

## Humane Society University

### Course Title: AS 300 / 600: Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Animal Studies

#### SYLLABUS

##### Course Description

Animal Studies, a rapidly growing and evolving field, provides an interdisciplinary approach to examining both human-animal relations (the changing roles of animals in society and of the evolution of human attitudes to other animals) and the animals themselves. The February 2008 Minding Animals Conference Newsletter ([www.mindinganimals.com](http://www.mindinganimals.com)) announced that “The new transdisciplinary field of Animal Studies has arrived.” The first conference convened in July 2009, brought “together animal theorists and scientists from a broad range of academic disciplines, with government officials from several nations, representatives from non government organizations and representatives from industry, to examine the interrelationships between human and nonhuman animals from cultural, historical, geographical, environmental, representational (arts and literature), moral, legal and political perspectives.” In 2012 and 2013 Minding Animals Conferences were scheduled in major cities all around the planet and even more are planned for 2014. Further updates can be found at: <http://www.aasg.org.au/bulletins> While a bit less ambitious, this course, drawing through interview (available from author: [mwcopeland@comcast.net](mailto:mwcopeland@comcast.net)) and publications on the expertise of scholars in a sampling of the disciplines currently involved in Animal Studies, examines what each discipline contributes to Animal Studies and, in turn, what Animal Studies is contributing to the disciplines considered, and how these combined endeavors serve to enhance understanding and improve the welfare and status of nonhuman animals.

##### Required Texts

Beers, Diane. 2006. For the Prevention of Cruelty: The History and Legacy of Animal Rights, Activism in the United States. Athens: Ohio University Press. ISBN: 978-0-8040-1087-0

Bekoff, Marc and Jessica Pierce. 2009. Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226041636

\*Copeland, Marion W. “Straight From the Horse’s Mouth”: Equine Memoirs and Autobiographies. In Margo DeMello, ed. 1012. Speaking for Animals: Animal Autobiographical Writing. London: Routledge. forthcoming

Garner, Robert and Gary L. Francione. 2010. The Animal Rights Debate: Abolition or Regulation. New York: Columbia University Press. ISBN: 978-0234-23-41.

\*Transcript of Prof. Rob Garner’s ARZone Chat of 11 December 2010:  
<http://arzone.ning.com/profiles/blogs/transcript-of-rob-garners>

\*Jennifer Howard. “Creature Consciousness: Animal Studies Tests the Boundaries Between Human and Animal—and Between Academic and Advocacy.” The Chronicle

of Higher Education 18 Oct. 2009: <http://chronicle.com/article/Creature-Consciousness/48804/>

\*Irvine, Leslie. 2007. "The Question of Animal Selves: Implications for Sociological Knowledge and practice." *Qualitative Sociology Review* III: 1 (April): 5-22.

\* Lynn, William S. 1998. "Contested Moralities: Animals and Moral Value in the Dear/Symanski Debate." *Ethics, Place and Environment* 1 (2): 223-242.

\*\_\_\_\_\_. 2010. "Discourse and Wolves: Science, Society and Ethics." *Society & Animals* 18 (1): 75-92.

Morpurgo, Michael. 2007. *War Horse*. New York: Scholastic Books. ISBN-13: 978-0439796637

**Recommended Texts:**

Bekoff, Marc. 2010. *The Animal Manifesto: Six Reasons for Expanding Our Compassion Footstep*. New World Library, ISBN: 1577316497

Bekoff, Marc and Cara Blessley Lowe, eds. 2007. *Listening to Cougar*. Boulder: University of Colorado Press. ISBN: 978-0870819360.

Copeland, Marion. 2003. *Cockroach*. London: Reaktion Books. ISBN-13: 978-1861891921

All books are either in print and available at bookstores and libraries, on site (indicated by \* before the title), or on-line. Reading requirements: see Learning Outcomes at beginning of Syllabus.

