

## **REL 5396: Religion and Animals**

Fall 2009

Tues. 2nd-3rd, Thurs. 3<sup>rd</sup> period

Instructor: Anna Peterson

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11:30-1:30 and Thursdays, 12:40-1:30, and by appointment

### **Description**

This course examines the place of non-human animals in the cosmologies and ethical systems, as well as in practices and institutions, in various religious traditions. Non-human animals have been important in most religions, playing diverse roles as subjects of myth, objects of sacrifice or worship, and symbols and members of communities. We will explore the interpretations and roles of animals in different religions both to illuminate important elements of the religions themselves and to understand the roles of non-human animals in human history and culture generally. Specific topics in the course will include mythical and symbolic animals, animal totems, ritual and sacrifice, ethical concerns about human treatment of animals, relations to domestic/companion animals, and scientific perspectives. Requirements will include full participation in class discussions as well as a number of writing assignments. Students registered for the graduate section (REL 5396) will have several additional reading and writing requirements.

### **Objectives**

1. To gain an understanding of the varied roles played by non-human animals in world religions;
2. To read historical, mythical, scientific, and theological texts critically; and
3. To improve students' ability to write analytically and comparatively about the broad themes and theories, as well as specific texts and cases, studied.

### **Policies, rules, expectations, and resources**

1. *Attendance and reading*: I expect you to attend all meetings of the class, barring extraordinary circumstances, and to come prepared to discuss the reading at each and every class meeting.
2. *Handing in Assignments*: Place all papers in my mailbox in the Religion Department, 107 Anderson Hall. DO NOT slip them under the door or leave them on the door of my office, the main department office, or the teaching assistant's office. Please also keep a dated electronic copy of all your papers.
3. *Late or Make-Up Assignments*: You may receive an extension on an assignment only in extraordinary circumstances *and* with prior approval from the instructor. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down ½ grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.
4. *Completion of All Assignments*: You must complete all written and oral assignments and fulfill the requirement for class participation in order to pass the course. I will not average a grade that is missing for any assignment or requirement.

5. *Common Courtesy*: Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. Students who receive or make calls during class will be asked to leave. You may take notes on a laptop computer or other device, although the instructor reserves the right to ask you to turn off the computer. The instructor also reserves the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class. Repeat violations of these rules will result in dismissal from the class.

6. *Honor Code*: On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. For more information about the definition of these terms and other aspects of the Honesty Guidelines, see <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>. Any student demonstrated to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in any assignment for this course will fail the course. In addition, violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and the sanctions listed in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code.

7. *Accommodation for Disabilities*: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

8. *Counseling Resources* available on campus for students:

- a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575
- b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171
- c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161
- d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601

9. *Software Use*: All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

**Required Books** (Available at Goering's Bookstore, NW 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. and NW 17<sup>th</sup> St.)

1. Paul Waldau and Kimberley Patton, eds., *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science, and Ethics* (Columbia 2006), ISBN 9780231136433 (720pp)
2. Howard L Harrod, *The Animals Came Dancing: Native American Sacred Ecology and Animal Kinship* (Arizona, 2000), ISBN 9780816520275 (170 pp)
3. Marc Bekoff and Jessica Pierce, *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals* (Chicago 2009), ISBN 9780226041612
4. Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (California, 2004), ISBN 9780520243866
5. Vicki Hearne, *Adam's Task: Calling Animals by Name* (Harper, 1994), ISBN 9781602390027

**Article** (available at University Copy Center)

1. Lynn White, Jr., "The Historic Roots of our Ecologic Crisis." *Science* 155, no. 3767 (March 10, 1967): 1203–1207.

**On-line readings**

1. Stories about Saint Francis and animals:

<http://www.americancatholic.org/features/francis/stories.asp>

2. Stories about Buddha and animals:

<http://www.littlelotushearts.com/stories>

3. Frans de Waal, "Are We in Anthropodenial?" *Discover* 18, no. 7 (1997): 50-53.

[http://www.emory.edu/LIVING\\_LINKS/OurInnerApe/pdfs/anthropodenial.html](http://www.emory.edu/LIVING_LINKS/OurInnerApe/pdfs/anthropodenial.html)

4. Human uniqueness: <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn13860-six-uniquely-human-traits-now-found-in-animals.html?full=true>

