

Deep History and Domestication:

The Animal Side of Human Life

UH3004 / Spring 2012 /CRN: 17804
Tues. 2-3:50 / Hillcrest 132

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Domestic animals are essential to our lives: They provide calories that fuel our bodies, companionship as pets, inspiration for our collective imaginations, and service as guardians, hunters, and scientific research subjects. These contemporary relationships have historical antecedents stretching back to the emergence of humanity as a species. Indeed the process of domestication was an essential part of the development and diversity of human culture. This Honors Colloquium will examine the cultural and biological implications of domestication for humans and other species, using examples extending from the first archeological evidence of domestication to the recent past. Drawing on recent research in the life sciences and behavioral sciences we will also consult the texts and analytical tools of humanists and social scientists in order to understand how the process of domestication has shaped and continues to inform the human experience. We will question the chronological and conceptual divide we assume exists between natural history and the history of human culture and civilization. The course should also help us to appreciate the role of animals in shaping human histories, and to consider the possibility that non-humans might generate their own histories.

Requirements:

1. Attendance and Participation:

This course will be conducted in a seminar format that is intended to promote active learning and give students a primary role in the presentation and discussion of the course material.

Everyone is expected to attend every class meeting. Your classmates should be confident that you will come to class having read the assignment and prepared to discuss it.

2. Course Wiki:

We will use a Wiki on the course Scholar site to prepare for class discussions and to stay in touch and exchange ideas between class meetings. Discussion leaders (see #4, below) will submit a short summary (one paragraph) of the main ideas of the reading and suggested themes for discussion to the Wiki by 5pm on Monday so that everyone has a chance to review them before class.

3. Response Papers:

As part of the preparation for class discussions, everyone will prepare a short paper (ca. 1p. or 500 words) on the assigned readings for each week. These response papers should not simply summarize the readings, but should address the meaning, significance, and implications of the texts. How you do this is largely up to you, as long as I can tell that you have read and given serious thought to the assigned material. You might comment on the author's theoretical/methodological framework or relate the assigned text to other readings for the course, or other perspectives you have encountered elsewhere. Or you might prefer to respond to the text's major arguments in more personal terms. Whatever approach you choose, the paper should be brief (**ca. 500 words**), well-written, and carefully proofread. I will grade these assignments using a check/check+/check- system.

Your response paper is due in Scholar (under "assignments") by 5:00 pm Monday. Please use the assignment tool in Scholar. Do not put use the dropbox for this. And please, please, please do not send it to me as an email attachment.

4. Discussion Leaders:

Each week 1-2 volunteers (depending on the final size of the class) will be in charge of leading class discussion. Discussion leaders should be especially familiar with the assigned readings, and will post a list of themes for discussion on Monday before 5pm (see #2 above). They will be "in charge" of leading discussion during class, and are welcome to consult relevant book reviews or other texts on the assigned topic if they wish. They are not required to make a formal presentation to the class, but might want to provide a short (5 minute) introduction to the material to get things started. I will be available to answer questions and move the discussion forward when necessary. Each student will serve as a discussion leader at least once, and probably twice during the semester.

5. Deep History and Domestication Research Project and Presentation:

Everyone will choose a domestic animal species (besides the dog!) as the subject of a deep history research project. This is NOT a formal research paper, but rather an original inquiry and thought piece, based on interdisciplinary research about how one might approach an integrated history of, say, Angus cattle and human society across the entire chronological expanse of their relationship. You will use an array of sources and materials from a variety of disciplines. The goal of this assignment is to provide a case study for thinking about the cultural interface between ethnography and ethology and between history and natural history. The final project will take the form of a research portfolio-journal and a presentation to the class at the end of the term.

We will begin working on this assignment early in the semester. Periodic oral "progress reports" in class will provide you with some feedback from me and your peers, and help you make timely progress. Short written assignments related to your project will also be due along the way. More information about the specific requirements for this assignment will be provided in class.

