

Spring 2007
English 118-2
M/W, 2:30-4:00
Eaton 209

Tobias Menely
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Hours: T 2:30-3:30/W 12:30-2:30
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**English 118: Topics in World Literature
Humans and Other Animals**

<http://www.willamette.edu/~tmenely/118syllabus.htm>

In *Aspects of the Novel*, E.M. Forster imagines a future in which novelists, assisted by scientific discovery, make characters of nonhuman animals. Writers, however, have long imagined what the world looks like from the point of view of other creatures. In this course, we will read poetry and novels in which animals are brought uncomfortably near to our humanity or we are asked to inhabit the eyes, ears, noses, and minds of nonhumans. We will investigate the ways writers have shepherded readers into an animal world—the perspective of a fish or dog or elephant—and, in doing so, have crossed a boundary that Western philosophy has worked assiduously to maintain. We will also analyze moments when human beings find their sense of what it means to be human troubled by encounters with other animals, be it Gulliver among the Houyhnhnms or Jacques Derrida, naked and feeling the shame of being stared at by his pet pussycat. Throughout the class, we will attend to the ethical, social, and representational questions raised by conscious, communicative animals.

Required Texts

Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*
Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto*
Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*
Sewell, *Black Beauty*
London, *The Call of the Wild*
Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*
Gowdy, *The White Bone*

Course Policies

Participation and Attendance

This is a discussion class. Expect to attend every class with your reading and writing assignments completed, and be prepared to participate in discussions. Before each class, I will ask several questions for you to consider regarding our readings; you should come to class with preliminary answers to these queries. **You are permitted two absences, excused or unexcused. If you are absent more than twice, I will lower your course grade by one third of a letter (e.g., from B to B-) for each absence beyond two.** Classes for which you are obviously not prepared will count as absences. Repeated tardiness may also be counted as an absence. Please inform me in advance of special circumstances such as religious holidays for which there will not be penalties. If you are the victim of an emergency or serious illness, please remain in contact with me.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism consists of using another person's ideas, words, or images without proper acknowledgement. I assume that any paper submitted with your name on it is your work. If this turns out not to be the case, I will follow University policy concerning plagiarism, which can lead to a grade of F for the assignment in question and/or for the course, a report to the Office of the Dean, and dismissal from the University.

Assignments

Essays: There will be three formal essays due. I will provide an assignment sheet with potential lines of inquiry for these essays, but, in consultation with me, you are welcome to develop your own topic. I encourage you to set up an appointment with me, or stop by office hours, to discuss your ideas and your rough draft.

Essays require correct documentation of sources; careful attention should be paid to grammar, style, and structure. They should be typed in a 12 pt. font, with regular margins, double-spaced, and stapled. We will use the Modern Language Association style for documentation and citation of sources; information can be found in the MLA handbook, at the Main Library, and online.

I expect all papers to be submitted in class on the day they are due. You will be penalized a third of a letter grade (B to B-) for each day that a paper is late. I will grade no papers submitted more than one week after the due date.

Listserv Discussion: Each week you will be expected to contribute to a listserv discussion group a one-page (around 300 words) informal response paper in which you reflect on a reading and respond to the contributions made by others in class and on the listserv. This is meant to be a discussion, an exchange of opinions, observations, and ideas. On the first day of class, I will ask you to sign up for either Monday or Wednesday responsibilities. Contributions will be due the evening before class (on Sunday or Tuesday), by 8 PM, and you are expected to read each other's listserv contributions before class. I will occasionally return your discussion contributions in batches. Grading will be √-, √, or √+. A √- indicates you have not fully completed or engaged the assigned reading; a √ indicates you read the material and responded to it thoughtfully; a √+ indicates a compelling contribution that responds to both the reading and comments made by others in class or through the listserv. The listserv email address is engl-118-02@willamette.edu

Quizzes: There will be at least five unannounced quizzes, asking you to reflect on the day's reading along the lines of questions I will have posed before class. You may use your reading notes for quizzes, but you may not consult the primary text. Quizzes will be graded √, √+, or no credit.

Grading

The grading breakdown is as follows:

Three Essays (5 pages)	75%
Listserv Participation	20%
Quizzes	5%

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

I might revise this schedule during the semester. Any changes will be announced in class and through the email listserv.

M, 1/15 Introduction

Section One: Representing Animal Subjects

- W, 1/17 Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?"
http://members.aol.com/NeoNoetics/Nagel_Bat.html
de Waal, "Are we in anthropodenial?"
http://www.emory.edu/LIVING_LINKS/OurInnerApe/pdfs/anthropodenial.html
Williams, "Light"
http://www.nenYorker.com/printables/fiction/061218fi_fiction1
- M, 1/22 Cavendish, "The Hunting of the Stag"
<http://www.usask.ca/english/phoenix/cavendishpoems1.htm>
Crist, Introduction, *Images of Animals: Anthropomorphism and Animal Mind*, 1-10 (online reserve)
- W, 1/24 Crist, "Darwin's Anthropomorphism," *Images of Animals*, 11-50 (online reserve)
- M, 1/29 Sewell, *Black Beauty*, 3-100
- W, 1/31 Sewell, *Black Beauty*, 101-213
- M, 2/5 Smart, "My Cat Jeoffry" (packet)
Gray, "Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat" (packet)
- W, 2/7 Bishop, "The Fish" (packet)
Hass, "On the Coast Near Sausalito" (packet)
- M, 2/12 Graham, "The Geese" (packet)
Levine, "Animals are Passing from Our Lives" (packet)
- W, 2/14 Gowdy, *The White Bone*, 1-112
- M, 2/19 Gowdy, *The White Bone*, 113-229
Siebert, "An Elephants Crackup?"
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/08/magazine/08elephant.html?ex=1166158800&en=0b48bd96c97147e2&ei=5070>
- W, 2/21 *The White Bone*, 230-327
- M, 2/26 Kafka, "A Report to an Academy"
<http://www.mala.bc.ca/~Johnstoi/kafka/reportforacademy.htm>

Essay #1 due

Section Two: Humanity and Animality

- W, 2/28 Agamben, *The Open*, 1-47
Aristotle, from *The Politics* (packet)
- M, 3/5 Agamben, *The Open*, 49-92
Hobbes, from *Leviathan* (packet)
- W, 3/7 Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, "A Voyage to Brobdignag"
- M, 3/12 *Gulliver's Travels*, "A Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms"
- W, 3/14 Ritvo, "Border Trouble" (online reserve)
Lawrence, "Snake" (packet)
- M, 3/19 Roethke, "The Lizard" (packet)
Rich, "Fox" (packet)
Bishop, "The Moose" (packet)

- W, 3/21 *Grizzly Man*
Essay #2 due

- M, 3/26 Spring Break
- W, 3/28 Spring Break

Section Three: Human and Animal Relations

- M, 4/2 Barbauld, "The Mouse's Petition" (packet)
Burns, "To a Mouse" (packet)
- W, 4/4 Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am" (online reserve)
- M, 4/9 Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto*, 1-62
Creeley, "If You" (packet)
- W, 4/11 *The Companion Species Manifesto*, 63-100
Hearne, "A Taxonomy of Knowing" (online reserve)
- M, 4/16 London, *The Call of the Wild*, 1-59
- W, 4/18 Student Scholarship Recognition Day (no class)
- M, 4/23 *The Call of the Wild*, 60-124

W, 4/25 Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*, Introduction, 15-45, and 73-91

M, 4/30 *The Lives of Animals*, 47-69 and 93-120

M, 5/7 **Essay #3 due (by 5 PM)**