\*text provided on-line

## **COURSE READINGS AND SCHEDULE**

**Discussion questions  
are at the end of the schedule**

### **Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Animal Studies**

#### **Week 1—date--Introduction**

##### **Required Reading:**

Lecture One: I apologize for the length of this lecture. Animal Studies is such a burgeoning area with so much to be noted, defined, questioned, and discussed, that I felt an extended lecture, substituting for lengthy required readings, was justified. Please supplement with:

\*Jennifer Howard. "Creature Consciousness: Animal Studies Tests the Boundaries Between Human and Animal—and Between Academic and Advocacy." *The Chronicle*

of Higher Education 18 Oct. 2009: <http://chronicle.com/article/Creature-Consciousness/48804/>

### **Recommended Reading:**

Donna Haraway. 2008. When Species Meet. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Linda Kalof and Amy Fitzgerald, eds. 2007. The Animals Reader: The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings. Berg Publishers

D. L. Pughe. 2007. "A Friendly Pack Scales the Ivory Towers." The Bark December [www.thebark.com/ezine/features/Canines\\_HigherEducation.html](http://www.thebark.com/ezine/features/Canines_HigherEducation.html)

Animals and Society Org list of Animal Rights courses:  
<http://www.animalsandsociety.org/pages/courses>

**Writing Assignment:** Your first challenge is to both absorb the ongoing evolution of Animal Studies and to select an animal (other than either the dog, the cat, or the horse) you are eager to study and champion (Copeland's Cockroach, Bekoff's Listening to Cougar, and Lynn's wolves offer examples as well as three different ways of bringing multiple disciplinary perspectives to bear on a single living being). Write a brief essay (2-3 pages due at the end of the first week) explaining what animal you will focus on for the semester, why you've chosen it, and why you feel an interdisciplinary approach is of particular importance in coming to understand that creature's needs and value. This will become the introduction to your animal and theme in the longer, interdisciplinary essay that will evolve over the 8 weeks of the course (while you will be free to revise your thematic focus as the course introduces new perspectives, choose your animal carefully because once you adopt it, you are required to stand by it). Where possible, students should collaborate on the weekly essays, providing each other with information and ideas by email or Skype or however you prefer: This should happen independent of the Class Discussion List. Your final essay (see end of this section for clarification) needs to include each of the six perspectives considered in the course and should take the form of a proposal to include your animal, with you as author, in Reaktion Books' Animal Series. It's ok if the series already has published or is committed to a volume on your animal. In fact, those volumes are excellent sources as you build the Bibliography for your proposal.

For Week One write a brief essay (2-3 pages due at the end of the week) explaining what animal you will focus on for the semester, why you've chosen it, and why you feel an interdisciplinary approach is of particular importance in coming to understand that creature's needs and value. This will become the Introduction to your animal and theme in the longer, interdisciplinary essay that will evolve over the 8 weeks of the course (while you will be free to revise your thematic focus as the course evolves, choose your animal carefully because once you adopt it, you are required to stand by it).

### **Week 2 – date –Biology: Interview with Marc Bekoff**

#### **Required Reading**

Marc Bekoff. 2009. Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

**Recommended Reading:**

Marc Bekoff. 2010. The Animal Manifesto: Six Reasons for Expanding Our Compassion Footstep. New World Library, ISBN: 1577316497

Marc Bekoff and Cara Blessley Lowe, eds. 2007. Listening to Cougar. Boulder: University of Colorado Press. Read introductions and contributions by both editors. The rest of the selections will be useful in Week Eight.

Encyclopedia of Life (Edward O. Wilson) (<http://www.eol.org/>); Doomsday Seed Vault.

**Writing Assignment:** Given your thesis or focus, use this week's writing (3-4 pages due at the end of the week) to decide what about your animal's biology (evolutionary as well as species and individual anatomy and physiology, intelligence and behavior, culture, etc.) it is essential for you to understand in order to give your reader an accurate and reliable picture of your animal.

**Week 3 – date—Geography/Environmental Science: Interview with William Lynn**

**Required Reading:**

Lynn, William S. 1998. "Contested Moralities: Animals and Moral Value in the Dear/Symanski Debate." *Ethics, Place and Environment* 1 (2): 223-242.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2010. "Discourse and Wolves: Science, Society and Ethics." *Society & Animals* 18 (1): 75-92.

**Recommended Reading:**

Lynn, William S. 2002. "Canis Lupus Cosmopolis: Wolves in a Cosmopolitan Worldview". *Worldview* 6 (3): 300-327.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2005. "Finding Common Ground in a Landscape of Deer and People". *Chicago Wilderness Magazine* 8, no. Winter: 12-15.

