Animals, Animality, and the Human

English 114
Location: TBA
MWF 1:00-3:15pm
Andrew Brown
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Office Hours and Location: TBA

Course Description:

Can the study of animal minds and bodies reveal what makes us uniquely human? This course takes up the question by asking how we understand the ties between our experiences and those of the pets, livestock, and wild animals that inhabit our world. We will examine the boundaries between the animal and the human in order to explore how these relationships inform contemporary social, political, and cultural issues. Questions under discussion might include: how have animals been used to explain the nature of human consciousness? How do animals provide us with food, labor, entertainment, or comfort—and what do we owe them in return? How have conceptions of animality been linked to constructions of race, gender, and sexuality? And how could the prospect of climate change, mass extinction, or food insecurity transform the bonds between humans and animals in the future?

Course Objectives:

This class is designed to prepare students for writing across all college disciplines and departments, providing you with adaptable skills that will be used in each of your other courses. Our assignments and discussions will focus on identifying a problem, making a strong claim, supporting these claims with evidence, and providing a compelling motive for your argument. Above all, we’ll treat the work of research and writing as a continuing and collaborative process (not merely a finished product) that is essential to your career as a college writer and beyond.

Grading Distribution:

Paper 1 (3-4 pages) 15%
Paper 2 (4-5 pages) 25%
Paper 3 (8-10 pages) 30%
Presentation 15%
Participation 15%

Due Dates:

Paper 1, First Draft Th, July 4
Paper 1, Final Draft M, July 8
Paper 2, First Draft Th, July 11
Paper 2, Final Draft T, July 16
Paper 3, Partial First Draft M, July 22
Paper 3, Complete First Draft Th, July 25
Paper 3, Final Draft T, July 30
Texts:

  ISBN: 978-0393631678

This required text can be purchased online at sites like Amazon or AbeBooks (search using the ISBN code to find the correct edition), through the Yale library system, or at the Yale Bookstore. All other readings can be found in the ENGL 114 Coursepack, available in hard copy at Tyco Printing (262 Elm St.) or downloadable from our Canvas course website.

Course Policies:

Written Assignment Formatting:

- Double-spaced
- 1-inch margins
- 12-point “Times New Roman” font
- First page (not a separate title page) with your paper title, name, the course title, and submission date in the top left-hand corners
- Filename containing your last name and date (e.g., Brown_Paper1Draft_9Sept2018)

Attendance and Active Participation:

Come to each class on time, having carefully read and marked up all assigned readings or other materials. When reading, pay special attention to apparent contradictions, ambiguities, and possible points of engagement. If possible, please also bring print-outs of these texts (rather than reading them on a screen) to help facilitate our group discussions. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your attendance and participation grade, with four such absences resulting in a failing grade for the class. One of this course’s central goals is to provide a space for serious and engaging debate, so please be respectful of fellow classmates and to their contributions.

Late/Missed Assignments:

Late papers will be marked down by a plus or minus for each day (not class meeting) that they are overdue. Submit an electronic copy through our Canvas site, and e-mail me to let me know that it is there. This e-mail, not the upload itself, will serve as the timestamp for your submission.

Instructor Meetings:

I am more than happy to meet outside of regular office hours and beyond our three scheduled meetings – please email me with at least 24 hours’ notice to set up an appointment. I do not discuss the specifics of grades over email.

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism, defined as the failure to credit a specific source or author, is a serious violation of Yale College’s code of conduct and will be referred to the Yale College Executive Committee. But it is also a violation of the most basic contract among academic authors and readers: that your writing represents your own original thoughts and your engagements with the claims of others. Perhaps the defining goal of this course is to provide training and experience in formulating arguments through an extended conversation with other writers—a process that requires you to confidently assert your own voice and perspective. Any questions about what constitutes appropriate citation can be
addressed by reviewing the official Yale College definitions of academic dishonesty (catalog.yale.edu/undergraduate-regulations/policies/definitions-plagiarism-cheating/), or by contacting me for clarification.

**Complete Class Schedule:**

**Unit 1: Encountering Animals**

*Week 1:*

| M, Jul. 1  | Course introduction                                |
| W, Jul. 3  | John Berger, “Why Look at Animals?” (from *About Looking*)  |
| Th, Jul. 4 | Paper 1 (draft) due on Canvas at 9:00am            |
| F, Jul. 5  | Berger, “Why Look at Animals?”                     |
|           | Paper 1 Workshop                                   |
|           | Bring peer reviews to class                        |

**Unit 2: Language, Play, and Consciousness**

*Week 2:*

| M, Jul. 8  | Paper 1 (final) due on Canvas at 9:00am            |
| W, Jul. 10 | Johan Huizinga, “Nature and Significance of Play as a Cultural Phenomenon” (from *Homo Ludens*)  |
| Th, Jul. 11| Paper 2 (draft) due on Canvas at 9:00am            |
| F, Jul. 12 | Paper 2 Workshop                                   |
|           | Bring peer reviews to class                        |

**Unit 3: Rights, Ethics, and Politics**

*Week 3:*

| M, Jul. 15 | Paper 3 assigned                                   |
|           | Library session                                    |
|           | Wayne Booth et al., “From Problems to Sources” and “Engaging Sources” from *The Craft of Research* |
T, Jul. 16  | **Paper 2 (final) due on Canvas at 9:00am**

W, Jul. 18 | Peter Singer, “All Animals are Equal” (from *Animal Liberation*)  
Martha Nussbaum, “The Moral Status of Animals”

F, Jul. 19 | **Research proposal and working bibliography due at the beginning of class (bring two printed copies)**  
Carol J. Adams, “The Sexual Politics of Meat”  

**Week 4:**  
M, Jul. 22 | **Paper 3 (partial draft) due at beginning of class** (Introduction with claim, at least three body paragraphs, and detailed outline with quotes—bring two printed copies)  
Charlotte Cote, “Challenges to Our Right to Whale”  
William Zinsser, “Simplicity” and “Clutter” from *On Writing Well*


Th, Jul. 25 | **Paper 3 (complete draft) due on Canvas at 9:00am**

F, Jul. 26 | **Paper 3 Workshop**  
**Bring peer reviews to class**  
Susan Nance, “Elephants and the American Circus”  
June Dwyer, “Do Not Feed the Animals, Do Not Touch: Desire for Wild Animal Companionship in the Twenty-first Century”

**Unit 4: Ecology, Extinction, and Survival**

**Week 5:**  
M, Jul. 29 | **Presentations assigned**  
Rachel Carson, “A Fable for Tomorrow,” “The Obligation to Endure,” and “Elixirs of Death” (from *Silent Spring*)  
Kathryn Yusoff and Mary Thomas, “The Anthropocene”  
Matthew Chrulew, “Freezing the Ark: The Cryopolitics of Endangered Species Preservation”

T, Jul. 30 | **Paper 3 (final draft) due on Canvas at 9:00am**

W, Jul. 31 | **Panels 1 and 2**  
Franklin Ginn, “Posthumanism”  
“Cary Wolfe on Posthumanism and Animal Studies”:  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NN427KBZII

F, Aug. 2 | **Panels 3 and 4**  
Richard Brautigan, “All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace”