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140.383
THINKING AND LIVING WITH ANIMALS:
HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIPS IN HISTORY
FALL SEMESTER 2008, TTh. 12-1:30

Course summary: In the last twenty years the multi-disciplinary field of human-animal studies has grown enormously. Scholars with different backgrounds have begun to study and analyze our interactions with animals. In laboratories, restaurants, grocery stores, shops, and streets, we find ourselves interacting or talking about animals without often being aware of it. Discussing different episodes and discourses in human history, 'Thinking and living with animals' will provide an opportunity for students to re-think the experiences they had, have and will have with animals. This course will provide an overview of this new field and will help students understand the complex social and cultural processes that endlessly shape our perception of animals in our lives. The course will begin with a review of the most important approaches scholars have applied to the study of human-animal relationships. The rest of the course will be dedicated to analyzing different episodes in history, focusing not only on the way in which discourses and knowledge about animals shaped our identities, as for example in the case of comparative anatomy and psychology, but also on the way in which actual interactions between human and animals bodies produce knowledge.

Course structure: We will meet two times per week. Students will be expected to have read the materials and to actively contribute to discussion. While the course is discussion-based, in many cases I will introduce and contextualize the topic of the day with a 20-30 minute lecture. All course readings will be on e-reserve accessible through the Milton S. Eisenhower Library website.

Assignments: Students will be expected to have read the materials and to contribute actively to discussion. Therefore, 20% of the grade will be assessed on the basis of participation in class. Students have to complete two written assignments. The two short papers (8-10 pages) will be based on the discussion and comparison of primary sources. In the first paper, students will analyze chapter III of Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle*. Using different approaches learned in class, students will discuss the meaning of animal bodies in the novel. In the second short paper, students will investigate the role of pets in the neighborhood where they live. Interviewing pet-owner and non pet-owner, students will describe how pets shape the lives of their owner as well as the lives of the people who live in the same neighborhood. 20% and 30% of the grade will be assessed on the basis of these two papers respectively. Finally, 30% of the grade will be based on students' presentations in class. Divided in groups, students will choose a particular case of human-animal interaction and will present in class an analysis of visual representations of that specific interaction.

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1: INTRO: HOW CAN WE THINK WITH ANIMALS?

Tuesday:

- Through a discussion of students' interactions with animals I will introduce methodologies and goals of the course.

Thursday:

- The topic of the day is the definition of the concept of 'animal's agency'. Does it exist? How can we define it? How can we study it? How does this concept change our perception of animals' actions?

Readings: (total pages 49)

1. Chris Wilbert, "What is Doing the Killing? Animal Attacks, Man Eaters, and Shifting Boundaries and Flows of Human-Animal Relations" in The Animal Studies Group (eds.), *Killing Animals*, Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2006: 30-49.
2. Chris Philo, "Animals, geography, and the City: notes on inclusions and exclusions", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 1995 (13): 655-681.

WEEK 2: LIVING WITH ANIMALS. RE-THINKING DOMESTICATION

Tuesday:

- The topic of the day is 'domestication'. After exploring different possible definitions of this concept, students will discuss how each concept can shape human attitude towards animals. Why is the process of domestication of animals primarily understood in economic and biological terms? How does the history of human evolution change with alternative definitions of 'domestication'?

Readings: (Total pages 43)

1. Nerissa Russell, "The Domestication of Anthropology" in Rebecca Cassidy and Molly Mullin (eds.) *Where the Wild Things are Now. Domestication Reconsidered*, Oxford, Berg, 2007: 27-48.
2. Kay Anderson, "A Walk on the Wild Side: a Critical Geography of Domestication", *Progress in Human Geography*, 1997(21): 463-485.

Thursday:

- While the topic of the day is still 'domestication', today students will discuss two different applications of this concept. How was domestication understood in Victorian England? How can the concept of 'domestication' help us understanding what is going on inside twentieth-century laboratories?

Readings: (Total pages 58)

1. Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1987: Chapter 1 “Barons of Beef”, pages 45-82.
2. Karen Rader, “The Metaphor of Domestication in Genetics” in Rebecca Cassidy and Molly Mullin (eds.) *Where the Wild Things are Now. Domestication Reconsidered*, Oxford, Berg, 2007: 183-204.

