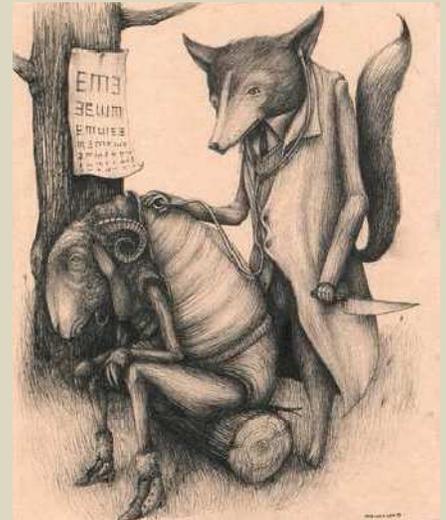


# (HUM)ANIMALITY

From Aeschylus to Agamben, philosophy and literature have called on the figure of the animal to represent everything from nobility, fidelity, and beauty to the immoral, depraved and inhuman. But humans are animals too and in post-Freudian and post-Darwinian modernity, humans have been theoretically “animalized:” animals have come to stand in for the “natural” unrestricted by cultural demands, and humans have been reconceived as bearing instincts and drives whose repression may be psychologically damaging. More recently, scholars such as Derrida, Agamben and Wolfe have rearticulated non-human animal life in terms of a shared being, embodiment, and finitude that ethically complicates the relegation of animals to the status of metaphor or raw material (for consumption, entertainment, or experimentation). Meanwhile, scientific scholarship on various species’ forms of communication, ways of reasoning, and moral codes has rendered murkier the line between animal and human.



This course will serve as an introduction to the emerging field of “animal studies,” engage in focused reading of a number of literary texts in which non-human animals or animality play a significant role, and pursue, *inter alia*, the following lines of inquiry:

- How are our conceptions of humanity altered when we consider animals as beings rather than metaphors or raw material?
- What is the symbolic work performed by animals in literary representations and philosophy? How is this labor divided by species?
- What theoretical and ethical problems derive from subsuming all non-human species under the word “animal”?
- How do depictions of humans thematize, repress or problematize their animality?
- How have animals been deployed as a rhetorical device for de-humanizing foreigners, colonized people, women, persons of different races or ethnic groups, or gender non-conformists?
- What are the consequences of the Aristotelian equation of human life with the life of the citizen? Should these consequences be addressed, as some “animal rights” activists have advocated by granting animals “human” or “civil” rights?
- Can instinct be counted on as a reliable moral guide? Can it be trained? How should justice, theoretically or as a system of law, account for human animality?

**Course Requirements:** This course requires intensive reading and independent study, active engagement in class discussions, four (500-700 word) postings to the class blackboard, presentation of a literary or theoretical text of your own choosing that bears on our subject, and a 15-page analytical seminar paper.

**Postings:** Your 500-700 word postings should be a well conceived, coherent and organized analytical argument about any text that we have read since your last posting. You may choose any relevant topic on which to write. You may want to use your postings to begin building ideas for your final seminar paper. All students are asked to read the postings of other seminar members.

**Book Presentation:** In the 13<sup>th</sup> week of class, you will be required to make a formal presentation in class on a literary or theoretical text that bears on our subject. You may choose a book from our class bibliography or choose a text on your own. I suggest that you have your presentation fully written out ahead of time. Your presentation should be between 10-15 minutes in length. Please assure that your presentation fits into this time frame.

**Seminar Paper:** Your final seminar paper may draw on any of the texts we have read in class as well as on your original research. The focus, however, should be on your own analysis of the text you have chosen to study and the theoretical argument you make should be your own—and not a repetition of another critic. While you are not required to hand in a draft of your paper ahead of time, I will be happy to read a draft and work with you on formulating a topic, developing an argument, or finding appropriate wording.

