

**American Animal Studies - ENG 9106 – Spring 2014**

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Office: UC 285

Office hours: Tues 3-5:00, or by appointment

Room: UC 377

Course hours: W 3:30-6:30

**Description:** Many of the major debates in American studies intersect in subtle ways with issues that have come into focus in the recent rise of animal studies. Topics that have been of key interest to American studies such as the frontier, the intersection of nature and industrialization, biological theories of racial and sexual difference, and biopolitical power are now being reconsidered with new attention through situations that directly refer to the relationship between humans and animals. In this class, we will read certain texts of American literature with an eye to how American studies and animal studies share similar problems and contentions. We will be careful in not assuming that animals are ciphers for either the unrestrained soul of America or its domesticated counterpart. Instead, we will try to elaborate on how different readings of animals and specific animal lives appear at the nexus of American politics and cultural production.

**Grading**

60% final essay

15% oral presentation

25% class participation

**Essay:** The essay is a research paper of 20 pages on a topic pertaining to the course. A one-paragraph abstract will be due on March 19.

**Oral presentation:** The presentation is a 20 minute overview of the key issues of a chosen text. You should frame the material with a variety of contexts including: how this text fits overall into our course (is in dialogue with previous readings), how the text fits overall in the author's oeuvre, and how the text fits in its field. In your presentation, you can choose to focus on close reading of passages, definition of select key terms, or analysis of the important elements of the argument. Throughout the presentation, you should be raising questions for the class and outlining how you think we can get the most out of this reading.

**Statement on Academic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

**Books:**

Jack London *The Call of the Wild* (Modern Library)

Herman Melville *Moby Dick, or The Whale* (Penguin)  
Charles Darwin *The Origin of Species* (Oxford)  
Anna Sewell *Black Beauty* (Penguin Classics)  
Joel Chandler Harris *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings* (Penguin)  
Upton Sinclair *The Jungle* (Oxford)  
Rachel Carson *Silent Spring* (Mariner)  
J. M. Coetzee *The Lives of Animals* (Princeton UP)  
Philip K. Dick *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (Del Rey)  
Jakob von Uexküll *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans* (Minnesota UP)  
*The Animals Reader*, eds. Linda Kalof and Amy Fitzgerald (Berg)

Jan 8- Week 1

Aristotle "The History of Animals" in *The Animals Reader*  
Edgar Allan Poe "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"  
John Berger "Why Look at Animals?" in *The Animals Reader*

Jan 15 - Week 2

Jack London *The Call of the Wild*  
Georges Bataille "Animality"  
Thomas Nagel "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" in *The Animals Reader*

Jan 22 - Week 3

Jeremy Bentham "Principles of Morals and Legislation" in *The Animals Reader*  
Peter Singer "Animal Liberation or Animal Rights?" in *The Animals Reader*  
Jacques Derrida "The Animal That Therefore I Am"  
Cary Wolfe "Introduction," from *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory*  
Michael Lundblad "Animal Studies and Animality Studies" PMLA

Jan 29 - Week 4

Herman Melville *Moby Dick* (1-341)  
Philip Armstrong "Rendering the Whale"

Feb 5 - Week 5

Herman Melville *Moby Dick* (341-end)  
Deleuze and Guattari "Becoming-Animal" in *The Animals Reader*

Feb 12 - Week 6

Charles Darwin *The Origin of Species*, selections TBD

Feb 26 - Week 7

Jakob von Uexküll *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans*  
Poetry selections from D.H. Lawrence, Marianne Moore, and Robinson Jeffers

March 5 - Week 8

Anna Sewell *Black Beauty*  
Joel Chandler Harris *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings* (just the “Legends” section)  
Marjorie Spiegel “In Defense of Slavery” in *The Animals Reader*

March 12 - Week 9

Upton Sinclair *The Jungle*  
Carol Adams “The Sexual Politics of Meat” in *The Animals Reader*  
Nicole Shukin *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times*, excerpts  
**Due: Essay Abstract**

March 19 - Week 10

Rachel Carson *Silent Spring*  
Michel Foucault *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, excerpts  
Joshua Schuster “Biopolitical Ontology after Rachel Carson”

March 26 - Week 11

J.M. Coetzee *The Lives of Animals*, plus responses at end of book  
Franz Kafka “A Report to an Academy”  
Rainer Marie Rilke “The Panther”  
Ted Hughes “The Jaguar,” “Second Glance at a Jaguar”

Apr 2 – Week 12

PK Dick *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*  
Sherryl Vint “Speciesism and Species Being in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*”  
Donna Haraway “Cyborgs to Companion Species: Reconfiguring Kinship in Technoscience” in *The Animals Reader*

**Due: Final Essay – April 11**