

ANIMALS AS MEDIA SCHOOL OF MEDIA STUDIES THE NEW SCHOOL SPRING 2019



Course Code: NMDS 5136 / CRN 3162

Class Meeting Schedule: January 22 - May 13, 2019

Location: Online

Professor: Dawnja Burris

Contact Information: burris@newschool.edu

Course Description

Historically, non-human animals have been represented by human societies in various forms of media and used as media themselves. From ancient instances of cave paintings to the plethora of contemporary visual media and objects, images of "the animal" continue to be produced for a variety of complex purposes. Carried within each artifact is a long and complicated series of human-animal interconnections proceeding from historical, cultural, political and philosophical constructions. This course traces key instances and themes of animal portrayal through various media and genres, with emphasis on identifying the ways in which humans interact with and maintain relationship with animals *through* the mediated image. Drawing upon inter-disciplinary theoretical viewpoints that explore the subject of "the animal" and humans' conceptions of "it", we examine and question potential motivations and consequences involved in interactions with animals as emblems, friends, companions, food, utility and wild others.

Course Structure and Assignments

Each week you responsible for completing and discussing a set of readings. A **lecture** corresponding to the readings and posing discussion questions are posted each **Monday**. Each student is expected to engage by **participating in the weekly discussions** and by sharing an example of an animal in or as media by **Wednesday** and to continue to monitor and contribute the class discussion through the week. **A total of four reading responses**, which may be chosen by the student from the semester's readings, serve as additional content for class discussion. **Additional assignments include a midterm consisting of three iterative parts: the idea and plan, a research report and a presentation on the research and a final which proceeds from the midterm research.** These assignments are each due at the beginning of the assigned week on Monday so that we have the full week to consider and thoughtfully address each student's work.

Final researched and illustrated essays are posted on an online student journal associated with the class at the end of the semester: <http://animalinstances.com>

Email

Please check your email regularly. I will use email to notify the class of any schedule or assignment changes. Email is also a way for you to ask me basic questions. We can also schedule phone or Skype appointments to discuss more complicated questions.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students should:

- Possess an overview of the history of human-animal interactions and resulting media representations made of the non-human animal.
- Appreciate the range and depth of examples of animal representation and associated cultural meanings.
- Recognize the intersections of art, science and technology on emergent relational possibilities between human and non-human animals.
- Conduct research and present findings on topic(s) relating to media representation of the non-human animal supported by historical and philosophical evidence.

Final Grade Calculation

Participation - 30%

Reading Responses - 20%

Midterm (report: 15%, presentation: 15%) - 30%

Final - 20%

Course Requirements (Details)

Participation in class - 30%

Consistent participation in the weekly discussions is key to the course and includes completing all of the readings and offering thoughtful opinion and insights relevant to the weekly and overall course topics. This may be accomplished by:

- posting a minimum of one response or question per discussion topic; monitoring that discussion and responding as it develops and posting additional replies to other students' posts.
- posting an example of an animal in or as media along with a brief description, comment or reflection
- The full amount of the participation grade will be issued when you clearly demonstrate that you are participating fully and thoughtfully in the discussions, and are actually furthering the discussion with your posts.

In order to establish a routine, my weekly content and discussion questions will be posted on each week on Monday afternoon. Your initial discussion responses are due on Wednesday by 11:59pm EST.

Participation starts with your: *Animal Association Assessment (Due Jan 23)*

- Your first assignment is a 500 word description of and reflection on your familiarity and engagement with animals - both actual and media representations.
- Cite your experiences with animals in all forms and the instances in which you witness, utilize, and engage with them. Include when, how and why.
- Discuss and get to know each other.

Reading Responses - 20% (5% each) (Due by May 6)

Four descriptive/critical responses to one of the assigned or recommended readings.

- You are free to decide which weekly topics/readings you want to respond to.
- **To receive credit, each post must be posted by Monday, 11:59pm EST of the week the reading is discussed.**
- You are responsible for achieving the 4 response posts before the 15th week of class.
- Each post's length should be at least 500 words.
- You may (and are encouraged to) post media files to illustrate your reading response posts.

