

Animals and Social Transformations
SOC 840, 3 graduate credits
Syllabus

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This graduate course is an historical overview of the cultural relationship between humans and other animals and how those relationships have changed with changing social conditions. We will use both visual imagery and extracts from historical and literary sources to experience the human-animal story from prehistory through postmodernity. The course draws on a wealth of information about the animal-human relationship, covering a range of topics rarely discussed in animal studies, such as the Black Plague, dead animal portraiture and animal rituals that reflect hierarchies of gender, race and class, including the medieval backwards ride, horning ceremonies and animal massacres. *Animals and Social Transformations* is taught every Spring primarily to graduate students in sociology, history and anthropology, but is open to all interested graduate students.

This is one of the required courses in the Graduate Specialization, **Animal Studies: Social Sciences and Humanities Perspectives**. For more information see: <http://animalstudies.msu.edu>.

Course objectives:

After completing the course, students will be able to:

- Provide an overview of the changing role of animals in human culture and of humans in animal culture throughout western history
- Describe the historical commodification of animals in consumption, exhibition, labor, science and recreation
- Explicate the historical links between the human-animal relationship and human social problems, such as slavery, sexism and environmental degradation

Texts:

Kalof, Linda. 2007. *Looking at Animals in Human History*. London: Reaktion Books.

Clutton-Brock, Juliet. 1992. *Horse Power: A History of the Horse and Donkey in Human Societies*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (available at Amazon.com new and used books (from \$5.69-25.00).

Each year, a different animal species will be covered in detail. This year, it is the horse, next year, perhaps the chicken if sufficient readings can be obtained.

Course requirements:

Students will be responsible for all of the class readings. In addition, individual students will write summaries of selected readings and lead class discussions on the assigned reading. The summaries should be written as literature reviews – in essay format, not as bullet points or an outline. Summary assignments will be determined according to the student alphabetical position on the roster, and the assigned student must prepare sufficient copies of the summaries

to hand in three instructor copies and distribute one to each member of the class. The assigned student must also lead a class discussion on the reading. The course will be conducted as a seminar, and your thorough reading of the material and participation in class is expected, required and absolutely essential. At the end of the semester, each student will have numerous reading summaries collected from student colleagues. This portfolio of summaries will be helpful in writing the final paper, due on the last day of class. The final paper will be an overall, well-referenced and organized paper that summarizes some aspect of the historical relationship between humans and other animals and how those relationships have changed with changing social conditions. Specific paper topics will be discussed later in the semester.

Student evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on the basis of their average grade on the summaries and their leadership in class discussions (40%), the final paper and oral presentation (50%), and class participation (10%).

Course schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

Weeks 2-3: Animals in Prehistory

- Kalof, *Looking at Animals in Human History*, Chapter 1
- Steven Mithen, To hunt or to paint: Animals and art in the Upper Palaeolithic, *Man* 23 (1989), 671-695
- Louis Chaix et al., A tamed brown bear of the Late Mesolithic, *Journal of Archeological Science* (1997) 24, 1067-1074
- Anthony Sinclair, Art of the ancients, *Nature* 426 (18/25 December 2003)
- Mairi Ross, Emerging trends in rock art research: Hunter-gather culture, land and landscape, *Antiquity* September 2001, 75, 289

Weeks 4-5: Animals in Antiquity

- Kalof, *Looking at Animals*, Chapter 2
- Jim Mason, Ch 1 Symbols, *Animals in Antiquity*, 2007
- J. Donald Hughes, Ch 2 Hunting, *Animals in Antiquity*, 2007
- Juliet Clutton-Brock, Ch 3 Domestication, *Animals in Antiquity*, 2007
- Jo-Ann Shelton, Ch 4 Entertainment, *Animals in Antiquity*, 2007
- Andy Gordon, Ch 5 Science, *Animals in Antiquity*, 2007
- Steve Newmyer, Ch 6 Philosophy, *Animals in Antiquity*, 2007
- Christine Morris, Ch 7 Art, *Animals in Antiquity*, 2007

Week 6: Antiquity (continued)

- Gilgamesh, Tablet I-V
- Gilgamesh, Tablet VI-XI
- Luke, Animal Sacrifice and Paternal Exploitation

Week 7 (Feb 21): Antiquity (continued)

- Jared Diamond, *The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race*
- Whatmore & Thorne, *Wild(er)ness: Reconfiguring the Geographies of Wildlife*

Week 8 (Feb 28): The Horse

- Clutton-Brock, *Horse Power*, Chapters 1-4
- Clutton-Brock, *Horse Power*, Chapters 5-8
- Clutton-Brock, *Horse Power*, Chapters 9-11

Weeks 9-10 (Mar 6 & Mar 13): No Class

Week 11 (Mar 20): Animals in the Middle Ages

- Kalof, *Looking at Animals*, Chapter 3
- Resl, *Animals in the Middle Ages*
- Terry O'Connor, *Thinking about beastly bodies*, In *Breaking and Shaping Beastly Bodies: Animals as Material Culture in the Middle Ages*

Week 12: Animals in the Renaissance

- Kalof, *Looking at Animals*, Chapter 4
- Bruce Boehrer, *The Animal Renaissance*
- Jason Scott-Warren, *When Theaters Were Bear-Gardens*

Week 13: Animals in the Enlightenment

- Kalof, *Looking at Animals*, Chapter 5
- Matt Senior, *Animal Witness*
- Anita Guerrini, *The Ethics of Animal Experimentation in Seventeenth-Century England*
- Peter Harrison, *Virtues of Animals in Seventeenth-Century Thought*

Week 14: Animals in Modernity

- Kalof, *Looking at Animals*, Chapter 6
- Kete, *Animals and Human Empire*
- Hribal, *Animals are part of the working class*, In *Labor History*
- Marvin, *Bullfight*

Week 15: Animals in Modernity (continued)

- Malamud, *Famous Animals in Modern Culture*
- Williams, *Disciplining animals*
- Buller, *Iconography of wild animals*
- Bronner, *This is why we hunt*

Weeks 16-17: Student Final Paper Presentations