

English 205: Topics in British Literature, Spring 2012

Reading Animals in British Literature and Culture

Instructor: Anna Feuerstein
Email: feuers14@msu.edu
Office: 4A Morrill Hall
Office Hours: Tuesday 10-12 and by appointment
C300 Wells Hall
MW 3-4:20

Course Description:

In the past ten years, scholars across various disciplines have become increasingly interested in what has been termed “the question of the animal.” That is, scholars in philosophy, literature, law, art history, sociology and history (among other disciplines) have started to take seriously the animals around us, and question not only the human/animal divide, but also the status of the animal more broadly. Not only have we begun to interrogate questions of animal consciousness, subjectivity, and the animal as an ethical subject, but scholars in this field also study the cultural place of animals – animals as pets, in zoos, in images, in literature, in science, and as food. Thus, this class will look at how animals existed in British culture, and how they are represented in British literature. We will begin in the romantic period, looking at poetry, and move into the Victorian period, where we will address issues such as anthropomorphism, children’s literature, vivisection and the C19 animal rights movement, evolution, and imperialism. We will end in the 20th century with an emphasis on pets and animality. As we trace these themes, we will always look at how these animals collide with other cultural and social issues. Along with literature, we will also read history and contemporary philosophical work on animal studies, in order to enhance our own analytical frameworks as we interrogate what it means to be an animal, and what it means to relate with them.

Course Goals:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Read a text critically and actively
- Perform close readings of literary and secondary texts
- Discuss texts in a purposeful, intellectual and thoughtful manner by exploring the themes, style, patterns and interpretations of a text.
- Understand the relationship between literature and culture, through situating texts within their historical and cultural context.
- Write fluently and critically about literary texts
- Trace a topic throughout a wide range of literary, philosophical, and historical texts
- Connect historical topics to our own contemporary moment

Required Texts:

Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland* (1865)

Wilkie Collins, *Heart and Science* (1883)

H.G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896)

D.H. Lawrence, *St. Mawr* (1925)

Virginia Woolf, *Flush* (1933)

J.R. Ackerly, *We Think the World of You* (1960)

Course pack available for purchase at Budget Printing in the Trowbridge Plaza (974 Trowbridge Rd; 517-351-5060)

Requirements:

- 2 papers 4-5 pages (40%)
- Midterm (15%)
- Close Readings (10%)
- Reading Quizzes (10%)
- Final paper 7-8 pages (25%)

Essays:

For this class you will write two short essays (4-5 pages) and a longer final essay (7-8 pages). Paper topics will be given out in advance in class. We will discuss paper writing and expectations in more detail once we get closer to the paper due dates. Students are encouraged to visit my office hours to discuss drafts of their papers, however I will not look at drafts via email. All essays are to be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. The default margin setting for Microsoft Word is 1.25, so please make sure you change it to 1.0. Your essay must also be stapled! **If these minimum requirements are not met I will not accept your essay.**

Essays and the midterm will be assigned a grade consistent with MSU's 4-point grading system:

4.0-3.9 A	3.5-3.2 B+	2.8-2.5 B-	2.1-1.9 C
3.8-3.5 A-	3.1-2.9 B	2.4-2.2 C+	1.8-1.5 C-
1.4-1.2 D+	1.1-0.8 D		

Close Readings

Close readings are one page, single spaced essays that focus on a small element or passage of a text. We will discuss close-reading strategies in class, and you will find that close reading will compose the majority of our class discussion. Ultimately, these close readings will not only help to improve your close reading skills, but they will lead to your longer papers. Each close reading will be worth ten points.

Quizzes:

We will have reading quizzes almost daily, which will be worth ten points each. They will consist mostly of plot and surface-level questions, and will serve merely as a way to ensure that students come to class prepared and having done the reading. Your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped.

Readings:

Students must complete the assigned reading before coming to class. **It is imperative that you bring the text with you to class.** In an English class, it is essential to have with you the texts under discussion, as close reading requires you to have the text in front of you. **Readings are around 100-150 pages per week, which is very typical for a 200-level English class. If you feel you cannot keep up with this amount of reading, then I suggest you drop this course immediately.**

Participation:

Your **active** presence and participation is essential to your success in this course. Active participation involves coming to class on time, paying attention, contributing to discussion, completing all in-class writing assignments, and participating in group activities. If you are too tired to stay awake in class, then please stay home. If you exhibit good participation I will raise final borderline grades.

Attendance:

You should be in class, on time each day. The concentrated in-class nature of this course means that every active, well-informed participant will contribute to the whole group's work and learning. You are allowed **two absences**, and I strongly encourage you to reserve these absences for the observance of religious holidays not acknowledged by the University calendar, family events, serious illness, etc. **For**

every absence after these two your final grade will face a deduction of 0.25. You should contact me immediately if you miss more than one week of class for any reason. If you are a student athlete, or need to miss class due to school-related activities, please see me before your absence.

Technology in the Classroom:

I require appropriate use of technology in the classroom. Cell phones, laptops and iPods must be on silent and put away. If you are caught using technology inappropriately, I will politely ask you to stop. After that, I will mark you absent for the day. Simply put, keep these devices in your bag – I do not want to see them on your desk (or in your hands under your desk).

Respect:

Respect your fellow classmates and your instructor. In this class we will have discussions where debates may become heated, and some disagreement is inevitable. While this is not an animal rights class, the issue will inevitably arise, and many people feel very strongly about their position on this topic. **Thus, I require, without exception, that you show respect and compassion to others, whose views may be different from your own.** In fact, you will find that listening to another's viewpoint will often prove quite productive. Some of our course materials and discussions may pertain to controversial or adult topics. Please show your fellow students the same respect and consideration you feel you deserve. **If you disrespect other students or the instructor I will ask you to leave and mark you absent for the day.**

Instructor Email:

Please feel free to email me anytime, with any comments, questions or concerns. While I do check my email quite frequently, please allow 24 hours for a response. Papers will not be accepted via email, except in the case of emergencies.

