School of Business and Social Sciences

Animals, Culture & Society

ANS020X305A

Module Handbook
Autumn Semester 2006 - 2007

Mondays: 2.00 to 5.45pm
Course Convener: Garry Marvin
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Assessment details:
Type of assessment: Essay 2000 – 2500 words (85%)
Due: 11 December 2006 by 2pm
Group Presentation (15%)
Students must pass both elements of the assessment
LEARNING COMPACT

1. The convener of each course within a programme will issue every student enrolling on that course with a course booklet describing the nature and demands of the course, including:
   
   (a) a calendar of all classes involved in the course and a week-by-week list of the topics to be covered by the course;
   
   (b) a list of required preparation for each week;
   
   (c) a description of the assessment criteria to be used during the course;
   
   (d) a statement of the nature, pattern and timing of the assessment;
   
   (e) a list of the dates and times by which all assignments must be submitted and details of the process for doing this;
   
   (f) a list of the dates and times by which each assignment will be returned to the students and details of the process for doing this;
   
   (g) a final date for collection of coursework by students, after which return cannot be guaranteed.

2. A register will be kept of attendance, and submission and return of all assignments for all courses.

3. Students are expected to:
   
   (a) participate fully in the learning process;
   
   (b) attend all classes and arranged tutorials;
   
   (c) provide the teacher with an explanation of enforced absences;
   
   (d) hand all coursework assignment in on time in accordance with published procedures;
   
   (e) attend all examinations at published time and venue;
   
   (f) complete 100 hours of study (including assessed work and time-tabled activities) for each 10-credit course;
   
   (g) regularly check their communication channels (e.g., pigeonholes, notice boards);
   
   (h) update their records with the Institute and Departments.
TERMS USED IN CLASSIFICATION

The Animal Kingdom is, for scientific purposes, classified in the following order of terms:

- Phylum
- Class
- Order
- Family
- Genus
- Species

These divisions may, when convenience demands, be divided respectively into subphylum, sub-class, sub-order etc…'

W.P. Pycraft F.L.S. (ed) *The Standard Natural History – From Amoeba to Man*

In the Chinese encyclopedia *The Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge* it is written that animals are divided into:

‘… (a) those that belong to the Emperor, (b) the embalmed ones, (c) those that are trained, (d) suckling pigs, (e) mermaids, (f) fabulous ones, (g) stray dogs, (h) those that are included in this classification, (i) those that tremble as if they were mad, (j) innumerable ones, (k) those drawn with a very fine camel's hair brush, (l) others, (m) those that have just broken a flower vase, (n) those that resemble flies from a distance.’

Jose Luis Borges ‘The Analytic Language of John Wilkins’ in *Other Inquisitions*
Humans share their social and cultural environments with a wide variety of animals and for a wide variety of purposes. Animals are domesticated and used for food, clothing, and transport; hunted for subsistence and sport; worshipped, sacrificed, tabooed, and vilified in religions; represented in art, literature and film; incorporated into homes and families as pets; used as models for humans in a range of experimental situations; they are anthropomorphised; put on display in zoos and natural history museums and made to entertain in circuses; are the focus of debates about human nature in moral philosophy and theology; and they are studied in a wide range of scientific practices. This course explores the spaces which animals occupy in human social cultural worlds and the interactions humans have with them. Central to this course will be an exploration of the ways in which animal lives intersect with human societies in a cross-cultural examination of how different human groups construct a range of identities for themselves and for others in terms of animals.
1. Module Description

1.1 Module Rationale

1.2 Module Learning Outcomes
At the end of the course the student will have:

(i) knowledge of broad range of contemporary issues about the relationships between animals and the human world;

(ii) an understanding of how sociological and anthropological perspectives and theories can be used to explore these issues;

(iii) learnt how to bring controlled academic rigour to the study of emotive subjects;

(iv) the ability to make presentations to their peers on issues which are of present social concern.

