Wherever human symbolic expression arises, animals appear. Since the earliest
cave paintings of the Paleolithic period, animals have been at the centre of the
human imagination. While as humans we define ourselves by how we differ
from and relate to animals, our ideas, stories, and images vary and change.
Some cultures imagine a shifting boundary between humans and animals, and
figure animals as deities, magicians, or messengers that play important roles in
their religious symbolism, origin stories or fables of justice. In modern western
culture, humans defined their species specifically in terms of what humans are
or can do in opposition to what animals are or can do, and consequently
animals’ powers and uses are more circumscribed. For founders and
fundaments of modern science, the human species was defined and elevated by
what separated man from beast. For many contemporary thinkers, whether
scientists or artists, this boundary is shifting again. With new knowledge and
perception, we recognize so-called human qualities in some animals, and so-
called animal qualities in human behaviour. How does this knowledge change
us?
The animal plays an important role in beliefs that unite a culture. At the same time, we often use animals to explain social, national, ethnic, cultural, or religious distinctions between people. We are not beasts: they are. (But maybe we are.) This anthropological tradition, combined with the influences of consumer culture and environmental risk, makes human-animal relations one of the most pressing issues of our time.

To help us gain a deeper sense of how animals matter in human culture, we explore social history, cultural studies, philosophy, religious history, literature, film, and visual culture. We ask how we meaning-making humans make animals mean, how animals fare in their various relations with humans, and how scholars, writers and artists provide fresh insights into these questions.

This is a lecture and seminar course emphasizing close readings, class discussions and research projects. Class attendance, participation, and coming to class prepared for discussion are mandatory, and factored into the course grading structure.

**COURSE RESOURCES**

**Required Texts**

J. Berland (ed), Coursekit, Humanities 3016.


Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto*. 
Course Website

We will be using the York Moodle Course Management System (CMS) for course materials, discussions, and announcements. You access this site through Passport York. For an open discussion of issues in the course, visit the Forum. To add your own multimedia conten, go to the WikiMedia section. For resources on using Moodle, visit http://moodle.yorku.ca/students/ To get started, see http://moodle.yorku.ca/students/documentation.htm http://moodle.yorku.ca/. For technical assistance, send an email to helpdesk@yorku.ca. Supplementary course materials, assignments and a class forum will be posted on the site.

COURSE POLICIES

Cell phones, Blackberries, iPods, PDAs, laptops or other electronic devices may not be used in the classroom except during in-class projects or by permission. If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class or that requires accommodation, please see me so that we can make appropriate arrangements. Research shows conclusively that people grasp and retain ideas, and perform better, when they do not use personal computers in class. When we look at screens in class, we will do so together.

Course Learning Objectives

1. To make students aware of the ever present but often overlooked significance of non-human animals in humanistic thought and culture.

2. To explore human self-understanding as the product of posited distinctions between humans and animals.

3. To help students develop critical skills, including writing, synthesizing ideas, and being able to explain how symbolic representations work in culture and everyday life.

4. To interest and engage students in significant cultural, social and ethical debates about animals in contemporary life.
ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES (each marked from 100%)

Presentations / Discussion facilitations. 15%
Presentation response 10%
Fall term paper, 6 pages. Due December 2. 15%
Two reading journals: summary plus commentary due November 16 & April 7, 2 x 5% 10%
Research proposal: required to submit paper (no grade but required for essay grade): 1.5 pages + bibliography. Due March 21
Research paper: 12-14 pages. Due April 4. 15%
Participation: see details below (5% written questions; 5% contributions to class discussion; 5% online forum) 15%
Final exam: 20%

Plagiarism on any written assignment is a serious academic offense and will be treated accordingly. If you are unsure about academic integrity in courses, see http://www.yorku.ca/acadinte/students/. For an on-line tutorial about academic integrity, see http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/. Not knowing the rules is not accepted as an explanation in a 3000 level course.

Lateness Penalty
Late assignments will be penalized per day with a minimum deduction of 5%. Students with a valid reason for missing a due date, such as illness or compassionate grounds, confirmed by supporting documentation, may request accommodation from the Course Director.
Discussion Facilitation Guidelines
On assigned weeks, two students will facilitate seminar discussion of assigned readings. Every student will play both roles in the course.

1) As presenter, your job is to draw out the main ideas in the assigned reading, to discuss them, and to lead a class discussion on the basis of those ideas. **Do not summarize the reading at length, but assume everyone has read it.** Your job is to keep us oriented to **one or two of the most important ideas or debates** in the reading and to **explain why they are important**. You may respond to, defend, critique or expand the position of the author. You may present texts or clips to illustrate the author’ ideas or your response to the text. Finally you will **generate and pose questions for discussion**. The presenter must provide a draft to the respondent at least 48 hours prior to class.