5. Crows: [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/26/science/26crow.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/26/science/26crow.html?_r=2) ; and

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn14745-crows-make-monkeys-out-of-chimps-in-mental-test.html>;

**Requirements**

1. Active participation in class discussions, based on timely and close reading of all assigned texts and punctual attendance of all class meetings (10% of final grade)

2. Short essay on animals in Native American cultures, myth and ritual, due in class on Tuesday, September 8 (3-4 pages) (20%)

3. Exam on animals in world religions, Tuesday, October 6 (20%)

4. Exam on animal morality and animal rights, November 3 (20%)

5. Final Paper, on human-animal relationships (including at least one interview/observation), due by 10:00 a.m. on Monday, December 15 (6-8 pp) (30%)

**Schedule**

Tues. 8/25

Introduction

**Reading**

Thurs. 8/27

Native American culture

*The Animals Came Dancing*, preface and Chapters 1-2

Tues. 9/1

Native American culture

*The Animals Came Dancing*, Chapters 3-5

Thurs. 9/3

Native American culture

*The Animals Came Dancing*, Chapter 6 and Epilogue

Tues. 9/8	Myth, Ritual, and Art	<i>Communion of Subjects</i> : Doniger, Opuku, McIntosh, Grim, Patton, Lawrence, McDonough, Mortensen, and Cappadona
	* * First short essay due in class Sept. 8 * *	
Thurs. 9/10	Judaism	<i>Communion of Subjects</i> : Klawans, Cohn-Sherbok, and Kalechofsky
Tues. 9/15	Christianity	<i>Communion of Subjects</i> : Kienzle, Steiner, and McDaniel chapters; plus White article *
Thurs. 9/17	Islam	<i>Communion of Subjects</i> : Foltz, Kassam, and Asani
Tues. 9/22	Hinduism and Jainism	<i>Communion of Subjects</i> : Bryant, Chapple, and Wiley
Thurs. 9/24	Buddhism	<i>Communion of Subjects</i> : Harris and Vargas
Tues. 9/29	Chinese Religions	<i>Communion of Subjects</i> : Sterckx, Anderson and Raphals, and Taylor
Thurs. 10/1	Animal Stories	Saint Francis and Buddhist animal stories (online)
Tues. 10/6	First Exam	
Thurs. 10/8	Law, Justice, Philosophy	<i>Communion of Subjects</i> , Wise, Adams, Roberts, Singer, Ames and Paper
Tues. 10/13	Animal Rights	<i>The Case for Animal Rights</i> , Chapters 1-2
Thurs. 10/15	Animal Rights	<i>The Case for Animal Rights</i> , Chapters 3
Tues. 10/20	Animal Rights	<i>The Case for Animal Rights</i> , Chapters 4-5
Thurs. 10/22	Animal Rights	<i>The Case for Animal Rights</i> , Chapter 6
Tues. 10/27	Animal Rights	<i>The Case for Animal Rights</i> , Chapters 7-8
Thurs. 10/29	Animal Rights	<i>The Case for Animal Rights</i> , Chapter 9 and Epilogue
Tues 11/3	Second Exam	

Thurs. 11/5	Animals in Science	<i>Communion of Subjects</i> : Bekoff, Griffin, Hauser, Rollin, and Shapiro
Tues. 11/10	Animal Morality	<i>Wild Justice</i> , Chapters 1 and 2
Thurs. 11/12	Animal Morality	<i>Wild Justice</i> , Chapters 3 and 4
Tues. 11/17	Animal Morality	<i>Wild Justice</i> , Chapters 5 and 6
Thurs. 11/19	Birds	Guest Lecture: LoraKim Joyner Readings (online) De Waal, human uniqueness, and crows
Tues. 11/24	Global Stewardship	<i>Communion of Subjects</i> , Rockefeller, Waldau, Tucker, and Goodall
Thurs. 11/26	Thanksgiving – no class	
Tues. 12/1	Companion animals	<i>Adam's Task</i> , 3-116
Thurs. 12/3	Companion animals	<i>Adam's Task</i> , 117-223 Paws on Parole dogs visit
Tues. 12/8	Companion animals	<i>Adam's Task</i> . 224-268

\* \* Final paper due December 15 at 10:00 a.m. \* \*