Course Code/Title: LCST3562 A, CRN 6831 — Animal Images: Representations of Non-Human Life
Class Meeting Schedule: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:50-5:30, January 27 - May 14, 2014
Location: 65 West 11th Street, Room 260
Professor: Dawnja Burris
Contact Information: burris@newschool.edu
Office Hours: (most) Thursdays, 2:00-4:00 and Fridays, 3:00-5:00 (click to make an appointment)
Office Location: 79 Fifth Avenue, 16th floor, pod 1622
Course Blogsite: http://www.dawnjaburris.info/animalimages/sp2014/

Course Description:
Non-human animals have been represented in various forms of media throughout history. From ancient instances of cave paintings to the plethora of modern day visual media, images of "the animal" have consistently been produced by all human societies, and for a variety of complex purposes. This course traces key instances of animal portrayal through different epochs, with emphasis on identifying the ways in which humans interact with, and maintain, relationships with animals through their mediated image. Drawing upon inter-disciplinary theoretical viewpoints that explore the subject of the animal and humans’ conceptions of them, we examine and question potential motivations and consequences involved in interacting with animals via their presentation as emblems, friends, companions, humanized characters, and wild others.

Examination of visual media is key to the course and students are expected to contribute visual examples to the online course blog for collective analysis, as well as co-creation of a digital gallery that will have an online opening at the end of the semester.
Online Course Components:
The course syllabus, supplemental readings and a listing of additional resources will be maintained online through Canvas. An additional Wordpress blogsite site will be used as the online course studio and discussion space and as the publication site for the final course project. Discussion questions designed to encourage further inquiry into the course topics are presented and discussed. Each student, functioning as an observational social scientist throughout the course, will maintain an online journal space to which the course assignments are posted, including visual research and commentary. Weekly contribution is expected.

Required Reading:
Animals and Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies. Margo DeMello. Columbia Univ. Press, 2012. Available at Amazon, $18.00 (Kindle/i-Pad) - $32.00 (paperback)

Supplemental readings will be posted in the Canvas online course site.

Resources:
Libraries Visit http://library.newschool.edu/ for full information on The New School library resources.
Production Equipment and media labs No media production is required for this class. If you elect to produce media examples to support your written assignments and/or to present in class, you should have access to your own media production equipment or utilize the resources provided to credit students by Academic Computing’s equipment center and computing labs. Full information at: http://my.newschool (Academic Computing section).

Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of the course, a student should possess the following abilities and knowledge:

- Possess an overview of the history of human-animal interactions and resulting representations made of the animal by the human.

- Appreciate the range and depth of cultural examples of animal representation and associated cultural meanings.

- Recognize the intersections of art, science and technology on emergent relational possibilities to and with the animal.

- Be able to pose a research question, conduct research and present findings on topic(s) relating to media representation of the animal supported by historical and philosophical evidence.

- Gain experience in planning, creating and presenting an online exhibition of visual research.
Course Requirements:

**Participation in class - 30%**

Participation is key to the course and includes: offering thoughtful opinion and insights relevant to the weekly and overall course topics and offering examples of media that illustrate them. Be prepared in advance of each class to comment on the previous week’s assigned readings. Dialog and ask questions. Bring the week’s readings to class with you so that we may refer to particular passages and do occasional close readings. Bring example images to class to support each session’s topic and discussion. Participation counts during the onsite class meetings and through your inputs on the course blog site.

Includes: **Animal Association Assessment - 5%**
- Your first assignment is a 500 word description of and reflection on your familiarity and engagement with animals - both actual and figurative.
- Cite your background experiences with animals and the instances in which you witness, utilize, and engage with them. Include when, how and why.
- Post in the online course site and discuss the second week of class.

**Response Posts - 20% (5% each)**

Four descriptive/critical responses to one of the assigned or recommended readings must be posted to the course blogsite.
- You are free to decide which weekly topics/readings you want to respond to.
- To receive credit, each paper must be posted prior to the class session covering the reading you are responding to.
- You are responsible for achieving the 4 response papers before the 12th week of class.
- Each paper’s length should be 500 words.
- You may (and are encouraged to) post media files to illustrate your response posts.

Guidelines for Response Posts:
1. What is the main idea of the reading? What are two subordinate ideas?
2. How does the reading illustrate the theme or topic of the class session? Provide a few examples.
Course Requirements (cont.):

**Midterm Presentation - 30%**
- Prepare and deliver a 20 minute presentation on an example of mediated animal representation, supported by descriptive writing on the example, a theoretical application and visual evidence.
- May be a case study or a unique proposal.
- Your presentation must have a clear thesis, be well-organized and properly cited.
- Conduct 10 min Q and A with the class.

