

**Faculty of Fine Arts  
Graduate Programme in Art History  
York University**

**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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Phone:

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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.

**Text:** Burt, J. (2002) *Animals in Film*, London: Reaktion Books

**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**

Berger, J. (1980) *Why Look at Animals?*, *About Looking*, New York: Pantheon, pp. 1-28.

Mitchell, W.J.T. (1994) Looking at Animals Looking, *Picture Theory*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 329-344.

Burt, J. (2005) 'Why Look at Animals?': A Close Reading, *Worldviews*, 9.2, pp. 203-208.

Rothfels, N. (2005) Why Look at Elephants?, *Worldviews*, 9.2, pp. 166-183.

### **Week 3 September 26**

#### **Early Animal Photography and Camera Hunting**

Brower, M. (2005) Trophy Shots: Early North American Animal Photography and the Display of Masculine Prowess, *Society and Animals*, 13.1, pp. 13-32.

Ryan, J. R. (2000) 'Hunting with the Camera:' Photography, Wildlife and Colonialism in Africa, *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places*, C. Philo and C. Wilbert (eds.), London: Routledge, pp. 379-397.

Brower, M. (2005) Take Only Photographs, *Invisible Culture*, 9, online at: [http://www.rochester.edu/in\\_visible\\_culture/Issue\\_9/brower.html](http://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/Issue_9/brower.html)

Guggisberg, C.A.W. (1977) *Early Wildlife Photography*, London: David and Charles chapters 1 and 2

### **Week 4 October 3**

#### **Chronophotography and the Visualization of Animals**

Snyder, J. (1998) Visualization and Visibility, *Picturing Science, Producing Art*, C. A. Jones and P. Galison (eds.), London: Routledge, pp. 379-397.

Crary, J. (2001) *Suspensions of Attention*, Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 138-148.

Muybridge, E. (1979) *Muybridge's Complete Human and Animal Locomotion*, New York: Dover.

Burt, J. (2002) *Animals in Film*, London: Reaktion Books, pp. 85-113.

Prodder, P. (2003) *Time Stands Still*, New York: Oxford University Press.

### **Week 5 October 10 Thanksgiving**

### **Week 6 October 17**

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

Law, J. and Lynch, M. Lists, Field Guides, and the Descriptive Organization of Seeing: Birdwatching as an Exemplary Observational Activity, *Representation in Scientific Practice*. M. Lynch and S. Woolgar (eds.), Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990, 267-299.

Barrow, M.V. (1998) The Politics of Vision, *A Passion for the Birds*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 154-181.

### **Week 8 October 24**

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

Thayer, A.H. (1896) The Law which Underlies Protective Coloration, *The Auk*, XIII, April, pp. 124-129.

Caillois, R. (1984) Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia, J. Shepley (trans.), *October*, 31, pp. 17-33.

Caillois, R. (1964) *Mask of Medusa*, G. Ordish (Trans.), New York: Clarkson Potter, Inc. excerpts.

Nemerov, A. (1997) "Vanishing Americans: Abbott Thayer, Theodore Roosevelt and the Attraction of Camouflage," *American Art*, Summer, 11.2. pp. 50-81.

Lacan, J. (1978) "Of the Gaze as *Objet Petit a*," *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, J. A. Miller (ed.), A. Sheridan (trans.), New York: Norton, pp. 67-119.

Blum, A.S. (1993) *Picturing Nature: American Nineteenth-Century Zoological Illustration*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 8.

### **Week 9 October 31**

#### **Looking at Dead Animals**

Burt, J. (2001) The Illumination of the Animal Kingdom: The Role of Light and Electricity in Animal Representation, *Society and Animals*, 9.3, pp. 203-228.

Kalof, L. and Fitzgerald, A. (2003) Reading the Trophy: Exploring the Display of Dead Animals in Hunting Magazines, *Visual Studies*, 18.2, pp. 112-122.

Desmond, P. (2002) Displaying Death, Animating Life: Changing Fictions of 'Liveness' From Taxidermy to Animatronics, *Representing Animals*, N. Rothfels (ed.) Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 159-179.

