

**The University of Texas at Austin  
Department of Geography and the Environment**

**Nature and Culture**

GRG 302P, Course #37217  
Mon/Wed/Fri 3:00-4:00  
Room: GRG 312

**Instructor**

Sharon Wilcox

Office: GRG 340

Office Hours: Mon/Wed/Fri 2:00-3:00

Email: SEWilcox@mail.utexas.edu

The investigation of nature-culture relationships lies at the core of academic geography. This course introduces students to the study of the complex interactions and interrelationships between human society and the natural world from a geographic perspective, with an emphasis on nonhuman animals.

Consideration of the more-than-human world is a rapidly emerging field, and one in which geographers play an important and meaningful role. Animals challenge and compliment our notions of identity and humanity; they share our homes; they are present on our dinner tables; and they are omnipresent in our popular culture. Animals also animate the world around us, “personifying” nature. As we examine the ways in which boundaries are constructed, enacted, practiced, and challenged between the human and the nonhuman animal, we undermine taken-for-granted dichotomies, and collapse the distances constructed between human society and the natural world. By broadening our discussion of “natures” and “cultures,” and bringing the animal alongside the human, we cross through a rich terrain of interrelationships and interactions that can expand our understandings of ourselves and our “place” within the world around us.

**Course Expectations**

You will be exposed to a variety of perspectives and ways of looking at the world in this class. Some of these ideas you will agree with, others you will not. It is not my role to tell you what to think, but instead to offer you guidance on how to approach, examine, and begin to think critically about these complex issues. This will require effort on your part, including conscientious attendance, careful reading of assigned articles and constructive participation in class exercises and discussions. If you are having any problems with the material covered in class or in the text, please do not hesitate to meet with me during office hours. **Consistent attendance and participation in class is absolutely essential for success in this class.**

## Assignments

**Late assignments are not accepted.** Extreme situations should be raised immediately with the instructor.

1. *Participation:* **Class attendance and participation are mandatory.** There will be unannounced exercises in class drawing from the readings of the week. Some of these exercises will be turned in for credit; others will be graded for content. **COME TO CLASS PREPARED!**

2. *Animals in the News:* Students are asked to bring in an **average of one article** from a major news source **each week** where animals figure prominently, for a total of **TEN (10)** over the course of the semester. These should be at least one full page in length (double spaced). Students should write a response to the article, including **critical reflection** and drawing **connections between these current events and larger issues discussed in class.** Students are invited to present their articles in class every few weeks in order to stimulate discussion.

3. *Reading Responses:* Students will write a **brief critical response** to assigned course readings (marked with a ♣ symbol on the course schedule). These should be **at least** one full page in length (double spaced). Students should turn in **TEN (10)** of these over the course of the semester, and are **due the day that the reading is discussed in class.**

4. *Leading In-Class Discussion:* Each student will be assigned one class day where they will be responsible for **presenting a summary and critique** of the assigned reading. Students will also generate a **list of discussion questions** and **lead in-class discussion** for the day.

5. *Research Portfolio:* There is no assumption that students will have experience conducting a major research project at the start of this class. The portfolio is intended to guide students through the process of crafting a properly researched, cited, and structured paper.

6. *Research Paper:* The **final paper will be 10-12 double-spaced pages** on a topic of the student's own choice (the topic must be approved by the instructor) that explores the relationships between humans and animals. More detailed instructions will be given in class. Due in class on the last class day, **late papers are not accepted.**

7. *Research Presentation:* Students will present a **10 minute presentation** on their research project. These presentations should include the use of audio/visual aids or utilize other handouts to better engage the class with their topic.

## Grading

Participation (Attendance, in-class activities, and free writing)	150 points
News Articles	100 points
Reading Responses	100 points
Leading In-Class Discussion	100 points
PORTFOLIO 1: Citation and Ethics	10 points
PORTFOLIO 2: Identifying Resources	5 points
PORTFOLIO 3: Free Write (in class)	5 points
PORTFOLIO 4: Research Paper Proposal/Thesis Statement	10 points
PORTFOLIO 5: Annotated Bibliography	20 points
Research Paper (10-12 pages)	400 points
Research Presentation	100 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

**The following scale will be used to determine your final letter grade.**

A	926-1000	(Unusual Excellence)
A-	900-925	
B+	870-899	
B	830-869	(Distinctly Above Average)
B-	800-829	
C+	770-799	
C	730-769	(Average)
C-	700-729	
D+	670-699	
D	630-669	(Below Average)
D-	600-629	
F	599 and below	

Pass/Fail Grades: 60% and above- Pass

I will report midterm grades for all students whose academic programs and athletic departments require notice.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations (including note takers, alternative print formats, etc.) should contact Services for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. Qualified students must make an appointment to meet with me outside of class time to discuss these accommodations, so that I can do all I can to help. This appointment must be made within the first two weeks of class. The responsibility of obtaining necessary documentation and informing the instructor through the proper channels rests entirely with the student. Please visit SSD's website for more information: <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>.