1.3 Module Teaching and Learning Methods

2. Details of Animals Culture and Society Autumn 2006

2.1 Assessment requirements
The Assessment is in two parts:

a. Students are required to submit one essay of between 2000 – 2500 words. This will represent 85% of the total grade for the course. No set titles have been given here so that each student is able to choose a topic which interests them. These must be discussed with the course convener. Marking for this work will be according to the guidelines set out in the Anthropology Programme Handbook. Essays should be submitted by 2pm on Monday 11th December 2006.

b. Each student will also be required to participate in a group presentation (lasting 20 minutes) which will represent 15% of the total grade. The grade for the group presentation will be given to the group and all students in that group will therefore receive the same grade.

NB. Students must pass both elements of the assessment.

2.2 Dates of Assessment
The entire class will discuss the timetable for the group presentations. These will be assessed on the day of presentation. The individual essays must be submitted by 2pm on Monday 11th December 2006.

2.3 Submission of Coursework
Students are reminded that coursework must be handed via the post box in the wall by the main entrance to the School Office QB104 on or before the submission date. This date is not negotiable and no extensions are allowed.

If you think your personal circumstances are such that even with good time-management you may not be able to adhere to the coursework requirements for this module and the submission date, you should think carefully about whether this module is the right one for you. The USR modular system allows considerable flexibility for students to choose modules with different forms of assessment.

If severe unforeseen circumstances (such as your own sudden illness or the illness of a close and dependent relative) make it impossible for you to adhere to the submission date, you should, as soon as possible, write a letter of explanation with supporting documentary evidence to the School Administrator. This evidence will be kept in a confidential file and your case will be considered at the Programme Board of examiners.

2.4 Assessment Criteria

**Group Presentation** – assessment here will be based on how theoretical perspectives are related to the chosen topic, the use of supportive material – for example any illustrative material, the ability to respond to questions arising from the presentation.

**Individual Essay** – For a general overview of assessment criteria please refer to the Programme Handbooks. In terms of this specific course, once again the assessment will be based on how theoretical perspectives might be related to the chosen topic. Given the fact that this course represents a relatively new area of academic interest, students will be encouraged to develop their own ideas, perspectives and arguments to explore their chosen topic.

2.5 Assessed work (project material and essays) will be available for collection at the beginning of the spring semester.

2.6 Teaching and Class Structure

This course booklet indicates the major areas which will be explored but, just as the whole field of the interdisciplinary study of animal/human relations is beginning to define itself, we too will be looking for fresh approaches, innovative ideas and novel perspectives. There is no fixed body of information which must be learnt, there are no theoretical perspectives which apply only to this area and there are, as yet, no texts which summarise the whole field. This gives the course the great advantage of flexibility and the possibility of creative intellectual thinking.

The sessions will be divided into four major strands. Each will have a lecture, a general discussion, an illustrative video, and a session of group presentations. In the first few weeks of the course the format (although this is a flexible format) will be a lecture followed by discussion, short break, video presentation followed by discussion. Once we have started the presentations the format will be presentations followed by a break, then the lecture and discussion, a break and video presentation and discussion.

Those participating in the course will be divided into small groups at the beginning and these groups will work together towards the presentation of
their projects. Group presentations can be about anything related to the
course even if it is not a topic covered in the lecture slots. Possible topics
could include:

Animal rights
Animals in advertisements
The politics of meat
The uses of animals
A particular animal and its relations with human society
Animal symbolism
Experimenting with animals
Animals in sports
Animal representations in a particular piece of literature/set of literature
Companion animals
Animals in human language
Conservation
The politics of fur
Animals on display
Animals in cartoons and other film formats
Working animals

Groups do not need to pick one of these and it will be much more positive if
they pick a topic because they have an interest in it. The aim here is to
develop ideas, arguments, new perspectives and interesting connections. The
chosen topic should be confirmed with the course convenor who will be
available to discuss topics and possible source material.
2.7 Reading and Recommended Texts

There is no text which adequately covers all the themes and topic of the course but one book, which has been published fairly recently, does cover many of them in a readable and accessible style. The text is:


This is a highly recommended text but it is not compulsory for you to buy it. If you are going to invest in a book though, this is the one to choose.