Begins with and includes: **Field Research Report - 10%**
- Visit a location that features animals and/or their representation; observe and produce field notes (written and multimedia); write up a 2 page assessment of your observations, including photos or other media, as appropriate.
- This report serves as the basis for your midterm presentation and is due the week prior to your scheduled presentation date.

**Final Project - 20%**

The final project will be a group endeavor. As a class, we will conceive of, design and create an online exhibition site that will feature categories of animal representation and commentary on the “exhibits.” Throughout the class, we will work to cite animal images, trace their origins and cultural meanings with the mission of critically engaging with what it means to represent the animal and live with the representation. The final project exhibition site will represent the highlights of this work and may propose new questions on the subject. Students will work in subgroups and serve various roles including site design and construction, content acquisition and creation, accompanying text authoring. An onsite “opening" will be held on the final day of class for the University community and students will present and discuss their findings.

**Workload**

You should expect to spend a minimum of **five (5) hours per week** outside of class preparing for and working on graded assignments.

**Final Grade Calculation:**

In order to receive a passing grade for this course, you must complete all the assigned projects by the due dates and actively participate in classroom discussions and critiques. Consideration will be given to how much a student's work has developed and how well that development demonstrates an understanding of the concepts of the course.

**Recap: Your final grade is determined by:**
- Participation: 30%
- Response Posts: 20%
- Midterm Presentation: 30%
- Final Project: 20%

See more on grading and policies on page 9.
Course Outline:

Readings Key:
AAS: Animals and Society
SUP: Supplemental

Locating the Animal

Week 1

Mon., Jan. 27  Course Intro
Assignment: Create Wordpress account, join class website

Wed., Jan. 29  Human-Animal Relationships - Intro

Representing the Animal

Week 2

Mon., Feb. 3  Animals as Symbols
Read: AAS: Part IV, Chapters 14/ Animals in Human Thought and 15/ Animals in Religion and Folklore
SUP: Intro and Chapter 1, Understanding Representation, Jen Webb, Sage, 2009

Assignment Due: Written Animal Association Assessment

Wed., Feb. 5  Animals in Media - Overview
Read: AAS: Part IV, Chapter 16/ Animals in Literature and Film
Read: SUP: Chapter 10/ Addressing Media in What do Pictures Want, W.J.T Mitchell, 2005

Situating the Animal

Week 3

Mon., Feb. 10  Defining the Animal
Read: AAS: Part V, Chapters 17/ Animal Behavior Studies and Ethology and 18/ The Moral Status of Animals
SUP: Chapter 1/ Approaching Humans, Animals, Machines in Humans, Animals, Machines: Blurring Boundaries, Glen A. Mazis, 2008

Wed., Feb. 12  Identifying with the Animal
**Week 4**

**Mon., Feb. 17**  **No Class - President’s Day**

**Wed., Feb. 19** Embodying the Animal
Read: SUP: Chapter 2/ The Common Ground between Animals and Humans in Humans, Animals, Machines: Blurring Boundaries, Glen A. Mazis, 2008

**Mediating the Animal**

**Week 5**

**Mon., Feb. 24** Animals in Film, Television, Video Games

**Wed., Feb. 26** Animals in Advertising and Fashion

**Week 6**

**Mon., Mar. 3** Animals as Pets
Read: AAS: Part II, Chapters 5/ The Domestication of Animals and 8/ The Pet Animal

**Wed., Mar. 5** Animals on Display
Read: AAS: Part II, Chapter 6/ Display, Performance and Sport

**Utilizing the Animal**

**Week 7**

**Mon., Mar. 10** Animals as Food
Read: AAS: Part II, Chapters 4/ Animals “in the Wild” and in Human Societies and 7/ The Making and Consumption of Meat

**Wed., Mar. 12** Animals as Test Subjects
Read: AAS: Part II: Chapter 9/ Animals and Science
Correlating the Animal

Week 8

Mon., Mar. 17  Speciesism, Sexism, Racism, Classism
Read: AAS: Part III: Chapter 13/ Human Oppression and Animal Suffering
SUP: Chapter 3/ Equality for Animals? in Practical Ethics, Peter Singer, 1993

Wed., Mar. 19  Co-Species Existence
Read: SUP: Chapter 1/ Introductions from When Species Meet, Donna Haraway, 2008