## **Writing Center**

The Undergraduate Writing Center ([www.uwc.utexas.edu/](http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/)) offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. You may also feel free to schedule an appointment to meet with the Instructor outside of class for additional guidance.

## **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to adhere to the University of Texas Honor Code ([www.utexas.edu/about-ut/mission-core-purpose-honor-code](http://www.utexas.edu/about-ut/mission-core-purpose-honor-code)). **University of Texas Honor Code:** "The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community."

Every student should be aware of what constitutes plagiarism, and we will take the time to review this in class as well. Academic dishonesty will lead automatically to failing grade for the course, and the student can be subjected to further disciplinary actions in accordance with applicable provisions of the Student Code of Conduct and related University Regulations. You need to ensure that your work is your own. For more information on plagiarism visit: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>.

## **Classroom Behavior**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty members have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity, and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

**Please TURN OFF your cell phones before the start of class.** If you are talking on your phone, texting, listening to your iPod, surfing the web, Facebooking, Tweeting, etc. during class you will not receive credit for attendance that day.

## Contacting the Instructor

**The best way to reach me is by email.** Please give me 24 hours to respond to your emails (and 48 hours over the weekend, as more often than not I am traveling Friday to Sunday.) My office is a shared office, so the best way to reach me by phone is to call me on my cell phone, 240-888-3821.

Please remember to sign your emails, first and last name, and reference which course you are in (this will help avoid confusion on my part!)

## Course Materials:

### Required Texts (To Be Purchased)

Coleman, J, 2004. *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America*. Yale.

Jans, N. 2005. *The Grizzly Maze: Timothy Treadwell's Fatal Obsession with Alaskan Bears*. New York: Plume.

Mighetto, L. 1991. *Wild Animals and American Environmental Ethics*. U. of Arizona Press.

Price, J. 2000. *Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature In Modern America*. Basic Books.

**Pick ONE from the following volumes on the Reaktion Animal Series (choose ONLY from these volumes.)** These books are widely available, new and used, and Amazon.com. (Learn more about the series [www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/series/RB-A.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/series/RB-A.html))

Copeland, M. 2003.  
*Cockroach*.

Stott, R. 2004. *Oyster*.

Michalski, K. 2010. *Spider*.

Young, P. 2004. *Tortoise*.

Sleigh, C. 2004. *Ant*.

Macdonald, H. 2006.

Schweid, R. 2009. *Eel*.

*Falcon*.

Williams, P. 2009. *Snail*.

Sax, B. 2004. *Crow*.

King, 2011. *Lobster*.

Van Dooren, T. 2011.  
*Vulture*.

Preston, C. 2006. *Bee*.

Coates, P. 2006. *Salmon*

Stutesman, D. 2004. *Snake*.

Owen, J. 2011. *Trout*.

**Available on E-Reserve:**

Castree, N. and B. Braun. 2001. *Social Nature: Theory, Practice and Politics*. Blackwell.

Cronon, W. 1996. *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Czech, B., P.R. Krausman, and R. Borkhataria. 2001. Social Construction, Political Power, and the Allocation of Benefits to Endangered Species. *Conservation Biology* 12(5): 1103-1112.

Davis, M. 1999. Maneaters of the Sierra Madre. Chapter in *Ecology of Fear*. Vintage Books.

Dion, M. 2000. The Moral Status of Non-human Beings and Their Ecosystems. *Ethics, Place and Environment* 3 (2): 221–229.

Kalof, L. and A. Fitzgerald, eds. 2007. *The Animals Reader*. New York: Berg Press.

Kellert, S., R. M. Black, C.R. Rush, and A.J. Bath. 1996. Human culture and large carnivore conservation in North America. *Conservation Biology* 10(4): 977-990.

Leopold, A. *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1949.

Philo, C. and C. Wilbert. 2000. *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places*. London: Routledge.  
(An electronic copy of this book is available through the library website.)

Wolch, J. and J. Emel, eds. 1998. *Animal Geographies*. New York: Verso Press.

**Documents and Web Links for the Following Readings are Available on Blackboard:**

Bartlett, T. and S. Smallwood. 2004. Four Academic Plagiarists You've Never Heard Of: How Many More Are Out There? December 17.

Haraway, D. 2005. Chicken for shock and awe: war on words. In: Latour, Bruno and Peter Weibel *Making things public. Atmospheres of democracy*. Cambridge, The MIT Press.

Plumwood, V. 1999. Being Prey. *The Ultimate Journey: Traveler's Tales*.

Siebert, C. 2006. Are we driving elephants crazy? *The New York Times Magazine*.

Slackman, M. 2011. A Stuffed Polar Bear Won't Do. *The New York Times*. April 12.

