GS/ARTH 5140 3.0 Envisioning Animals: Animals and Visual Culture

Course Director: Matthew Brower
Class location and hours: Monday 11:30-2:30 in CFA 338
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Course description and objectives: This course deals with the role of visual depictions of animals in aesthetic, activist, environmental and biological contexts. It explores the role of imagery in constituting contemporary and historical conceptions of animality. The course objectives are to develop an understanding of the importance of imagery in human-animal relations.

Format: Three hours of weekly seminars with commonly-assigned readings to serve as the basis for discussion.


Requirements and grade weighting:
Active involvement in seminar discussions (20%)
Thought pieces 10% each = (20%)
Analysis of an animal representation (15%)
Term Paper (45%)

a) Thought pieces.
Generally these brief essays select two or more of the assigned week’s readings and identify and discuss the author’s questions, methods and arguments, and the relationships of these readings to one another. Simply summarizing the articles you read without engaging with the arguments they present or issues they raise will result in a failing grade. Be creative and be thoughtful. Each piece should end with two or more questions for discussion. The pieces are due at the class in which the selected readings are discussed. One should be handed in before Thanksgiving (October 10) and the other after.

b) Analysis
This is a short (4 page) essay examining an animal representation. Students will examine how the representation presents animality and analyse the implications (aesthetic, political, environmental) of the representation in relation to the work of the course. This is due on November 14.

c) Term Paper Due December 16
This is a substantial research project on any aspect of animal representation. The piece should make an argument about the topic rather than simply describing it. Keep in mind the specifics of the assignment and the following general description of an excellent written assignment:

1. The paper begins with an interesting and reasonable thesis.
2. The paper applies what you have been learning by drawing on relevant readings and class discussions.
3. The paper adds your own insights to the analysis. The quality of your own ideas is important. Show your own independent thinking as much as possible.
4. The paper is convincing. You have the responsibility to justify your arguments. You must back up your points or conclusion. Support your argument by using evidence from your visual analysis of the work and from your reading and research. Be as explicit and concrete as possible. Think about your reader as you write and ask yourself if you are really conveying what you need to say. This can often be assessed most easily by asking someone else to read over your paper.
5. The paper does not paraphrase the ideas of others. This undermines the strength of the argument. When you are quoting a fact you can add a brief footnote explaining the extent of the reference. When you are referring to an idea put forth by another person, you should quote them clearly in the text. Otherwise, it is difficult for the reader to establish what portion of the sentence is yours.
6. The paper is well organized. It has an introduction with a thesis (argument), it has a body supporting this thesis, and it ends with a conclusion summarizing the main points.
7. The paper has no spelling and grammatical errors.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS
All late work will lose 10% of the assignment per day.

PARTICIPATION
Participation is mandatory and since this participation requires your presence in the classroom, attendance is mandatory as well. You will be asked to participate in the class in a variety of ways. In order to receive full marks for participation you must be present, on time and well prepared at every class and you must also contribute to the discussion in ways that are both thoughtful and respectful. Coming late to class, leaving early, not being prepared and not participating in class or small group discussions all make the class less enjoyable for everyone and will impact your grade. When you are late or absent, you are responsible for finding out what happened in class by contacting one of your classmates.

SPECIAL NEEDS
Students with disabilities, particular religious beliefs, or others who might need some modifications to be made to the course schedule or requirements, should see me during office hours, as soon as possible, to make arrangements.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Envisioning Animals
Week 1 September 12
Introduction

Week 2 September 19
Looking at Animals

**Week 3 September 26**

**Early Animal Photography and Camera Hunting**


**Week 4 October 3**

**Chronophotography and the Visualization of Animals**


**Week 5 October 10 Thanksgiving**

**Week 6 October 17**

**Watching and observing birds and other animals: The Field Guide and the Photo Blind**


**Week 8 October 24**

**Case study: Abbott Thayer, Animal appearance and the concept of the gaze**


**Week 9 October 31**

**Looking at Dead Animals**


**Week 10 November 7**

**Zoos: Looking at Captive Animals**


**Week 11 November 14**

**Animal Rights Imagery: Looking at Animal Suffering**


**Week 12 November 21**
Animals on Film and video

Week 13 November 28
Animals in Contemporary Art

Visual Resources
[www.criminalanimal.org](http://www.criminalanimal.org)

Week 14 December 5
Digital Animals