

LTPR 204/LTFR 230

Humanism in the Making: Animals before/after Descartes

Carla Freccero

Spring 2010

429-5364 ([freccero@ucsc.edu](mailto:freccero@ucsc.edu))

Office Hours: W 1:45-3:30 and by appt

This course, cross-listed among PEMS and French in Literature and also listed as History of Consciousness, explores the genealogy of what retrospectively might be called a minor tradition in Western literary, philosophical, and scientific thinking: the inseparability of orders of being comprising human and non-human life. From certain classical writers, such as Pliny and Herodotus, and early Christian thinkers such as Augustine, to medieval and early modern theological, literary, philosophical and scientific writers such as Marie de France, Rabelais, Montaigne, L ry, Par , La Fontaine, Pascal, and even Descartes himself, to name a few, a capacious conceptualization of the living may be seen to be at work, one that ranges from a view of the relative insignificance of the human in the order of things, to the hybridity of kinds of living beings (monsters, angels, mixtures of human and animal, mixtures of human and divine, and other permutations), to a model of living differences called Nature. This course examines some of these conceptualizations of life alongside what will emerge as Humanism, the dominant strain of Western philosophical thinking about the living. Readings will include early modern texts that work to define the human as distinct from, even opposed to, the animal (such as Pico della Mirandola's "On the Dignity of Man"), as well as those that figure the living otherwise. Throughout the course, we'll be thinking with a number of current theorists who have, through animal studies and philosophical posthumanism(s), enabled the posing of the question of pre- and post-modern alternatives to humanism.

**Books** (available at the Literary Guillotine):

Aesop. *The Complete Fables*

Agamben, Giorgio. *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell.

Cartmill, Matt. *A View to A Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature through History*

Derrida, Jacques. *The Animal that Therefore I Am*.

Descartes, Ren . *Discourse on Method*, trans. Laurence J. Lafleur.

Fudge, Erica, et al., ed. *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies and Natural Philosophy in the Early Modern Period*

Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*

Haraway, Donna. *The Companion Species Manifesto*

La Fontaine, *Selected Fables* (bilingual ed.)

Las Casas, Bartolom . *Devastation of the Indies*, trans. Herma Briffault

Ovid. *The Metamorphoses*. Transl. Horace Gregory.

Pico Della Mirandola. *On the Dignity of Man*, trans. Wallis, Miller, and Carmichael

**Recommended:**

*The animals reader : the essential classic and contemporary writings* / edited by Linda Kalof and Amy Fitzgerald.

Darwin, *The Origin of Species*

**ERES reader** (<http://eres.ucsc.edu>); Instructor: Freccero; Course number LTPR 204; password: animals

**Course Requirements:**

--Attendance. Any absence must be indicated by e-mail. If you are absent, a two-page reading summary is due for the next class.

--Three papers (assignments will be given) [those seeking French credit must deal with texts in the original]

--All the reading (by the date of the class under which the readings appear)

--A research project. **Options:** 1) Historical research on some aspect of animals/animality (includes bibliography, outline, and a SHORT presentation, 15 minutes max. Do not read your outline). Suggestions will be discussed in class; 2) Critical summary of recommended or unassigned relevant reading, with "bullet point" issues or questions that address the reading for the class, secondary bibliography, one-page write-up, 10 minute presentation max. Do not read write-up).

--Two people per class will be responsible for guiding discussion on selected readings, not by giving a presentation but by formulating discussion questions, handing them out, then guiding class through relevant sections of the text. This is, in part, to practice leading a seminar.

--Two people per class will be responsible for class protocol, to be distributed the Monday following class on e-mail.

Schedule:

**Week 1 T 3/30 Some of the Places where "We" Stand**

Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto*; Derrida, "Eating Well"; Wood (ERES); Derrida, *The Animal* (part I)

Rec *Animals Reader*: Ritvo and Adams

**Week 2 T 4/6 Where "We" Stand (continued)**

Seth, "Difference with a Difference" (ERES); Cartmill, *A View to a Death*, ch 10; Grosz (ERES); Wolfe, "What is Posthumanism?" (ERES)

**Week 3 T 4/13 Ancient Stories**

Aesop; Bible (ERES); Ovid; *A View to a Death* (ch 1-3); Aristotle; Fraser; Atwood; Le Guin; Pliny; Homer (all on ERES)

Rec: *Animals Reader* (Aristotle, Mitchen, Plutarch, Pliny the Elder, Levi-Strauss)

**paper due Friday on e-mail by 5 pm 5-7 pages double-spaced with complete works cited or bibliography; cover sheet**

**Week 4 T 4/20 Those "Middle" Ages (report on papers)**

Marie de France (ERES); Gerald of Wales; Bynum (ERES-ch. 2); McCracken; Salisbury; Dunton-Downer; Karkov; Knight; Oates (all on ERES)

Rec: Bloch; Cohen (“Animal law and folklore”); Cohen, Jeffrey; *View to a Death* (ch 4)

**Week 5 T 4/27 More Medievalia**

Bynum (ERES-ch. 4); Freedman; Boccaccio; Wofford ; Steel; Yamamoto (all on ERES)

**Week 6 T 5/4 Humanism I, The Manifestoes**

Petrarch (ERES); Rabelais; Pico della Mirandola; Daston (ERES); Migiel (ERES); Cartmill ch. 5 (“Sobbing Deer”); Fudge ch. 1

**Week 7 T 5/11 Humanism II, Alternatives?**

Montaigne; Cervantes; Melehy; Machiavelli; Paré; Schiesari; Las Casas (sel); Léry (all on ERES)

**paper due Friday on e-mail by 5 pm 5-7 pages double-spaced with complete works cited or bibliography; cover sheet**

**Week 8 T 5/18 Early Modernities (report on papers)**

Descartes (ERES or online); La Fontaine; Cartmill ch. 6,7,8; Darnton (ERES); Fudge ch.2, 5, 8

Rec: *Animals Reader* ch. 2,9; (Nussbaum?)

**Week 9 T 5/25 Modernities**

Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign* (pdf); *The Animal* (part III); Srinivas Aramundan (pdf); Rousseau; Deleuze (both on ERES); Cartmill, ch. 9

**Week 10 T 6/1 Worldings**

Agamben, *The Open*; Derrida and Roudinesco; Despret; Le Guin, “Mazes”; Lingis (ERES)

**paper due Friday by 5 pm 7-10 pages with complete works cited or bibliography; cover sheet**

Week 11 T 6/8 Pot luck at my house

**Cover Sheets**

Name

Title of Paper

Main Thesis/Argument

Conclusion

What Works Best

What Could be Improved

Feedback you would find Most Useful