6. Reading:

The following books have been ordered at the University and Tech Bookstores:

- Daniel Lord Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain* (University of California, 2008)
- Richard W. Bulliet, *Hunters, Herders and Hamburgers. The Past and Future of Human Animal Relationships* (Columbia University Press, 2005)
- Mark Derr, *How the Dog Became the Dog. From Wolves to Our Best Friends* (Overlook Press, 2011)
- Virginia DeJohn Anderson. *Creatures of Empire. How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Piers Vitebsky, *The Reindeer People. Living with Animals and Spirits in Siberia* (Mariner Books, 2006)
- Brad Kessler, *Goat Song. A Seasonal Life, A Short History of Herding and the Art of Making Cheese* (Scribner, 2009)

Additional readings will be posted on Scholar or on Reserve in Newman Library.

Grades:

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

Regular attendance and class participation	30%
Response papers	30%
Leading Class Discussion	15%
Deep History and Domestication Project – Presentation	10%
Deep History and Domestication Project – Research Portfolio / Journal	15%

Honor Code:

Students in this course are expected to abide by the University Honor code: “I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment.” Feel free to work with your classmates on the assignments and to share ideas with others. But assignments you hand in must reflect your own thinking and work. Please make sure to acknowledge ideas that are not your own.

Special Needs:

If you feel you need an accommodation because of a disability please make an appointment to see me during office hours.

Schedule: Subject to change if necessary. I see this course as a collaborative learning endeavor and will make every effort to tailor the readings to the group’s emerging interests. If changes are necessary I will post them on Scholar and announce them in class.

Week 1: Introduction: History, Natural History, Deep History
Jan. 17

Week 2: Guns, Germs and Steel

Jan. 24

watch: Diamond, *Guns Germs and Steel*, pt. 1

Utube: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-4008293090480628280>

Or Newman Library: DVD 534 c. 2

read: Edmund Russell, "Evolutionary History: Prospectus for a New Field,"

Environmental History vol. 8, no. 2 (2003): 204-228 (Scholar); Mary C. Stiner and

Gillian Feeley-Harnik, "Energy and Ecosystems" in Andrew Shryock and Daniel

Lord Smail, *Deep History. The Architecture of Past and Present* (2011) (Scholar)

Week3: Doing Deep History in a Post-Domestic Age

Jan. 31

reading: Bulliet, *Hunters, Herders, and Hamburgers* 1-46; Smail, *Deep History and the Brain*, 1-73

Week 4: Origins of Species

Feb. 7

reading: Bulliet, *Hunters, Herders, and Hamburgers* 47-79; Derr, *How the Dog Became a Dog*, 17-21, 25-42, 51-75

Week 5: Co-Evolution

Feb. 14

reading: Bulliet, *Hunters, Herders, and Hamburgers*, 80-100, Derr, *How the Dog Became a Dog*, 77-109, Schleidt and Shalter, "Co-evolution of Humans and Canids," (2003) (Scholar)

Week 6: Brains

Feb. 21

reading: Smail, *Deep History and the Brain*, 113-156; Derr, *How the Dog Became a Dog*, 113-179

Week 7: Brawn

Feb. 28

reading: Anthony, *The Horse the Wheel and Language* (2007), 123-133, 193-224, 458-466; Bulliet, *Hunters, Herders and Hamburgers*, 101-142

===== Spring Break=====

Week 8: Herders, pt. 1

Mar. 13

reading: Vitebsky, *The Reindeer People* (2006) 3-59, 259-310, 370-395

Week 9: Herders, pt. 2

Mar. 20

reading: Kessler, *Goat Song*(2009)

Week 10: Research Week

Mar. 27

Week 11: Creatures of Empire

Apr. 3

reading: Anderson *Creatures of Empire, How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (2006), 1-105, 243-246

Week 12: Darwin in Context

Apr. 10

reading: Darwin, *The Variation of Animals and Plants Under Domestication* vol. 1 [(1868) 1998], forward (by Harriet Ritvo), v-xiii, Introduction, 1-14, Ch.1, 15-50; Brantz, "The Domestication of Empire" (2007) 73-93

Week 13: Of Mice and Men

April 17

reading: Burt, *Rat*, 7-48, (89-114); Rader, "The Multiple Meaning of Laboratory Animals: Standardizing Mice for American Cancer Research, 1910-1950" in *Animals in Human Histories*, ed. Mary J. Henninger-Voss (2002), 389-438; Kenneth J. Shapiro, "A Rodent for Your Thoughts: The Social Construction of Animal Models" in *Animals in Human Histories*, pp. 439-471

Week 14: Final Presentations

April 24

Week 15: Final Presentations

May 1