Late Assignments:

I do not accept late assignments except in the case of emergencies.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a disability specialist, call 353-9642 (voice), 355-1293 (TTY), or visit myprofilercpd.msu.edu.

Academic Integrity:

One of the most important principles in higher education is academic integrity. Quite simply, if you use someone else's words, ideas, text, images, music, etc., you must cite your source. When in doubt, cite the source.

I take this very seriously, and chances are good that I will catch you if you attempt to plagiarize some or all of your papers. Remember, if you can find it I can find it. My enforcement of MSU's academic integrity policy is as follows: your first infraction will result in receiving a 0.0 for the assignment, though you will have to rewrite the assignment using your own words and ideas/citing your sources. Your second infraction will result in you receiving a 0.0 for the course. MSU also states that I must refer you to the dean of your college for any offense.

Michigan State University has adopted the following statement about academic integrity:

- * **1.00** Protection of scholarship and grades.
- * The principles of truth and honesty are fundamental to the education process and the academic integrity of the University; therefore, no student shall:
- * **1.01** claim or submit the academic work of another as one's own.

- * **1.02** procure, provide, accept or use any materials containing questions or answers to any examination or assignment without proper authorization.
- * **1.03** complete or attempt to complete any assignment or examination for another individual without proper authorization
- * **1.04** allow any examination or assignment to be completed for oneself, in part or in total, by another without proper authorization.
- * **1.05** alter, tamper with, appropriate, destroy or otherwise interfere with the research, resources, or other academic work of another person.
- * **1.06** fabricate or falsify data or results.

For more information please visit www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/RegsOrdsPolicies.html#General

University Resources for Writers:

The following resources are available to you free of charge, and I urge you to make frequent use of these throughout the semester. Their websites detail the services they offer and how to make appointments.

- The Writing Center www.writing.msu.edu
- The Learning Resource Centers www.lrc.msu.edu
- The English Language Center www.elc.msu.edu
- The Library! www.lib.msu.edu
- The Oxford English Dictionary <http://www.oed.com.proxy2.cl.msu.edu/>

*I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus if necessary.

Reading Schedule (CP = Course Pack)
(Please note this schedule is subject to change)

Introduction and Animals in Poetry: The Romantics

- Mon 1/9 Introduction, "Why read animals?"
 Wed 1/11 Berger, "Why Look at Animals"; Shelley, *To a Skylark*; Wordsworth, *To a Cuckoo*; Christopher Smart, from *Jubilate Agno*; Keats, *Ode to a Nightingale* (CP)
 Mon 1/16 **No Class**
Wed 1/18 Barbauld, *The Mouse's Petition*; John Clare, *Badger*; Burns, *To a Mouse* (CP) / **Close Reading**

Victorian Animals and the Limits of Anthropomorphism: *Alice in Wonderland*

- Mon 1/23 Ritvo, "The Nature of the Beast" / Nagel, From "What is it like to be a bat?" (CP)
 Wed 1/25 *Alice in Wonderland*, Ch. 1-7
 Mon 1/30 *Alice in Wonderland*, Ch. 8-12 / **Close Reading**
 Wed 2/1 Animal Paintings (in class) / Begin *Heart and Science*

Vivisection, Sensation and Sentimentalism: *Heart and Science*

- Mon 2/6 *Heart and Science*, Ch. 1-14
Wed 2/8 *Heart and Science*, Ch. 15-20 / **Paper 1 due**
 Mon 2/13 Bernard, from *Experimental Medicine*; Cobbe, "What is Vivisection?" (CP)
Wed 2/15 *Heart and Science*, Ch. 21-41 / **Close Reading**
 Mon 2/20 *Heart and Science*, Ch. 42- 63

Evolution and The Human-Animal: *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

- Wed 2/22 Deleuze and Guatarri, "Becoming Animal" (CP) /
 Mon 2/27 *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Ch. 1-13
Wed 2/29 *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Ch. 14-22 / **Close Reading**
 Mon 3/5 - Wed 3/7 **Happy Spring Break!**
 Mon 3/12 Midterm Review
 Wed 3/14 Midterm

Imperialism, Zoos and the Exotic:

- Mon 3/19 Ritvo, "Exotic Captives" and "The Thrill of the Chase" / Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant" (CP)
 Wed 3/21 No Class / Work on Papers

Women and Pets: *Flush*

- Mon 3/26** Yi-Fu Tuan, "Animal Pets" (CP) / **Paper 2 Due**
 Wed 3/28 *Flush*, Ch. 1-2
Mon 4/2 *Flush*, Ch. 3-4 / **Close Reading**
 Wed 4/4 *Flush*, Ch. 5-6 / Haraway, from *The Companion Species Manifesto*

Animality and the Animal: *St. Mawr*

- Mon 4/9 *St. Mawr* 41-84; Hearne, "Tracking Dogs, Sensitive Horses, and the Traces of Speech" (CP)
 Wed 4/11 *St. Mawr* 84-140
Mon 4/16 *St. Mawr* 140-175 / **Close Reading**

Men and Dogs: *We Think the World of You*

Wed 4/18 *We Think the World of You* 3-57

Mon 4/23 *We Think the World of You* 50-122/ **Close Reading**

Wed 4/25 *We Think the World of You* 122-209

Tue 5/1 Final Papers Due by 5, in my office (107 Morrill Hall)