Logics"
 2/9 Theodor Adorno, *Beethoven* (excerpt), "People are looking at you"; Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "Man and Beast"; Cary Wolfe, "Before the Law: Animals in a Biopolitical Context"; Franz Kafka, "Before the Law"

IV. Zoopoetics

- 2/14 Franz Kafka, "The Metamorphosis," "A Report to an Academy," "The Animal in the Synagogue"; Maurice Blanchot, "Reading Kafka"
 2/16 Franz Kafka, "A Hunger Artist," "Investigations of a Dog"; Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "What is a Minor Literature?"
 2/21 J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* (3-70)
 2/23 J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* (71-119); Critical response #2 due

V. The Post-Animal

- 2/28 Emmanuel Levinas, "The Face," "The Name of a Dog, or Natural Rights," "The Paradox of Morality"
 3/2 Judith Butler, "Precarious Life, Grievable Life"; Matthew Calarco, "Facing the Other: Levinas"
 3/7 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible ..." (237-60, 272-77, 291-94)
 3/9 Course conclusions
 3/14 Critical essay #2 due