WEEK 3: LIVING WITH ANIMALS, LIVING WITH PETS

Tuesday:

- One of the most important consequences of domestication is the transformation of animals into pets. The topic of the day is the origin and meaning of this transformation. Why do we like pets? Why did specific animals become pets? What is the difference between animals and pets?

Readings: (Total pages 54)

1. James Serpell, *In the Company of Animals: A Study of Human-Animals Relationships*, New York, Basil Blackwell, Chapters 2-3, pages 19-47 and chapters 6-7, pages 73-99.

Thursday:

- Today, students will investigate how the concept of ‘pet’ changes over time. In particular, they will discuss how the market can shape the meaning of this concept. Focusing on birds and fishes, students will investigate how a ‘pet’ becomes a ‘pet business’. Is the example of birds and fishes useful also to understand the businesses associated with dogs and cats? Which concept of ‘pet’ and ‘animal’ are people involved in ‘pet business’ adopting and supporting?

Reading: (Total pages 27)

1. Katherine C. Grier, “Buying your Friends: The Pet Business and American Consumer Culture” in Susan Strasser (ed.), *Commodifying Everything: Relationships of the Market*, New York, Routledge, 2003: 43-70.

WEEK 4: LIVING WITH ANIMALS, LIVING LIKE ANIMALS

Tuesday:

- Investigating the similarities between the enslavement of black people and the enslavement of animals, students will discuss the role of animal exploitation in justifying the oppression of groups of humans. What does make ‘animal metaphor’ work? Are metaphors only metaphors? Is it only a linguistic question?

Readings: (Total pages 43)

1. Majorie Spiegel, *The Dreaded Comparison. Human and Animal Slavery*, New York, Mirror Books, 1996: 15-58.

Thursday:

- Holocaust survivors and family members have argued that our treatment of animals parallels that of humans in the Holocaust. How do we assess this argument?

Readings: (Total pages 29)

1. Charles Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*, New York, Lantern Books, 2002, Chapter 6, "We were like that too. Holocaust-connected Animal Advocates", 139-168.

WEEK 5: THINKING WITH ANIMALS, THINKING ABOUT GENDER

Tuesday:

- Today, students will explore on the relationship between animals and gender. In particular they will discuss if gender shapes individuals' attitude towards animals. How does masculinity affect the way in which men look at animals? Do you think a different definition of 'animal' could modify our perception of male identity?

Readings: (Total pages 49)

1. Brian Luke, *Brutal: Manhood and the Exploitation of Animals*, Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2007, Introduction, "Introduction: Gender and Exploitation of Animals" (1-23) and Chapter 3, "The Erotics of Men's Predation", 81-108.

Thursday:

- The topic of the day is again gender, but today students will discuss how gender shapes the woman-animal relationship. Do you think female and male identities produce different attitudes towards animals?

Readings: (Total pages 41)

1. Coral Lansbury, "Gynaecology, Pornography and the Anti-vivisection Movement", *Victorian Studies*, 1985 (28): 413-437.
2. Carol Adams, *Neither Man nor Beast*, New York, Continuum, 1995, Chapter 8, "Bringing Peace Home: a Feminist Philosophical Perspective on the Abuse of Women, Children, and Pet Animals", 144-161.

WEEK 6: LIVING WITH ANIMALS, EATING LIKE ANIMALS

Tuesday:

- Today students discuss one of the most obvious interactions between humans and animals, namely food. The main goal of today discussion is to understand if the way in which we interact with food is shaped by the ways in which we interact with animals.

Readings: (Total pages 29)

1. Erica Fudge, "Saying nothing concerning the same: on dominion, purity, and meat in early modern England" in Erica Fudge (ed.), *Renaissance Beasts. Of Animals, Humans, and Other Wonderful Creatures*, Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2004: 70-86
2. Carol Adams, *Neither Man nor Beast*, New York, Continuum, 1995, Chapter 1. "Eating Animals", 25-38.

Thursday:

- Today we investigate the impact of the fast food culture on our understanding of the role of food in our life. How has fast food culture changed our idea of animals? Did fast food culture only affect animal bodies?
- **DEADLINE FOR THE FIRST SHORT PAPER.**

Readings: (Total pages 42)

1. Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of four Meals*, New York, Penguin Press, 2006, chapter 4, "The Feedlot: Making Meat", 65-84.
2. Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 2001, chapter 8, "The Most Dangerous Job", 169-192.