Guidelines for Reading Response Posts:

1. What is (one of) the main idea(s) of the reading?
2. How does the reading correspond with or illustrate the theme or topic of the class session?
3. What elaborations or questions do you have for the author?

Course Requirements (cont.)

Midterm Research Project Idea and Discussion - (weekly participation points) (Due Feb 25)

- Prepare a one page or annotated outline describing a research subject (on an animal in human society pursuant to the topics of our course) you would like to pursue as your semester's work.
- Include initial relevant images and share with the class, posing questions that will assist you as you conduct your research.

Midterm Research Report - 15% (Due March 25)

- Begin with an abstract that describes your subject and approach. Include a research statement, question or general aim, then follow with a description of the sources you are drawing from (both textual and visual).
- If applicable, visit a location that features animals and/or their representation; observe and produce field notes (written and multimedia); write up your observations, including photos or other media, as appropriate.
- This report serves as the basis for your midterm presentation (see next component).

Midterm Presentation and Discussion - 15% (Due April 8)

- Prepare and deliver (via posted text and illustration; audio or video) a presentation equivalent to 20 minutes on an example of mediated animal representation, supported by descriptive writing on the example, a theoretical application and visual evidence.
- Your presentation must have a clear thesis, be well-organized and properly cited (text and images).
- Conduct Q and A with the class via weekly discussion.

Final - 20% (Due May 6)

The final project will be a refinement of your midterm research fashioned as a contribution to the developing digital journal Animal Instances (animalinstances.com). Your contributing posts will represent the semester's fruits of this work and may propose new questions on the overall subject.

Course Outline

Recommended historical reference text: *Kalof, Looking at Animals in Human History*

Situating The Animal

Week 1: Jan 22 - 27 (Tues start)

Animals as Symbols

- DeMello - Chapter 14/ *Animals in Human Thought, Animals and Society*
- Manghani - Introduction, *Image Studies: Theory and Practice*
- McKay - Representation/ *Critical Terms for Animal Studies*

Assignment: post “animal association assessment”

Week 2: Jan 28 - Feb 3

Figuring the Animal

- Weil - Intro, *Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?*
- Probyn-Rapsey - Anthropocentrism/ *Critical Terms for Animal Studies*
- Manghani - Chapter 2/ *Understanding Images, Image Studies: Theory and Practice*

Week 3: Feb 4 - 10

Defining the Animal

- DeMello - Chapter 15/ *Animals in Religion and Folklore, Animals and Society*
- Tapper - Chapter 4/ *Animality, Humanity, Morality, Society, What is an Animal?*
- Weil - Difference/ *Critical Terms for Animal Studies*

Locating the Animal

Week 4: Feb 11 - 17

Menageries, Zoos, Aquariums

- Berger - *Why Look at Animals?, Why Look at Animals?*
- Marino - *Captivity/ Critical Terms for Animal Studies*
- Hoage and Deiss, Eds. - selection, *New Animals: From Menagerie to Zoological Park in the Nineteenth Century*

Week 5: Feb 18 - 24

Literature and Film

- DeMello - Chapter 16/ *Animals in Literature and Film, Animals and Society*
- Malloy - Chapter 3/ *Stars: Animal Performers*
- and Chapter 8 / *Monsters: Horrors and Moral Panics, Popular Media and Animals*

Week 6: Feb 25 - Mar 3

Pets

- DeMello - Chapter 8/ *The Pet Animal, Animals and Society*
- Fudge - *Intro, Animal*
- Weil - Chapter 3 / *Is the Pet an Animal?, Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?*

Week 7: Mar 4 - 10 **MIDTERM IDEA and DISCUSSION**

(Re) Contemplating Relationship with the Animal

Week 8: Mar 11 - 17

Co-Species Connections

- Haraway - Chapter 1/ *Introductions, When Species Meet*
- Fuentes and Porter - *Kinship/ Critical Terms for Animal Studies*
- Aloï - *Why Look at Animals Now?, Art & Animals*

