

A Cultural History of Animals in Western Culture
From Antiquity to the Present

HUMN 3073/101

TR 9:30-10:50, PY 201

Spring 2016

Professor Kirsten Lodge

kirsten.lodge@mwsu.edu

217 Bea Wood Hall, 940-397-4363

Office Hours: MW 10-11 and 12-1;

F 10-11 and 12-2; TR 11-12:30 and by appointment

This course will take an interdisciplinary approach to the cultural history of animals, an important branch of a new and rapidly growing field of scholarly inquiry known as Animal Studies. We will examine ways in which animals have been perceived in the West from antiquity to the present day through a study of history, philosophy, literature, and the arts. We will discuss questions such as how and why our view of animals has changed over the centuries, what distinguishes humans from other animals, what ethical obligations we have toward animals, and how different representations of animals relate to the historical, philosophical, and cultural backgrounds of different time periods.

Jan. 19 Introduction: Animals before Antiquity

21 Animals in Antiquity: Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Pliny the Elder (excerpts); Ovid (excerpt: Pythagoras); Plutarch, "Beasts Are Rational"

26 The First Fables: *The Jatakas* (nos. 316, 385, 407, 476) and Aesop's *Fables* (selections)

28 Christianity and the Bestiary: The Bible, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure (excerpts); *Physiologus* (nos. 1, 4-6, 8-9, 12-13, 15-16, 18, 20, 27, 30-31, 36-37, 39, 42-43, 45-46); Leonarda Da Vinci, "Bestiary"

Presentation Proposal Due

Feb. 2 The Renaissance Responds: Miguel de Cervantes, *The Dialogue of the Dogs*

First Wikispace Assignment Due

4 Animals and Reason: The Renaissance and the Enlightenment: Michel de Montaigne, "Man Is No Better Than the Beasts" and René Descartes (excerpts)

9 Reason and Bestiality: Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (Part IV)

11 The Satirical Romantic Cat: E.T.A. Hoffman, *The Adventures of Tomcat Murr* (pp. 1-13, 20-27, 46-47, 57-63, 110-13, 136-37, 152-56, 205-9, 244-55, 322)

16 Women and the Diabolical Animal: Edgar Allan Poe, "The Black Cat"; Joyce Carol Oates, "The White Cat"

18 The Sublime Beast: Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* ("Moby Dick," "The Whiteness of the Whale")

Second Wikispace Assignment Due

23 The Realist Horse: Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (excerpt); Anton Chekhov, "Heartache," Leo Tolstoy, "Strider," Vladimir Mayakovsky and Nikolai Zabolotsky, horse poems

- 25 Darwinism:** Charles Darwin (excerpts); H.G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, pp. 71-118 and 198-210
- Mar. 1** Wells, pp. 188-174
Third Wikispace Assignment Due
3 Wilderness vs. Civilization: Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*
8 Fauvism, Primitivism and Expressionism: Fyodor Sologub, “On the Other Side of the River Mairure”
10 A Modernist Menagerie: Rainer Maria Rilke, selected poems
First Paper Proposal Due
15 Kafka’s Animals: Franz Kafka, “A Report to the Academy,” “Investigations of a Dog,” “The Burrow”
17 Woman’s Best Friend: Virginia Woolf, *Flush*; Elizabeth Browning, poems to Flush
First Paper Due
22-29 No Class
30 Last Day for “W”
31 Racism and Speciesism: Art Spiegelman, *Maus*
- Apr. 5 Animal Ethics:** Lori Gruen: *Ethics and Animals: An Introduction*, ch. 1, 2, & 4
7 Gruen, ch. 5-6
12 Gruen, ch. 3 & 7
Fourth Wikispace Assignment Due on April 12
14 No Class
19 Postmodernist Animal Philosophy and Ethics: Peter Singer, “All Animals Are Equal,” “Man’s Dominion”; Jacques Derrida, “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)”
21 The Postmodern Animal: Julio Cortázar, “Axolotl”; Italo Calvino, *Mr. Palomar* (pp. 19-28, 51-66, 76-78); Eric Chevillard, *Palafox* (ch. 4)
26 Animal Rights: J.M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*
28 Past, Present, and Future Farms: Leo Tolstoy, “The First Step”; Vladimir Makanin, “The Long Road Ahead”
Fifth Wikispace Assignment Due
- May 3-5** Don LePan, *Animals*
Final Paper Proposal Due on May 3
12 Final Paper Due