2) As respondent, you will respond to the presentation on the assigned readings. The respondent will give useful feedback on the presentation, help connect the reading to themes of the course, and raise additional questions about the reading to help the discussion.

Each individual presentation should last around **15-20 minutes**, the respondent around **10 minutes**, and the class discussion **15-20 minutes**. (In short, the presentation, the response and the discussion have **one hour of class time** each week.) Presenters will lose marks if they speak for longer than 20 minutes in their initial presentation. The presenter will also lead the discussion with the help of the presenter, and know when to end it without cutting something off. Your presentation will be evaluated by equal rating of these factors: *the grasp of ideas, *the clarity of presentation, *how well it speaks to ideas and issues of the course, and *contribution to class discussion and understanding. The respondent will be graded according to the same criteria.

**Weekly questions.** Each week, write a question or commentary on the reading and bring it to class. Write your name at the bottom of the page. I will call on students randomly and the questions selected will be filed as evidence of participation. These questions constitute 5% of your participation mark.

**Journal commentaries.** Keep written journals about the readings, it helps with comprehension, discussion, assignments, essays and exams. Each term post two written reviews with a brief summary and commentary on the reading.
**Participation.** Here is how participation is evaluated.

0 – 4 Missed class or didn’t show up with course reading material in ink-on-paper form.
5 - 6 Brings assigned readings (hard copies) and written questions to class, participates in the class.
7-8 Brings texts and questions to class, draws on these in class participation, makes contributions to the discussion.
9-10. Brings excellent written questions, participates in discussions, makes thoughtful contributions, listens and responds helpfully to other students, contributes positively to class learning.

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**September 10.** *Introduction to the course.*

**Part One. Thinking the Human through Animals.**

**September 14.** Human origin stories.
*Holy Bible: Genesis 1-2, 7-8, and other texts.* Begin reading *The Animals’ Lawsuit.*

**September 21:** Gods, humans, animals.

**September 28:** Human-animal understanding.
Montaigne, Michel. “Man Is No Better Than The Beast.” In *Montaigne, 7-8.* *Apology for Raymond Sebond.* (ck)

**October 5:** Human-animal boundaries
Mary Midgeley, “Beasts, Brutes and Monsters” in Tim Ingold (ed), *What is an Animal?* (ck)

**October 12:** Thanksgiving Monday

**October 19:** Introduction to Anthropomorphism
Timothy Clark, “Anthropomorphism,” *Cambridge Introduction to Literature and
*the Environment*, Chapter 19, 192-201 (ck)

**October 26:** The Human Animal.

**November 2.** Fall Reading Days

**November 9.** *Life of Pi*. Screening, discussion, summary of Part I.

*First reading journal due.*

**PART TWO. LOOKING AT ANIMALS**

**November 16.** Bridging image and idea in historical perspective.

**November 23.** Looking at animals.

**November 30.** Framed and famous animals.

**December 7.** Animals in film and photography.

*Fall term paper due.*

-- **HOLIDAY** --

**January 4.** The Sexual Politics of Animals.

**January 11.** Animals in Zoos.
Malamud, *Introduction to Animals in Visual Culture*, Chapter 6
Guest lecture: Rob Laidlaw, Executive Director, Zoocheck
January 18. Animals in Museums. (Taxidermy and Art.)

**PART THREE. ANIMALS AT HOME**

January 25. People in disguise?
James Serpell, “People in Disguise: Anthropomorphism and the Human-Pet Relationship”(ck)

February 1. In defense of pets
Donna Haraway, Companion Species Manifesto.

February 8. Living with pets.
Erica Fudge, ‘Living with Pets,” in Fudge, Pets.

**PART FOUR. VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE VIOLENCE**

February 15. Experiments in social history.
Roger Darnton, “The Great Cat Massacre” in Darnton, The Great Cat Massacre and Other Essays (ck).

February 22. Reading Week.

February 29. Troubling history.

March 7. Cruelty and compassion.
Recommended:
Kelly Oliver, “You Are What you Eat: Rousseau’s Cat.” Animal Lessons: How They Teach Us to be Human. (ck).

*Second reading journal due*
March 14. Distance and Distancing.  


March 28. Easter Monday

**Part Five. Stories and Reflections**

**April 4.** Franz Kafka. *A Report to the Academy.*  
Thomas King, “The One About Coyote Going West.” In Daniel Moses and Terry Goldie (eds) *Anthology of Native Canadian Literature in English* (ck)

**Class Summary and discussion.**

*Final essay due.*