Haraway, D. (1989) Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, *Primate Visions*, New York: Routledge, pp. 26-58.

### **Week 10 November 7**

#### **Zoos: Looking at Captive Animals**

Jones, R. W. (1997) The Sight of Creatures Strange to Our Clime: London Zoo and the Consumption of the Exotic, *The Journal of Victorian Culture*, 2.1, pp. 1-26.

Wirtz, P. (1997) Zoo City: Bourgeois Values and Scientific Culture in The Industrial Landscape, *Journal of Urban Design*, 2.1, pp. 61-82.

Greene, Melissa (1987) No Rms, Jungle Vu, *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1987 pp. 62-78.

Hyson, Jeffrey (2000) Jungles of Eden: The Design of American Zoos, *Environmentalism in Landscape Architecture*, M. Conan (ed.) Washington, D.C. : Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, pp. 23-44.(available for printing online at <http://www.doaks.org/Environmentalism/env1.pdf>)

### **Week 11 November 14**

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

Broughton, Z. (2001) Seeing is Believing, *The Ecologist*, 31.2, pp. 31-33.

Jasper, J. and Poulsen, J. (1995) Recruiting Stangers and Friends: Moral Shocks and Social Networks in Animal Rights and Anti-Nuclear Protests, *Social Problems*, 42.4, pp. 493-

Baker, S. (2001) Escaping the Ratking: Strategic Images for Animal Rights, *Picturing the Beast*, Champaign: University of Illinois Press, pp. 187-236.

Burt, J. (2002) *Animals in Film*, London: Reaktion Books, pp. 115-197.

### **Week 12 November 21**

### **Animals on Film and video**

- Bousé, D. (2003) False Intimacy: Close-ups and Viewer involvement in Wildlife Film, *Visual Studies*, 18.2, pp. 123-132.
- Mitman, G. (1993) Cinematic Nature, *Isis*, 84.4, pp. 637-667.
- Burt, J. (2002) Film and the History of the Visual Animal, *Animals in Film*, London: Reaktion Books, pp. 17-83.
- Sheen, E. (2005) 101 and Counting: Dalmations in Film and Advertising, *Worldviews*, 9.2, pp. 236-254.
- Crowther, B. (1995) Towards a Feminist Critique of Television Natural History Programs, *Feminist Subjects, Multimedia*, P. Florence (ed.), New York: Routledge, pp.

### **Week 13 November 28**

#### **Animals in Contemporary Art**

- Hauser, K. (1998-9) Coming Apart at the Seams: Taxidermy and Contemporary Art, *Make: The Magazine of Women's Art*, 82 Dec.-Jan., pp. 8-11.
- Baker, S. (2002) What does becoming-animal look like?, *Representing Animals*, N. Rothfels (ed.), Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 67-98
- McHugh, S. (2001) Video Dog Star: William Wegman, Aesthetic Agency, and the Animal in Experimental Video Art, *Society and Animals*, 9.3, pp. 229-251.
- Enright, E. and Walsh, M. (2003) Chamelionesque: The shape-shifting art of William Wegman, *Border Crossings*, 22.1, pp. 30-47.
- Baker, S. (2003) Sloughing the human, *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, C. Wolfe (ed.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 147-64.

#### Visual Resources

- Olly & Suzi (2003) *Olly & Suzi: Arctic, Desert, Ocean, Jungle*, New York: Abrams.
- Jaschinski, B. (1996) *Zoo*, London: Phaidon.
- [www.criminalanimal.org](http://www.criminalanimal.org)

### **Week 14 December 5**

#### **Digital Animals**

- Lippit, A. M. (2002) ...From Wild Technology to Electric Animal, *Representing Animals*, N. Rothfels (ed.), Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 119-138.
- Bergman, C. (2005) Inventing a Beast with no Body: Radio-Telemetry, the Marginalization of Animals, and the Simulation of Ecology, *Worldviews*, 9.2, pp.255-270.
- Kramer, C. (2005) Digital Beasts as Visual Esperanto: Getty Images and the Colonization of Sight, *Thinking With Animals*, L. Daston and G. Mitman (eds.) New York: Columbia University Press.