Course Requirements:

- 1. Participation (10%).** Participation in class discussions will help you to understand and remember the material. It will also demonstrate that you have done the reading and improve your critical thinking and verbal communication skills. I encourage you to speak with all of your classmates and respond to one another’s ideas during discussion, rather than addressing your thoughts only to me. Note that participation is different from attendance! Participation means talking in class.
- 2. Daily Assignments (30%):** For each class meeting, I will post one question on the readings on D2L under **Dropbox**. In your response, you should answer my question and

pose one discussion question of your own. Your question should not be a yes/no or a factual question, but rather one that you believe will stimulate class discussion. Each assignment must be submitted online by 8:30 a.m. on the day of the class. Only I will see your responses and questions, though I may use them in class anonymously. You must look at your grades and read my responses to your assignments—they are for you, and I will give you feedback on how to improve your responses in the future. You will receive grades for your responses as follows:

90-100 (A): excellent to outstanding

80-89 (B): good to very good

70-79 (C): acceptable to satisfactory

60-69 (D): very poor to poor

0-59 (F): unacceptable

If you have an excused absence, you may submit the assignment by the day you return to class. If this is the case, please write in your submission why you were absent, as I sometimes forget. If you are absent and your absence is not excused, you are nevertheless responsible for submitting the day's assignment on time. *No other late assignments responses will be accepted.*

If you will not have Internet access, please see me at the start of the semester so I can give you a different kind of assignment.

3. Presentation (10%). You will give a 10-15 minute research-based PowerPoint or Prezi presentation on any topic of your choice that has to do with animals. It does not have to be on the class material, and it may be in any discipline. You must submit a presentation proposal by **Jan. 28**. Once your proposal has been approved, the date of the presentation will be determined. I strongly encourage you to discuss your ideas with me beforehand. On the day of the presentation, you should submit to me an outline and a list of at least three reliable scholarly sources that you consulted. The list should be in MLA or APA style. If you are not familiar with these citation styles, please visit the Writing Center for assistance. Your presentation will be graded using a rubric that will be distributed on the first day of class and available on D2L.

4. Midterm Paper (15%). You must propose a topic for a 3-4 page paper by **March 10** and submit the paper by **March 17**. I encourage you to discuss your topic with me beforehand. Your paper topic should be different from your presentation topic, and it must be on a subject we covered in class. Your paper may be research-based, or it may offer an original interpretation of one or more works of literature, philosophy, or art.

5. Final Paper (25%). You must propose a topic for a 6-7 page paper by **May 3** and submit the paper by **May 12**. I encourage you to discuss your topic with me beforehand. Your paper topic should be different from your presentation topic, and it must be on a subject we covered in class. Your paper may be research-based, or it may offer an original interpretation of one or more works of literature, philosophy, or art.

6. Wikispace Postings (10%): We will have a course wikispace, where we will be posting images and other media related to our readings. You will post something related to the course material since the previous wikispace assignment, and comment on your post. You may comment on why you chose it and/or how it relates to our class discussions. You must post something that has not already been posted on the wikispace; this means that you will have to look at everyone else's posts before adding your own. You will receive a $\sqrt{+}$ if you provide information (i.e., in the case of artworks, title, artist, and date), comment, and do the assignment on time. If some of the information is lacking and/or the assignment is late, you will receive a $\sqrt{}$ or $\sqrt{-}$. You will get no credit for posting a duplicate. I can tell who posted first! Choose the most interesting media you can find, because at the end of the semester we will vote for the best posts. You may post as much as you want on the wikispace, and you will get extra credit for everything you post in addition to the assignment, including written descriptions of your posts, particularly good commentary, and all additional images or other media.

Once you have joined the wikispace, you can sign into it at www.wikispaces.com. You may want to bookmark this address for convenience. I will also post a link on Blackboard.

Final Wikispace Contest Rules: Review all of the posts and vote for at least five and at most ten favorites. Send me your vote by email, including the students' names and the titles or descriptions of their posts. You may cast a "double vote" for any posts you especially like. The winners will receive extra credit, which may raise their final grade. However, you cannot win if you do not vote!