John Hadidian, Camilla Fox, and William S Lynn. 2006. "The Ethics of Wildlife Control in Humanized Landscapes". In *Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Vertebrate Pest Conference*, eds. R M Timm, and J M O'Brien, 500-504. Davis, CA: University of California, Davis.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2006. "Between Science and Ethics: What Science and the Scientific Method Can and Cannot Contribute to Conservation and Sustainability". In *Gaining Ground: In Pursuit of Ecological Sustainability*, ed. David Lavigne, 191-205. Limerick, IRL: University of Limerick.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2007. "Practical Ethics and Human-Animal Relations". In Marc Bekoff, ed. *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 790-797.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2007. "Wolf Recovery". In Marc Bekoff, ed. *Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relations*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 812-819.

D Lavigne and William S Lynn. 2011. "Canada's Commercial Seal Hunt: It's More Than a Question of Humane Killing". *Journal of Animal Ethics* 1, no. 1: 1-5.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2011. *Barred Owls in the Pacific Northwest: An Ethics Brief*. Worcester, Massachusetts: George P. Marsh Institute, Clark University, 70 pp.

**Writing Assignment:** This is the week to consider the significance of your animal's habitat, the setting of its story, and how that setting contributes to the animal's ethical stance (What Martha Nussbaum refers to as its capability right to control its own environment<sup>1</sup>). In light of those rights, what ethical obligation should humans have both to your animal and, by extension, to its habitat? Is there evidence of what obligations they actually do feel? Summarize your findings in a brief (3-4 pages) essay due at the end of the week.

#### **Week 4 – date—History: Interview with Diane Beers.**

##### **Required Reading:**

Diane L. Beers. 2006. Excerpts from For the Prevention of Cruelty: The History and Legacy of Animal Rights Activism in the United States. Athens: Ohio State University Press.

##### **Recommended Reading:**

Virginia DeJohn Anderson. 2004. Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

\*Marion Copeland. 2007. "'Historical Amnesia': a review of and commentary on Diane Beers' For the Prevention of Cruelty... The Other Forum: Explorations in Teaching and Learning. Fall. Holyoke Community College, Holyoke, MA: 54-57.

Jon T. Coleman. 2004. Vicious: Wolves and Men in America. New Haven and London: Yale University Press: "Wolves tell a story longer than any nation's, larger than war's, and more significant than any president's. They push history beyond the confines of humanity to include the creatures and biological processes that shaped the past" (235).

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<sup>1</sup> In a review of Nussbaum's Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership (Belknap Press, 2007), Ramona Cristina Ilea writes that "Nussbaum's capabilities approach has the potential to make a significant difference to both moral philosophy and nonhuman animals. I have high hopes that, as time passes, both Nussbaum and others interested in the capabilities approach will continue to develop this theory and to apply it to some of the most pressing, contemporary moral problems—including our treatment of nonhuman animals." In the course of her review (Society and Animals 16 (2008): 94-97), Ilea points out that Nussbaum "argues that nonhuman animals should have the same capabilities secured and protected as do human beings" and lists them: "(1) life; (2) bodily health; (3) bodily integrity; (4) senses, imagination, thought; (5) emotions; (6) practical reason; (7) affiliation; (8) relationships with other species; (9) play; and (10) control over ones environment" (94-95)

Colleen Patrick-Goudreau. "Know Your History: The SATYA Interview with Diane Beers." <http://www.satyamag.com/apr07/goudreau.html>

Linda Kalof. 2008. Looking at Animals in Human History. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**Writing Assignment:** Some questions to be considered in this week's writing assignment (3-4 pages due at the end of the week): How seriously has your animal's contribution to human history been considered? How historically has the animal you've chosen been viewed in your Western Euro-American culture? Obviously it may be viewed differently in other cultures and other times, questions you might want to also consider. What consideration has been and is currently given in history to your animal's survival, well-being, and rights?

### **Week 5 – date—Literature: Interview with Marion Copeland.**

#### **Required Reading:**

Morpurgo, Michael. 2007. War Horse. New York: Scholastic Books. ISBN-13: 978-0439796637

\*Copeland, Marion W. "Straight From the Horse's Mouth": Equine Memoirs and Autobiographies. In Margo DeMello, ed. 1012. Speaking for Animals: Animal Autobiographical Writing. London: Routledge. forthcoming

#### **Recommended Reading:**

Marion W. Copeland. 2003. Cockroach. London: Reaktion Press..