I would also recommend the highly readable:


The LRC already has a wide range of books covering the topics of this course and there has been considerable investment in new books specifically for the course. These should be in the LRC by the beginning of term. Because of the anticipated numbers for this course the newest books have been put on restricted loan so that all students will have a chance of consulting them.

Included here is a list of key texts which can be found in the LRC. It is certainly not expected that you will use all of these texts. The purpose of this list is to give some indication of the range of material available and to help you when you come to discuss project/essay topics with the tutor. Further reading lists, relating to specific topics, will be prepared during the course.
INDICATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY


Cornwall, I (1968) *Prehistoric Animals and Their Hunters* London: Faber and Faber


Fout, J (1992) *Forbidden History, the State, Society and the Regulation of Sexuality in Modern Europe* Chicago: Chicago University Press


Goodall, J (1971) *In the Shadow of Man* London: Collins


Harris, M (1985) *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture* London: Allen and Unwin


Lévi-Strauss, C (1973) Totemism Harmondsworth: Penguin


Linden, E (1976) Apes, Men and Language Harmondsworth: Penguin


Mcgrath, M (1996) Beatrix Potter and Her World University of Surrey PhD Thesis


West, T (1972) Heros on Horseback: The Story of the Pony Express Glasgow: Blackie


THE WEB

There is a huge range of potentially useful and interesting sites on the web. Try for example **society + animals** and **culture + animals** as a way in. It would be helpful if you could note the locations of any sites which have interested you. These can be added to later literature lists.

**EXTREMELY USEFUL SITE**

Society and Animal journal  
http://arrs.envirolink.org/psyeta/sa

*Society and Animals* has now made nearly all of the articles in its back issues available, free of charge, on the web. There is also an easy search function. There are very many useful articles here. Please do make good use of it.

**POTENTIALLY USEFUL SITES**

Animal rights sites  
http://www.isleuth.com/animal-r.html
http://www.altculture.com/aentries/a/animalxlib.html

Sites advocating the rights of indigenous peoples to hunt whales, seals etc  
http://www.highnorth.no

Key sites for leading into many indigenous peoples' web sites  
http://www.itv.se/~boreale/aelmetjh.html

NB If you find difficulties with http://www.itv.se this go to and look for the site labeled ‘Indigenous People’

The World Zoo Organisation  
http://www.iudzg.org  
http://www.5tigers.org.org/wzcs.html

The World Conservation Union  
http://www.iucn.org

Companion animals – research etc  
http://www.petsforum.com/deltasociety

Pro - field sports (UK) site  
http://www.countryside-alliance.org

Link site for many anti-hunting etc sites  
http://arrs.envirolink.org

Feminists for Animal Rights  
http://arrs.envirolink.org.far

Fur Issues  
http://www.furs.com

Fur trade  
http://www.digitalpresence.com/histarch/furtrade.html

Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute  
http://www.cwu.edu/~cwuchi
Very important link to
Many animal issues http://www.mtd.com/tasty/index.html
COURSE OUTLINE

Week One  Animals and Humans – The Great Divide?

The first session introduces the range of topics and issues to be covered in the course. Not only will we consider how animals are related with human cultures, and societies but we will also consider the contested categories and notions of ‘human’ and ‘animal’. Are humans in some way unique in the animal world and if so, in what ways? Although it might seem obvious, what exactly does it mean for something to be an animal?


Week Two  The Wild and the Tame

Here we will consider the processes of domestication and how certain animal species were brought into close association with human societies. In what ways have they been tamed, bred and trained? For what purposes? Are these symbiotic relationships or are they, in some ways, exploitative? How have these relationships affected the development of human societies?


