

Spring, 2014: English 547 (Graduate)
Wednesday, 7:00-9:30 p.m.
Lea Hall 111

Professor Linda Sumption
BH 223/ 562-2136
Office Hours: M: 10-12:00;
Tues: 11:00-noon; Wed.: 4:30-6:30 p.m.;
Thurs.: 11:00-noon
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Animals in Narrative: Giving Voice to Shifting Views

In recent years, animal studies has emerged as a significant, interdisciplinary academic field. Following the development of environmental studies, scholars and writers have begun to question the ways that human beings relate to nonhuman creatures. How has that relationship changed in recent times? What forces have brought about that change? Most important to us in our course is this question: How do the stories we tell express that shift? We see changes in perspective and expression about nonhuman life in nonfiction, poetry, fiction, and film. This course is designed to give you a look into those literary forms, and to give you an opportunity to participate in a lively, global conversation about the way we relate to a great range of other creatures, including domestic animals, exotic wildlife, creatures we mostly ignore, and those we label as pets.

In particular, we will investigate the following topics as they relate to nonhuman creatures and our experience of them: (1) theories of “mind” and consciousness; (2) nonhuman language and communication; (3) narrative, agency and anthropocentrism; and (4) interspecies experiences. We will consider various theoretical frameworks – these include poststructuralism, cultural criticism, new historicism, to name a few -- in order to see how they contribute to our main theoretical lens in the course, which is posthumanism.

Required Texts*

**You are required to bring copies of these texts (and also the uploaded poetry) to the class meetings for which they are assigned:*

Auster, Paul. *Timbuktu*. New York: Picador, 1999.

Bergman, Charles. *Wild Echoes*. U Illinois P, 2003.

Goodall, Jane. *Through a Window: My Thirty Years with the Chimpanzees of Gombe*.

New York: Mariner Books, 2010.

Gowdy, Barbara. *The White Bone*. New York: Picador, 2000.

Morton, Alexandra. *Listening to Whales*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2004.

Morton, Timothy. *The Ecological Thought*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2013.

Mowat, Farley. *Never Cry Wolf*. New York: Back Bay Books, 2001.

Films, Poetry, Critical Essays and an Additional Selection of Short Narratives will be provided online, in our Blackboard class page. See Schedule of Assignments for additional details. Along with pdf files for these additional materials, Blackboard will also offer links to these films, which you must watch before their assigned class meetings:

Buck, starring Buck Brannaman. Documentary Film, 2011

More Than Honey, starring John Hurt. Documentary Film, 2013.

My Life as a Turkey, starring Joe Huto. Documentary Film, 2011

Old Partner, starring Choi Won-Kyun, and a 40 year old ox. Documentary Film, 2010 (Korean, with English Subtitles)

Story of the Weeping Camel. Starring Janchiv Ayurzana, Chimed Ohin. Documentary Film, 2005 (Mongolian, with English Subtitles)

The Last Lions, narrated by Jeromy Irons. Documentary Film, 2012

Course Requirements

Participation in weekly discussions.

Reading Responses* (total of 4): two must be of primary texts (not already discussed in class); two must be secondary works, either assigned (but not yet discussed) or from Additional Reading bibliography (forthcoming). In addition, a minimum of two of these reading responses must be submitted by March 7, 2014.

Annotated Bibliography*: Due April 16, 2014.

H-Animal Studies Listserv: Join the list, look over the resources available and the emails you receive; post at least one Query (or call it a Research Request) during the semester. We will discuss this animal studies online discussion group during our first class meeting: <http://www.h-net.org/~animal/>

Research Paper*: 12-15 pages, MLA style.

*Detailed information and directions for these activities will be posted in Blackboard.

Your Grades

Your grades in and for the course will be figured according to the following scheme:

Engagement in class discussions, including familiarity with all assigned texts and films:	30%
Research Paper:	30%
Reading Responses (4):	25%
Annotated Bibliography:	10%
H-Animal Listserv: Publication of Research Question to the List:	5%

Course Policies

- Papers are expected at class time on the date they are due, unless another arrangement has been made with me in advance.
- You will receive detailed, written instructions about all assignments. These instructions will be circulated in class, and will also be posted on the course web page in ENMU's Blackboard site. If you are concerned about research resources, please do contact our excellent research librarian, Michele Wood, in Golden Library. She is an excellent source of information, and is always willing to help with our projects.
- Student submissions from outside Portales should be made through Blackboard, no later than the day they are due. Portales students can bring their assignments to class, or submit them through Blackboard.
- The Schedule of Assignments is subject to changes in the course of the semester. It is your responsibility to make note of those additions and changes when I announce them. If you miss class, be sure to contact me or check the course Blackboard web page. Some assignments have not been finalized, but you will find updates (in Blackboard and in class) in the days ahead.
- Plagiarism will not be tolerated. "Plagiarism is the use of the work, words, or ideas of another person as if they were your own" (Bulletin of Yale University, 1979). Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, and plagiarized work will be automatically rejected. If you are unsure about a possible plagiarism problem in your work, please speak to me about it before you submit the assignment in question.
- Regular attendance and class participation are expected, and you are also expected to be on time. We will be taking advantage of a variety of technologies in order to keep our distance

students involved in all class meetings. We will discuss these methods of communication in class.