**Readings:** *Please note that I very strongly urge you to purchase the editions and translations listed below, so we can all follow the text in class together. This is especially crucial for Aeschylus, Ovid, Renard the Fox, and Kafka since translations of these texts vary widely. These books are readily available through amazon.com or Abebooks.com, as well as through local bookstores.*

Aeschylus, *Oresteia*  
Trans Richmond Lattimore  
University of Chicago Press (0-226-30778-6)

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*  
Trans Charles Martin  
Norton (978-0-393-32642-0)

*Renard the Fox*  
Trans Patricia Terry  
University of California Press (0-520-07684-2)

H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*  
Penguin (978-0-14-144102-3)

Franz Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*  
Trans Stanley Corngold  
Norton Critical Edition (978-0-393-96796-5)

Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*  
Harper Perennial (978-0-06-023213-8)

Moacyr Scliar, *Max and the Cats*  
Trans Eloah F. Giacomelli  
Penguin (0-452-28453-8)

J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*  
Penguin (978-0143115281)

### Readings available on Blackboard:

Jacques Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am* (selections)

Ovid, *The Metamorphoses* (Selections)

Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal* (selections)

Marie de France, "Bisclavret"

Merz-Perez, Heide, and Silverman, "Childhood Cruelty to Animals and Subsequent Violence against Humans"

Dale Jamiesen, "What do animals think?"

Frans de Waal, *Primates and Philosophers* (selections)

Leslie Irvine, "The Power of Play"

**Class Blackboard:** You can access our Blackboard from either iCampus or directly from <https://blackboard.ilstu.edu>. Your Blackboard user name is your ULID and your password is your ULID password. When you log into Blackboard for the first time (or any time you change computers off campus), it is very important that you do a "browser check" to insure that you can access the course and complete all the activities. In Blackboard, click on the "Check Browser" link in the upper right of the login screen or My Blackboard screen and follow the recommendations provided. Please note that pop-ups must be enabled for the site and the file upload function requires Java. When you log in to Blackboard, you will likely receive a "Java Security Warning": You must click "NO" in order for all of your Blackboard tools to run correctly. It is highly recommended that you install and use Firefox as your web browser. Mac users should use Safari rather than Firefox. If you are having difficulty, please contact the University Computer HelpDesk at 438-HELP.

### Reading Schedule

<u>WEEK 1</u>	Aug	24	Introduction to Course
<u>WEEK 2</u>		31	Aeschylus, <i>Agamemnon</i> Derrida, <i>The Animal that Therefore I Am</i> (41-47, 69-87)
<u>WEEK 3</u>	Sep	7	Ovid, "Apollo and the Python" (33) -----"Apollo and Daphne" (33-38) -----"Actaeon and Diana" (95-100) -----"Arachne" (189-195) -----"Tereus, Procne, and Philomela" (206-218)
<u>WEEK 4</u>		14	Ovid, "Iphigenia on Aulis" (407-408) -----"The Sorrows of Hecuba" (454-461) Marie de France, "Bisclavret" Agamben, <i>The Open: Man and Animal</i> (selections) <b>Posting Due</b>
<u>WEEK 5</u>		21	<i>Roman de Renard</i>
<u>WEEK 6</u>		28	Kafka, <i>The Metamorphosis</i>
<u>WEEK 7</u>	Oct	5	H. G. Wells, <i>The Island of Doctor Moreau</i> Merz-Perez, Heide, and Silverman, "Childhood Cruelty to Animals and Subsequent violence against Humans" <b>Posting Due</b>

<u>WEEK 8</u>		12	Scliar, <i>Max and the Cats</i>
<u>WEEK 9</u>		19	Grizzly Man (film viewing in class) Jamiesen, "What do animals think?" <b>Posting Due</b>
<u>WEEK 10</u>		26	Coetzee, <i>Disgrace</i>
<u>WEEK 11</u>	Nov	2	Coetzee, <i>Disgrace</i> Frans de Waal, <i>Primates and Philosophers</i> (selections)
<u>WEEK 12</u>		9	Coetzee, <i>Disgrace</i>
<u>WEEK 13</u>		16	<b>Outside Reading Presentations</b>
<u>WEEK 14</u>		23	Thanksgiving
<u>WEEK 15</u>		30	Kundera, <i>Unbearable Lightness</i> Leslie Irvine, "The Power of Play" <b>Posting Due</b>
<u>WEEK 16</u>	Dec	7	Kundera, <i>Unbearable Lightness</i>
	Dec	12	<b>Final Paper Due</b>