**No Class Mon., Mar. 24 or Wed., Mar. 26: SPRING BREAK**

MIDTERM PRESENTATIONS

Week 9

Mon., Mar. 31  Students TBD
Wed., Apr. 2  Students TBD

Week 10

Mon., Apr. 7  Students TBD
Wed., Apr. 9  Students TBD

Week 11

Mon., Apr. 14  (Student Midterm Pickups)
Wed., Apr. 16  Final Project Site Planning
Assessment of content (midterm presentations)
Editorial Mapping; Create Initial Outline/Site Architecture
Select Site Theme
Exhibition Site Production and Continued Animal Representation Study

**Week 12**

**Mon., Apr. 21**  (Re-Visit) Co-Species Existence  
*Read: SUP: Chapter 1/ Introductions from When Species Meet, Donna Haraway, 2008*

**Wed., Apr. 23**  (Re-Visit) Media Representation  
*Read: SUP: Chapter 10/ Addressing Media in What do Pictures Want, W.J.T Mitchell, 2005*

**Week 13**  
http://www.animalcollectivism.com

**Mon., Apr. 28**  (In-Class) Site Pre-Production  
Add Initial Content to Site Sections

**Wed., Apr. 30**  (In-Class) Site Production  
Review and Revise Site Content

**Week 14**

**Mon., May 5**  Animals as Bio-Media  

**Wed., May 7**  Species-Continuing  
*Read: SUP: Conclusion/Human Remains in Human Error: Species Being and Media Machines, Dominic Pettman, 2011*

**Conclusion**

**Week 15**

**Mon., May 12**  Final Site Edits, Rehearse Opening Presentation

**Wed., May 14**  Exhibition Presentation, Location TBA
Criterion for grading individual projects

Each assignment will be graded in part on how well the criteria of the assignment are met. These criteria will be distributed and discussed as assigned. A general guideline follows.

A  4.0  Work of exceptional quality.  95-100%
These are projects/papers that go above and beyond the expectations and requirements described in the assignment. They demonstrate substantial effort and achievement in the areas of critical thinking, technique and presentation.

A-  3.7  Work of very high quality.  90-94%

B+  3.3  Work of high quality, higher than average abilities.  86-89%

B  3.0  Very good work that satisfies goals of course.  83-85%
These are papers/projects that offer a clear and convincing structure that is more complex and unique than a project at the average level. The creator’s point of view and point of the project are merged successfully and organized fairly consistently throughout the project. Although minor structural problems may be present in the assignment, they do not hinder the overall outcome.

B-  2.7  Good work.  80-82%

C+  2.3  Above Average work, Average understanding of course material.  76-79%

C  2.0  Average work; passable.  73-75%
These are papers/projects that demonstrate an engagement with the assignment. The project will show that the creator can identify and work with key ideas and examples found in reference material. Typical of a “C” project is that the original problem or assignment once approached, does not develop further. Projects may also have organizational, technical weaknesses.

C-  1.7  Passing work but below good academic standing.  70-72%

D  1.0  Below average work; does not fully understand the concepts of the course.  60-70%
Although this is passable work, the paper/project only answers the minimum requirements of the assignment. The projects shows very little effort, is incomplete, late or incorrect in its approach. The outcome shows a lack of full understanding and commitment on the part of the creator.

F  0  Failure, no credit.  0-59%

WF  Withdrawal Failing. Instructors may assign this grade to indicate that a student has unofficially withdrawn or stopped attending classes.

See more on the University grading policies at:
http://www.newschool.edu/student-services/academic-policies/grades/
**Attendance Policy**

Absences may justify some grade reduction and a total of four absences mandate a reduction of one letter grade for the course. More than four absences mandate a failing grade for the course, unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as the following: an extended illness requiring hospitalization or visit to a physician (with documentation); a family emergency, e.g. serious illness (with written explanation); observance of a religious holiday. The attendance and lateness policies are enforced as of the first day of classes for all registered students. If registered during the first week of the add/drop period, the student is responsible for any missed assignments and coursework.

For significant lateness, the instructor may consider the tardiness as an absence for the day. Students failing a course due to attendance should consult with an academic advisor to discuss options. Divisional and/or departmental/program policies serve as minimal guidelines, but policies may contain additional elements determined by the faculty member.

**Late Work and Makeup Policy:**

All assignments are due on the date listed. No late assignments will be accepted. In the case of any illness or emergency, an appropriate extended deadline needs to be discussed and agreed upon with me in advance of the due date.

**Etiquette**

All your electronic devices should be switched ‘off/silent’ while class is in session. In order to best be present and engage with the class, you will completely abstain from texting, emailing and other now habitual social media activities during class time. Any media examples that you wish to contribute to the class must be previously uploaded to the course blog site.

**Honor Code**

By taking this course, you agree that you will adhere to The New School’s Standards of Conduct, as well as the New School Academic Honesty policy. The work you do for any assignment should be your own.