No Required Class Participation Mar. 18 - 24: SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Mar 25 - 31

Hunting, Sport, Emblem

- Britz - *Beautiful Animals in Hunting Wonderland, Antennae 8A*
 - Baker - Chapter 2/ *Eagles, Lions and Bulldogs: an Iconography of Power, Picturing the Beast: Animals, Identity and Representation*
- Assignment Due: Midterm Research Report**

Week 10: Apr 1 - 7

Wildlife Genre

- Chris - Chapter 1/ *The Wildlife Film Era, Watching Wildlife*
- Bousé - Chapter 1/ *The Problem of Images, Wildlife Films*

Week 11: Apr 8 - 14. **MIDTERM PRESENTATIONS and DISCUSSION**

Week 12: Apr 15 - 21

Museum, Theme Park, Gallery

- *Desmond - Chapter 9/ Displaying Death, Animating Life, Representing Animals*
- *Aloi - Chapter 2/ Taxidermy: Subjugated Wildness, Art & Animals*
- *Fox - Constructed Reality: The Diorama as Art, Antennae 6*

Week 13: Apr 22 - 28

Dinner and Science

- *DeMello - Chapter 7/ The Making and Consumption of Meat, Animals and Society*
- *Adams - selections, The Sexual Politics of Meat*
- *Deckha - Postcolonial/ Critical Terms for Animal Studies*
- *Herzog - Chapter 8/ The Moral Status of Mice: The Use of Animals in Science, Some we Love, Some we Hate, Some we Eat*

Engineering the Animal

Week 14: Apr 29 - May 5

Bio-Media and Bio-Politics

- *Wadiwel - Biopolitics/ Critical Terms for Animal Studies*
- *Aloi - Chapter 4/ An Uncomfortable Closeness, Art & Animals*
- *Mazis - Chapter 1/ Approaching Humans, Animals, and Machines, Humans, Animals, Machines: Blurring Boundaries*

Week 15: May 6 - 12

Electric Animals

- *Riffel - Animals at the End of the World, Making Animal Meaning: Notes toward a Transspecies Eschatology*
Final Project Elements Due

(Re) Imagining the Animal

Week 16: May 13. **Semester Debrief**

Course Policies

Attendance and Participation

The New School requires all credit students attend every class. Since this is an online class, weekly, intensive participation in class discussions is critical. If you must be absent, please notify me in advance via email. It is your responsibility to make up for any work missed. One absence (counted as one week's worth of reading and assignments) in the semester will not affect your grade. Missing more than that will adversely affect your grade, unless there are exceptional, and appropriately documented reasons.

Criterion for grading individual projects

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 weekly discussions. Consideration will be given to how much your work has developed and how well that development demonstrates an understanding of the concepts of the course. 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.

See more on the University grading policies at:

<http://www.newschool.edu/student-services/academic-policies/grades/>

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.

Incompletes

No incompletes will be given in this class. For anyone needing a grade, the absolute last day to turn in work is **MAY 6**.

University Resources & Policies

Resources

The university provides many resources to help students achieve academic and artistic excellence. These resources include:

- The University (and associated) Libraries: <http://library.newschool.edu>
- The University Learning Center: <http://www.newschool.edu/learning-center>
- University Disabilities Services: <https://www.newschool.edu/student-disability-services/>

In keeping with the university's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations is welcome to meet with me privately. All conversations will be kept confidential. Students requesting any accommodations will also need to contact Student Disability Service (SDS). SDS will conduct an intake and, if appropriate, the Director will provide an academic accommodation notification letter for you to bring to me. At that point, I will review the letter with you and discuss these accommodations in relation to this course.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

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. Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, academic warning, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university. Students are responsible for understanding the University's policy on academic honesty and integrity and must make use of proper citations of sources for writing papers, creating, presenting, and performing their work, taking examinations, and doing research. It is the responsibility of students to learn the procedures specific to their discipline for correctly and appropriately differentiating their own work from that of others. The full text of the policy, including adjudication procedures, is found at: <https://www.newschool.edu/about/university-resources/policies/>