WEEK 7: THINKING ANIMALS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Tuesday:

- The topic of the day is the relationship between animals and technology. In particular, students will discuss how the representation of animals is shaped by different technologies and how the history of technology can be affected once we consider animals themselves 'a technology'

Readings: (Total pages 38)

1. Jonathan Burt, "The Illumination of the Animal Kingdom: The Role of Light and Electricity in Animal Representation", *Society & Animals*, 2001, 9(3): 205-228.
2. Edmund Russel, "The Garden in the Machine: Toward an Evolutionary History of Technology in Susan Schrepfer and Philip Scraton, *Industrializing Organisms, Introducing Evolutionary History*, New York, Routledge, year: 1-16.

Thursday:

- **Today, different groups will present in class the sources they are going to use for their in-class presentation. They will not only discuss the nature of their sources but also their limits. In particular, they will investigate how technologies shape not only the representation of animals but also human capacity to do research.**

WEEK 8: THINKING WITH ANIMALS, ANIMAL MIND AND BODY

Tuesday:

- Today students analyze how the study of the animal body re-defines the boundaries between humans and animals. Why do we study animal bodies? How do we apply the knowledge of these bodies to human beings? How do we distinguish the two kinds of bodies?

Readings: (Total pages 31)

1. Galen, *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*, Translated by Margaret May, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1968: 67-75; 104-112.
2. René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, Baltimore, Penguins Books, 1960, *Discourse N.5*: 67-82.

Thursday:

- Tuesday we studied how we have negotiated the boundaries between human and animal bodies. Today, looking at Charles Darwin's work, students will study the process of re-defining the boundaries between human and animal mind. How do we affirm human uniqueness? What animal do we consider closest to us? Why?

Readings: (Total pages 40)

1. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, ch. III 69-100.
2. Elizabeth Knoll, "Dogs, Darwinism, and English Sensibilities" in Robert Mitchell, Nicholas Thompson, Lyn Miles (eds.), *Anthropomorphism, Anecdotes, and Animals*, New York, State University of New York Press, 1997: 12-21.

WEEK 9: THINKING WITH ANIMALS, TEACHING TO ANIMALS

Tuesday:

- In the twentieth century scientists tried to teach animals human languages, pursuing the age-old dream of speaking with other species. Before discussing these experiments, students will investigate the meaning of the concept of 'anthropomorphism'. How do we define 'anthropomorphism'? Is it a useful concept to study animals? Are there risks in applying this concept to animal minds?

Readings: (Total pages 47)

1. Frans de Waal, *The Ape and the Sushi Master. Cultural Reflections by a Primatology*, New York, Basic Books, 2001: ch.1 "The Whole Animal: Childhood Talismans and Excessive Fear of Anthropomorphism" 37-84.

Thursday:

- Today, students will read and discuss two important experiments on animal language. Historically, language represents the insuperable wall defending human uniqueness. What happens when we eliminate this wall? How do we re-define our identities as humans? How do we re-define the differences between human and animal minds?

Readings: (Total pages 38)

1. Allen Gardner, Beatrice Gardner, "Teaching Sign Language to a Chimpanzee", *Science*, 1969 (165): 664-672.
2. Raymond Corbey, *The Metaphysics of Apes. Negotiating Animal-Human Boundary*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005: Ch.1 "Ambiguous Apes" 5-35.

WEEK 10: THINKING WITH LABORATORY ANIMALS

Tuesday:

- The topic of the week is animals inside the laboratory. Today students will ask themselves if the concept 'laboratory animal' has a history. What is a 'laboratory animal'? In which sense can we define a 'laboratory animal' an animal? Is there a 'laboratory animal' in the seventeenth century?

Readings: (Total pages 20)

1. A. D. Farr, "The First Human Blood Transfusion", *Medical History*, 1980, 24: 143-162.
2. Robert Boyle, "Tryals proposed by Mr. Boyle to Dr. Lower, to be made by him, for the improvement of transfusing bloud out of one live animal into another", *Philosophical Transactions*, n.22, February 11, 1666, p.386.