7. Attendance. You must attend class to help you master and contextualize the material. You are permitted two unexcused absences. Absences will be excused on the basis of a note from a doctor, dean, military official, or coach. If you believe that your absence should be excused but you do not have a note, you must see me in person and explain your absence. Your explanation must be more detailed than "I didn't feel well" or "I was sick." I will then tell you whether your absence is excused. Having to work does not constitute an excused absence. ***Communication is essential:*** if you do not explain your absence to me immediately before or after, it will not be excused. Your final grade will be lowered by one point for each unexcused absence in excess of the two permitted unexcused absences. If you are absent, you are responsible for all material covered during that class section. Repeated lateness will also add up to absences: three "lates" will be counted as one absence.

Please check your grades online regularly and let me know if you have any questions.

Course Policies:

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism will not be tolerated, including on the daily assignments. If you deliberately plagiarize on any assignments or papers, or engage in any other form of academic dishonesty as defined by the MSU Student Handbook and the course Academic Dishonesty Policy (distributed in class and available on D2L), ***you***

will get an F in the course and disciplinary proceedings will be initiated. There will be no second chances. Other forms of academic dishonesty include, for instance, forging doctor's notes and lying to the professor.

Late Papers: Grades for late papers will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade per day (e.g., A > A-), including weekends and holidays, unless you have a good reason for submitting the paper late and you have spoken to me about it.

Cellphones: No cellphones should be visible in class at any time! Exception: if you wish to consult an e-text on your cellphone, iPad, or computer, please tell me ahead of time.

Computers: I prefer that you do not use your computer in class, but if you would really like to take notes on your computer, please let me know at the beginning of the semester. I may ask to see your class notes to ensure that's really what you've been doing! See also the exception above.

Attention: Please be alert and do not lay your head down on your desk during class, or I may mark you late or absent without warning.

Class Dismissal: Please do not start to pack up your things or leave until I have dismissed the class. If you believe I have gone over the allotted time, please raise your hand and let me know.

Food and Beverages: You may bring beverages to class, but please do not eat while class is in session.

Email Communication: The only way I can communicate with you outside of class is through email. You are responsible for checking your "preferred" email regularly for any reminders, clarifications, or other communications from me.

Safe Zone Statement: This classroom is a "safe zone" in which all students will be treated and will treat one another equally, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Diversity of thought is encouraged.

REPEATED AND/OR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF ANY OF THESE POLICIES WILL RESULT IN A LOWERED GRADE WITHOUT WARNING, ESPECIALLY IF YOUR GRADE IS BORDERLINE.

Additional Information:

Materials on D2L: Some course materials will not be available in print. I will provide either a link to the assigned text or a scanned copy on D2L. Unfortunately, stricter copyright laws prohibit me from distributing these texts to you, even if they are in the public domain.

PowerPoint Presentations and Online Videos: I will provide a link on D2L to all PowerPoint presentations and online videos shown in class so that you may review them. Additional recommended materials may occasionally be posted on D2L.

Office Hours: My office hours are given above, and I am always happy to help you with any questions you may have, or you may just come by to talk. You may also contact me by phone or email; email is much better, because I check it more often than I check phone messages.

Academic Accommodations: If you require special accommodations, please contact Disability Support Service, 168 Clark Student Center, 397-4140, at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Arrangements cannot be applied retroactively.

Required Books:

Asterisks mean that you must use that edition. These books are available at the bookstore and on reserve at the library.

- *Cervantes, Miguel de. *Dialogue of the Dogs*. Random House, 2008.
- Coetzee, J.M. *The Lives of Animals*. Princeton UP, 2001.
- *Curley, Michael. *Physiologus*. U of Chicago P, 2009.
- *Derrida, Jacques. *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Fordham UP, 2008.
- Gruen, Lori. *Animal Ethics: An Introduction*. Cambridge UP, 2011.
- *Hoffmann, E.T.A. *The Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr*. Penguin, 1999.
- Kafka, Franz. *Collected Stories*. Everyman's Library, 1993. (You may use any translation of the stories on the syllabus, but this book contains them all.)
- LePan, Don. *Animals*. Soft Skull Press, 2010.
- London, Jack. *The Call of the Wild*. Any edition, or read for free online.
- Makanin, Vladimir. *Escape Hatch*. Penguin, 2009.
- Montaigne, Michel de. *Apology for Raymond Sebond*. Hackett, 2003.
- Spiegelman, Art. *Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. Pantheon Books, 1991. (You may purchase or borrow volumes 1 and 2 separately if you prefer.)
- Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels*. Penguin, 2003.
- *Wells, H.G. *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. Broadview Press, 2009.
- Woolf, Virginia. *Flush: A Biography*. Mariner Books, 1976.