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Office hours: MW 12:00-1:30, Wilson 2-163 (Ext. 5204)
Class hours: M 6:10-9:00, Wilson Hall 1-153

HISTORY 468: ANIMAL HISTORIES

This course is designed to investigate the interrelationship between human and nonhuman animals in comparative historical settings, ones elucidated through the interdisciplinary approach of science, technology, cultural studies, and straight history. Increasingly, historians have begun to investigate the role of nonhuman animals in shaping human history and, even more intriguingly, the potential for nonhumans to experience and generate histories of their own. This course offers an opportunity to participate in this pioneering field of inquiry. From the calories that fuel our society to the large predators that continue to haunt our collective imaginations, nonhumans directly participate in and shape our histories, cultures, and ecologies.

In this seminar, you will tackle many cutting-edge historical studies and then write your own original paper that deals with nonhumans in some historical context, whether in the development of science, forms of “biotechnology,” class dynamics, agriculture, hunting, conservationism, industry, environmentalism, species eradication, empire building, or any other topic that suits your – and to a certain degree my – fancy. Although on the surface writing on nonhumans may seem removed from the traditional concerns of historians, it actually offers a fresh vantage point to view human history and, even more broadly, a shared natural history.

When historians write about animals and the natural world they are required to push the disciplinary envelope; that is, to cast their nets widely to include sources not traditionally used by historians. By expanding our horizons, however, new light can be shed on the human past and that is precisely what this seminar seeks to do. Section I of the seminar will be spent reading some (but certainly not all) histories on human relationships with nonhuman animals, from the metaphorically to the ecologically real. Section II of the seminar will be spent on student-research presentations. These will be about 25 minutes in length, and can involve video, overheads, PowerPoint presentations, or other forms of media. (Please let me know in advance what you require.)

Every week, moreover, student “specialists” will lead discussions on assigned readings. Caution: This does not mean a presentation or public book review. Rather, “specialists” will guide the discussion through raising issues and asking pertinent questions prompted by the assigned readings. You will be graded on this exercise.

Required books (available for purchase at the MSU bookstore).

Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire* (Oxford, 2004).

Jon T. Coleman, *Vicious* (Yale, 2004).

Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate* (Harvard, 1987).

Brett L. Walker, *The Lost Wolves of Japan* (Washington, 2005).

David Quammen, *Monster of God* (WW Norton, 2004).

Required articles and chapters (available at the reserve desk in the Renne Library).

Pamela J. Asquith, "Primate Research Groups in Japan: Orientations and East-West Differences," in *The Monkeys of Arashiyama* (State University of New York, 1991).

Claude Bernard, "Experimental Considerations Peculiar to Living Beings," in *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine* (Dover Publications, 1957).

Alfred W. Crosby, "Old World Plants and Animals in the New World," in *The Columbian Exchange* (Greenwood Press, 1972).

Alfred W. Crosby, "Animals," in *Ecological Imperialism* (Cambridge, 1986).

Robert Darnton, "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Séverin," in *The Great Cat Massacre* (Vintage Books, 1984).

Frans De Waal, "Predicting Mount Fuji and a Visit to Koshima, Where the Monkeys Salt Their Potatoes," in *The Ape and the Sushi Master* (Basic Books, 2001).

Donna J. Haraway, "Animal Sociology and a Natural Economy of the Body Politic: A Political Physiology of Dominance," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (Routledge, 1991).

Kathleen Kete, "Animal Protection in Nineteenth-Century Paris: The Case of Pets," in *The Beast in the Boudoir* (California, 1994).

Edmund Russell, "Evolutionary History: Prospectus for a New Field," *Environmental History* 8 (April 2003).

Edmund Russell, "Introduction: The Garden in the Machine: Toward an Evolutionary History of Technology," in *Industrializing Organisms: Introducing Evolutionary History* (Routledge, 2004).

Edmund P. Russell, "'Speaking of Annihilation': Mobilization for War Against Human and Insect Enemies, 1914-1945," *Journal of American History* 82, no. 4 (March 1996).

Peter Singer, "Tools for Research... Your Taxes at Work," in *Animal Liberation* (Avon Books, 1975).

Aaron Skabelund, "Can the Subaltern Bark? Imperialism, Civilization, and Canine Cultures in Nineteenth-Century Japan," in *JAPANimals: History and Culture in Japan's Animal Life* (CJS, Michigan, 2005).

Jon Turney, "As Remorseless as Nature: the Rise of Experimental Biology," in *Frankenstein's Footsteps* (Yale, 1998).

Course requirements: Students are required to be a "specialist" and lead a discussion of assigned readings at least twice during the semester (20%). Attendance is mandatory and students who do

not attend seminars will have their grade adjusted accordingly. Students will also be required to give a twenty-minute presentation of their original research topic (20%). The majority of the course grade will be based on an original research paper of between twenty and twenty-five pages in length (60%). Graduate students should write a thirty-page paper.

SECTION I

ANIMALS, THE “OLD WORLD,” AND EMPIRE; or Nation-Building Pigs

Monday 8/29: Course introduction

Monday 9/05 Labor Day Holiday

Monday 9/12: Required readings: Darnton, “Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Séverin”; Crosby, “Old World Plants and Animals in the New World”; Crosby, “Animals”; Skabelund, “Can the Subaltern Bark?”

Specialists:

Monday 9/19: Required readings: Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*.

Specialists:

Monday 9/26: Required readings: Ritvo, *The Animal Estate*.

Specialists:

SCIENCE, “EVOLUTIONARY HISTORY” AND “BIOTECHNOLOGIES”; or Can Living Things be Technologies?

Monday 10/03: Discussion of student topics

Monday 10/10: Required readings: De Waal, “Predicting Mount Fuji and a Visit to Koshima, Where the Monkeys Salt Their Potatoes”; Asquith, “Primate Research Groups in Japan: Orientations and East-West Differences”; Haraway, “Animal Sociology and a Natural Economy

of the Body Politic: A Political Physiology of Dominance.

Specialists:

Monday 10/17: Required readings: Russell, “Evolutionary History: Prospectus for a New Field”; Russell, “Introduction: The Garden in the Machine: Toward an Evolutionary History of Technology”; Bernard, “Experimental Considerations Peculiar to Living Beings”; Turney, “As Remorseless as Nature: the Rise of Experimental Biology”; Kete, “Animal Protection in Nineteenth-Century Paris: The Case of Pets”; Singer, “Tools for Research... Your Taxes at Work.”

Specialists:

PREDATORS; or the History and Biology of Humans as Calories in Another Creature’s Stomach

Monday 10/24: Required readings: Quammen, *Monster of God*.

Specialists:

Monday 10/31: Required readings: Coleman, *Vicious*.

Specialists:

Monday 11/07: Required readings: Walker, *The Lost Wolves of Japan*.

Specialists:

**SECTION II
STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS**

Monday 11/14

Presenters:

Monday 11/21

Presenters:

Monday 11/28

Presenters:

Monday 12/05

Presenters:

Finals papers due on Friday 12/09 before 5:00pm