*All reading assignments noted in italics*  
*Written Responses may be submitted for all readings with the 📌 symbol*

**Week 1: Introduction and Expectations**

**August 24: Introduction**

**August 26:** 📌 *Haraway: Chicken for shock and awe: war on words (Blackboard)*

**Week 2: “Nature” and “Culture”**

**August 29:** 📌 *Social Nature: Preface, Chapter 1 (Blackboard)*

**August 31:** 📌 *Social Nature: Chapter 2, Chapter 12 (Blackboard)*

**September 1:** 📌 *Uncommon Ground: Introduction (Blackboard)*

**Week 3: Considering the Human “Place” In Nature**

**September 5: Holiday**

**September 7:** 📌 *Uncommon Ground: Chapters 1, 5 (Blackboard)*

**September 9:** 📌 *Uncommon Ground: Chapters 7, 10 (Blackboard)*

**Week 4: Thinking About Animals**

**September 12:** No readings due, **Research Paper Assignment Introduced**

**September 14:** 📌 *Animal Geographies, Preface, Chapter 1 (Blackboard)*

**September 16:** 📌 *Animal Geographies, Chapter 4, 6 (Blackboard)*

**Week 5: Charisma and Affection I**

**September 19:** 📌 *The Animals Reader: Chapter 16 (Blackboard)*

    📌 *Herzog: The Importance of Being Cute (Blackboard)*

    📌 *Siebert: The Animal-Cruelty Syndrome (Blackboard)*

**September 21:** 📌 *The Animals Reader: Chapter 26 (Blackboard)*

    📌 *The Animals Reader: Chapter 24 (Blackboard)*

**September 23:** 📌 *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: Chapter 12*

    📌 *Slackman: A Stuffed Polar Bear Won't Do (Blackboard)*

## **Week 6: Charisma and Affection II**

**September 26:** 📌 *Reaktion* volume chosen from list

**September 28:** 📌 *Reaktion* volume chosen from list

**September 30:** 📌 *Reaktion* volume chosen from list

## **Week 7: Avian Species, Human Appropriations**

**October 3:** **Research Portfolio: Resources, Citation and Ethics**

*Four Academic Plagiarists You've Never Heard Of* (Blackboard)

📌 *Flight Maps* Intro & Chapter 1.

**October 5:** 📌 *Flight Maps*: Chapters 3-4

**October 7:** 📌 *Flight Maps*: Chapters 5

## **Week 8: Wild Animals in the American Imagination**

**October 10:** 📌 *Wild Animals and American Environmental Ethics*: Chapters 1-4

**October 12:** 📌 *Wild Animals and American Environmental Ethics*: Chapters 5-Epilouge

**October 14:** 📌 *Davis: Maneaters of the Sierra Madre*

## **Week 9: Transgressive Animals, Transgressive Spaces**

**October 17:** **CHOOSE ONE:** 📌 *Animal Geographies*: Chapter 7

📌 *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places*: Chapter 3

**October 19:** 📌 *Siebert, Are We Driving Elephants Crazy?* (link on Blackboard)

📌 *Plumwood: Being Prey* (link on Blackboard)

**October 21:** Guest Speaker: City of Austin Parks and Recreation Dept.

**Research Paper Proposal Due IN CLASS**

## **Week 10: Human Transgressions, Becoming Prey**

**October 24-28:** Werner Herzog's "*Grizzly Man*," Film will be shown in class (Monday and Wednesday). Discussion will follow on Friday.

You can write a response for all three of the following readings and turn them in anytime during the week:

📌 *The Grizzly Maze: Read entire volume*

📌 *Chewing on the Grizzly Man: Getting to the Meat of the Matter* (Blackboard)

📌 *Grizzly Man Review*(Blackboard)



**Week 11: Villainizing Predatory Natures**

**October 31:** 🦇 *Vicious*: Chapters 1-3

**November 2:** 🦇 *Vicious*: Chapters 4-6

**November 4:** Guest Speaker: Bat Conservation International

**Week 12: Recasting the Charismatic**

**November 7:** 🦇 *Vicious*: Chapters 7-9 and “Reintroduction”  
Individual Research Paper Consultations (one-on-one meetings with instructor).

**November 9:** 🦇 *Kellert, Human culture and large carnivore conservation in North America*  
Individual Research Paper Consultations (one-on-one meetings with instructor).

**November 11:** Guest Speaker: Whole Foods, Humane Standards Representative

**Week 13: Morality, Ethics, and Animals**

**November 14:** 🦇 *Czech, Social Construction, Political Power, and the Allocation of Benefits to Endangered Species*  
**Annotated Bibliography Due**

**November 16:** 🦇 *Dion, The Moral Status of Non-human Beings and Their Ecosystems*  
🦇 *Leopold, Thinking Like a Mountain, Conservation Ethic*

**November 18:** *In-class research presentations*

**Week 14: Research Presentations**

**November 21:** *In-class research presentations*

**November 23:** No Class

**November 25:** Thanksgiving- No Class

**Week 15: Research Presentations**

**November 28:** *In-class research presentations*

**November 30:** *In-class research presentations*

**December 2:** *In class research presentations*  
***Research Papers due in class, LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.***