\_\_\_\_\_. "Introduction." Cockroach Bibliography (<http://www.h-net.org/~nilas/bibs/cockroach.html>)

\_\_\_\_\_. 2006. "Voices of the Least Loved: the Cockroach in the Contemporary American Novel." Insect Poetics. Ed. Eric C. Brown. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. 153-175.

D. L. Pughe. 2008. "Literary Dogs." Bark March/April: 74-77. [www.thebark.com](http://www.thebark.com)

**Writing Assignment:** Your goal in your final proposal, like Copeland's in Cockroach, is to bring your animal's story, told—as far as that is possible—from what you imagine its view point is, to life for your reader and to make that story the rationale for your thesis. Poets and fiction writers do exactly this to create believable and accurately presented nonhuman characters caught up in the drama (plot) of their lives and times. Notice how often Bekoff, Lynn, Beers, and Copeland turn to fiction to help their readers engage an animal with their sympathetic imaginations, an essential step in both understanding and caring about any other creature. "What does it feel like to be a fox?" Bekoff asks in the Introduction to Animal Passions. Substituting your animal, ask the same question and begin to answer it in this week's essay (3-4 pages due at the end of the week) by

discovering what fictional<sup>2</sup> (in whatever media) depictions of your character might help you in your own characterization and argument? Use them and include them in your final proposal Bibliography as sources.

## **Week 6—Political Science: Robert Garner**

### **Required Reading:**

Robert Garner and Gary L. Francione. 2010. The Animal Rights Debate: Abolition or Regulation. New York: Columbia University Press. ISBN: 978-0234-23-41.

### **Recommended Reading:**

*\*[Transcript of Prof. Rob Garner's ARZone Chat of 11 December 2010:](http://arzone.ning.com/profiles/blogs/transcript-of-rob-garners)*  
<http://arzone.ning.com/profiles/blogs/transcript-of-rob-garners>

**Writing Assignment:** In 1990 in the Foreword to Political Theory and Animal Rights, an anthology establishing “a long and continuing relation between political theory and concerns about the status of animals,” Tom Regan wrote that, in contrast to that long tradition of concern, “[c]ontemporary political theorists...[at that time] had little to say on the issue of animal rights” and “the larger issue of moral anthropocentrism,” a neglect he hoped the Clarke/ Linzey anthology would rectify. Perhaps it did, because contemporary political scientists like Robert Garner do have something to say about them. Among their many concerns, justice and the whole issue of animal rights under the law are of particular importance. In your essay for this week (3-4 pages due at the end of the week), consider the status of the animal you are focusing on in the law and in current political ideas. Under current law (How quickly this can change has been illustrated recently in the government sanctioned killing of wolves and efforts to include polar bears on the endangered species list because of global warming), is your animal treated as you believe it should be? Have “abolition” or “regulation” been more effective in establishing legal claims for your animal’s rights and welfare? Why? Why not?

## **Week 7 – date—Sociology: Leslie Irvine.**

### **Required Reading:**

Leslie Irvine. 2007. “The Question of Animal Selves: Implications for Sociological Knowledge and Practice.” Qualitative Sociology Review III: 1(April): 5-22.

**Writing Assignment:** There will be no short essay due this week to give you time to complete your Animal Series interdisciplinary proposal to Reaktion Books. Your 12-15 page essay will need to include the sociological perspective and will be due no later than one week after this course ends (Friday, date).

**Week 8—date—Developing an Interdisciplinary Perspective:** This is the week to try to bring all the disciplines examined together both in your mind and in your developing Reaktion book proposal. Revisit the interviews and readings for each discipline: Are

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<sup>2</sup> Remember that some folks consider anecdotal evidence “fictional.”

there models there for interdisciplinary study? Does Bekoff and Lowe's Listening to Cougar suggest yet another model? The bibliography for your Reaktion proposal should contain material you, as an editor, might select for an interdisciplinary reader called Listening to (Your Animal). Maybe the goal of Animal Studies should be providing a voice for those most humans consider voiceless (or at least without language), so that each volume of Reaktion's Animal series asks readers to reconsider his or her attitudes toward, assumptions about, consideration and respect for, and treatment of its nonhuman animal subject.

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