One of the key relationships between animals, both wild and domesticated, and humans is that humans kill them in order to consume them. All societies express, in different ways, concern about this relationship. Not all animals are regarded as appropriate sources of food. For example, some are regarded as too close to humans to be acceptable as food while others are regarded as too disgusting to be eaten. Why should an animal be ‘tasty’ in one society and tabooed in another? What exactly does it mean to turn a living creature into ‘meat’? What taboos and moral concerns do human societies express about killing and eating other animals?


Harris, M (1986) *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture* London: Allen and Unwin


Week Four Animals in Religious Thought and Practice

The religions of all societies incorporate animals (both negatively and positively) into their cosmologies, beliefs, practices and symbolism. Animals are worshipped, made the object of taboos, sacrificed, and associated with gods, spirits and other supernatural beings. In this session we will explore how religious thought and practice makes sense of the animal world and uses it of comment on the human condition.


Lévi-Strauss, C (1973) Totemism Harmondsworth: Penguin


Smith, B (1991) ‘Classifying Animals and Humans in Ancient India’ in Man Vol 25, No 3 pp 527 – 548
In recent decades the issue of animal rights has engaged the attention, emotions and thoughts of a wide public. In many western societies animals have come to be regarded as an oppressed minority and various organisations have set about arguing for, and fighting, for a change in this status. This session explores the development of the idea of animal rights and its impact on movements dedicated to animal welfare and 'liberation'. A central concern will be a sociological exploration of how/why such ideas have developed rather than any attempt to argue for or against them.


All animals communicate with members of their own species for reasons of biological necessity and survival. Is there though, something unique about human language as a system of communication? The debates about whether humans are unique in their capacity for self-reflexive/abstract thought expressed in language has been questioned in much language work with primates. The debates around this issue are perhaps fundamental in establishing or disestablishing human uniqueness.


Anthropomorphism is, in this context, the attribution of supposedly human qualities to non-human animals and is perhaps expressed in its most complex form in human relationships with their pets. Pet-keeping, as a cultural practice, involves the incorporation of animals into human families and human domestic space. What is expressed in these relationships and what does it tell us about human societies and cultures?


Goodall, J (1971) *In the Shadow of Man* London: Collins


Animals do not represent themselves in any ‘natural’ way to human societies – they are given cultural meaning – but human societies certainly make representations of them in a variety of ways. In this session we look at menageries, zoos, animal them parks and natural history museums. The main theme will be that the cultural representation and exhibition of animals, particularly of ‘wild’ animals, can be interpreted as a story which humans tell about themselves through the medium of animals.


Week Nine  Animals in Literature

For this session we hope to have a guest speaker. Either Lucile Desblanche, Reader in Translation Studies at Roehampton, who has a special interest in animals and literature or Jonathan Burt, who has written a major book on animals in film and a book on the rat. Jonathan might come to speak about animals and war. At the time of writing the handbook I was not able to confirm their availability.
Week Ten Animal Performances

A wide range of animals are made to perform, in a variety of ways, for human entertainment. They are made to race and fight against each other; some are ridden in a variety of performances and sports; made to do ‘tricks’ in circuses; challenged by humans in events such as bullfights and rodeos and judged in their relations with other animals in events such as herding trials and hunting. What meanings are expressed in such performances and what can we understand from examining humans watching animals, and participating with animals, in these contexts?


Fernandez, J (1971) ‘Persuasions and Performances: Of the Beast in Every Body ... And the Metaphors of Everyman’ in Geertz, C (ed) Myth, Symbol and Culture American Academy of Science


Week Eleven  Conservation and the Animal Environment

The central theme here will be that of conservation and environmental programmes related to animals. It is, perhaps, a taken for granted assumption among many people that it is a 'good' thing to preserve and conserve species but why should this be so? It is estimated that almost 90 per cent of all species which have ever existed are now extinct – how and why are decisions made now about which species deserve conservation now? Concern for conservation is cultural and social and must be understood as such. This session will consider the reasons for, and significance of, such concern.