- Please feel free to contact me during my office hours, and remember that we can also arrange other times to speak if those office hours are not workable for you.

Schedule of Assignments

Wednesday, January 15, 2014	Introduction; In-Class Discussion with Short Narratives (Hopi)
Wednesday, January 22	<i>Insects, and Some Theory</i> <i>More Than Honey</i> , starring John Hurt. Documentary Film, 2013. Gay, Ross, "Some Thoughts on Mercy." <i>The Sun</i> , July 2013, 24-28 Wilson, E. O. "Trailhead." <i>Excerpt from Anthill</i> . New York: Norton, 2011. Morton, Timothy, "Thinking Big," "Dark Thoughts," <i>The Ecological Thought</i>
Wednesday, January 29	<i>Ancients and the Posthuman: A Conversation</i> Anishinaabe Ojibway, "Man's Dependence on Animals" Cherokee, "Origins of Disease and Medicine" Mowat, Farley, <i>Never Cry Wolf</i> Morton, Timothy, "Forward Thinking"
Wednesday, February 5	<i>Science and Narrating Animal Lives: Some Proposals</i> Goodall, Jane, <i>Through A Window: My Thirty Years with the Chimpanzees of Gombe</i> , Chapters 1-11 Rudy, Kathy, "If We Could Talk to the Animals" Dixon, B.A., <i>Animals, Emotion & Morality</i> , Chapter 8: "Stories"
Wednesday, February 12	Goodall, Jane, <i>Through A Window: My Thirty Years with the Chimpanzees of Gombe</i> , Chapters 12-Afterword (p. 291) Dillard-Wright, David, "Brains, Bodies, Minds"
Wednesday, February 19	<i>Shifting Views of Species and Storytelling</i> Morton, Alexandra, <i>Listening to Whales</i> , Chapter 1-11 Armstrong, Phillip, "Cetaceans and Sentiment"
Wednesday, February 26	Morton, Alexandra, <i>Listening to Whales</i> , Chapter 12-23 Leviton, Mark, "Wrong Turn: How Science Lost its Way," Interview with Rupert Sheldrake (bring copy to class).
Wednesday, March 5	Bergman, Charles, <i>Wild Echoes</i> , Introduction – Chapter 5 Singer, Peter, "Ethics Beyond Species and Beyond Instincts"

- Wednesday,
March 12 NO CLASS: Spring Break
- Wednesday,
March 19 Bergman, Charles, *Wild Echoes*, Chapter 6 – Chapter 10
[Note extensive bibliographies provided at end of volume. They may be of interest to you.]
Film: *My Life as a Turkey*. Starring Joe Huto, 2011
- Wednesday,
March 26 ***Some Experiments in Fiction and Poetry***
Auster, Paul, *Timbuktu*
McHugh, Susan, “Literary Animal Agents”
Poetry (bring copies to class): “The Raven” by Edgar Allen Poe, “Turtle” by Kay Ryan, “The House Dog’s Grave” by Robinson Jeffers.
- Wednesday,
April 2 Gowdy, Barbara, *The White Bone*, Prologue – Chapter 9
Morin, Alan, “What Are Animals Conscious of?”
Deleuze, Gilles, “Becoming-Animal,” 1987
- Wednesday,
April 9 Gowdy, Barbara, *The White Bone*, Chapter 10-Chapter 16 (conclusion)
Poetry (bring copies to class): A cluster of Robinson Jeffers Poems: “Hurt Hawk,” “Vulture,” “The Beaks of Eagles,” “People and a Heron.”
- Wednesday,
April 16 ***Researching Animal Studies; Critiquing Animal-Featured Film:***
Film: *Buck*, starring Buck Brannaman, 2011
Wolfe, Cary, “Human, All Too Human: Animal Studies and the Humanities”
Lundblad, Michael, “From Animal to Animality Studies”
Annotated Bibliography Due
- Wednesday,
April 23 ***What Do We Mean by “Domestic Animal”?***
Film: *Old Partner*, starring Choi Won-Kyun, and a 40 year old ox, 2010
Film: *Story of the Weeping Camel*. Starring Janchiv Ayurzana, Chimed Ohin, 2005
MacKinnon, Catharine, “Of Mice and Men: A Feminist Fragment on Animal Rights” (bring copy to class)
- Wednesday,
April 30 ***Animal Studies and New Developments in Documentary Film***
Film: *The Last Lions*, narrated by Jeromy Irons, 2012
Research Paper Due
Student Presentations