Thursday:

- Jumping to the twentieth century, students will discuss who is a 'laboratory animal' today. How is this animal different from the animal we met in the seventeenth century? Which kind of knowledge can this animal produce? And How?
- **DEADLINE FOR THE SECOND SHORT PAPER.**

Readings: (Total pages 39)

1. Michael Lynch, "Sacrifice and the Transformation of the Animal Body into a Scientific Object: Laboratory Culture and Ritual Practice in the Neurosciences", *Social Studies of Science*, 1988 (18): 265-289.
2. Arnold Arluke, "We build a Better Beagle": Fantastic Creatures in Lab Animal Ads", *Qualitative Sociology*, 1994(17): 143-158.

WEEK 11: WRITING ABOUT LABORATORY ANIMALS

Tuesday:

- Today, students investigate the way in which scientists communicate their knowledge to the community outside the laboratory. In particular, they will discuss the differences between the language used inside the lab and the language used outside the lab. Why are there differences between inside and outside the laboratory? Are there differences between the animal inside the laboratory and the animal described in the scientific journals?

Readings: (Total pages 50)

1. Susan Lederer, "Political Animals. The Shaping of Biomedical Research Literature in Twenty-Century America", *ISIS*, 1992(83): 61-79.
2. Otniel Dror, "The Affect of Experiment. The Turn to Emotions in Anglo-American Physiology, 1900-1940", *ISIS*, 1999(90): 205-237.

Thursday:

- Tuesday students discussed how scientists translate the knowledge they gained inside the laboratory in a language proper to scientific journals. Today, looking at the fascinating stories of animals in space, students will investigate how newspaper write about laboratory animals. How do newspapers describe animals in space? Are they different from other laboratory animals?

Readings: (Total pages 17)

1. NASA, *A Brief History of Animals in Space*, <http://history.nasa.gov/printFriendly/animals.html>: 1-5.
2. Animals in space according to newspapers:
 - "Traveler in Space: A Little Russian Hunting Dog", *The New York Times*, Nov. 4, 1957: 8.

- “Four Mice packed for Space Travel”, *The New York Times*, Feb. 13, 1959: 29.
- “Russian Orbit a Satellite Carrying 2 Dogs and TV”, *The New York Times*, Aug. 20, 1960: 1.
- “Apes Surviving in Vacuum Tests”, *The New York Times*, Nov 19, 1964: 19
- “Laika a U.N. Issue”, *The New York Times*, Nov 21, 1957: 10.
- “Missile to Carry Ape”, *The New York Times*, May 5, 1959: 67
- “Space Chimpanzee is Safe after Soaring 420 Miles”, *The New York Times*, Feb 1, 1961.
- “Space Chimpanzee Bars Encore”, *The New York Times*, Feb 4, 1961: 7
- “Ham, the Space Chimpanzee, Bears Up Well”, *The New York Times*, Feb 2, 1961: 7.
- “Ham, First Chimp in Space, Dies in a Carolina Zoo at 26”, *The New York Times*, Jan 20, 1983: B19.

WEEK 12: DEFENDING LABORATORY ANIMALS

Tuesday:

- The topic of the day is the Victorian anti-vivisection movement. Students will analyze the language used by nineteenth-century anti-vivisectionists and pro-vivisectionists. What animals did they have in mind writings about vivisection? Who were their targets? And their audience?

Readings: (Total pages 44)

1. Frances Power Cobbe, *Light in Dark Places*, (London, Victoria Street, 1883) in Susan Hamilton, *Animal Welfare and Anti-vivisection 1870-1910, Vol. I, Frances Power Cobbe*, London, Routledge, 2004: 291-321.
2. J. Cleland, *Experiments on Brutes Animals*, (London, 1883), in Susan Hamilton, *Animal Welfare and Anti-vivisection 1870-1910, Vol. III Pro-Vivisection Writings*, London, Routledge, 2004: 251-265.

Thursday:

- Today, students will discuss new strategies and discourses used by twentieth-century activists. In particular, they will investigate the history of Animal Liberation Front. What animal do ALF activists have in mind in designing their strategies? How do they justify violence? What changed from nineteenth-century?

Readings: (Total pages 54)

1. Steven Best, Anthony Nocella, “Behind the Mask: Uncovering the Animal Liberation Front” in Steven Best, Anthony Nocella (eds.), *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters? Reflection on the Liberation of Animals*, New York, Lantern Books, 2004: 9-65.

WEEK 13: THINKING AND LIVING WITH ANIMALS, WHAT DID WE LEARN

Tuesday:

- The last day of the course is dedicated to in-class presentation by student groups. Each group will have 10 minutes to present their projects and another 5 minutes to answer questions.