English 3597.03

Environmental Citizenship

TR 3:00-4:20

Spring 2016

Morrill Hall 210

Sara Crosby

**Animal Minds**



Animals. We love them, fear them, eat them. They are cute, and they are horrifying. They are aliens, and they are us. Why can’t we make up our minds about them? And what about their minds? What are they really thinking? Animals mediate our connection to our environment and our own identities. How we understand and treat them shapes how we understand and treat ourselves. This class will investigate that contradictory relationship and track how we have conceptualized our fellow earthlings, from Aesop and Edgar Allan Poe to *Birdemic* and Henri the Existential Cat. In so doing, we will shed some light on animal minds—our own included.

**Course Goals**

By the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Identify the key theories, debates, persons, and events that shaped western civilization’s depiction and treatment of animals.
2. Trace the historical development of the discourse about animals (i.e., How has western culture understood, related to, and represented animals? How has this changed over time? Why?)
3. Perform close readings (in discussion and in written form) of important literary and cultural texts to reveal the theories and motivations shaping this animal discourse.
4. Research one animal and follow its progress through natural, literary, and cultural history.
5. Produce a smart essay detailing this history and your own interpretation of the animal’s “meaning.”
6. Produce creative pieces about your animal, taking on at least two different theories/styles of representation.
7. Present and communicate your work.

**Course Requirements**

1. Class Participation . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 10%
2. Quizzes . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 15%
3. Midterm . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 15%
4. Final . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .15%
5. Animal Portfolio (Researched Paper). . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 20%
6. Animal Portfolio (2 Creative Pieces). . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 20%
7. Animal Portfolio (Presentation) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .5%

**Absence and Late Paper Policy**

You are allowed 2 absences without penalty. After that, your final grade will drop by half a letter with each absence. Leaving early or coming late to class is counted as half an absence. Late assignments will incur a grade penalty of one half a letter grade for each 24 hours overdue.

**Academic Misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\_for\_students/csc.asp).

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own: It includes the unacknowledged word for word and/or paraphrasing of another person’s ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. Please see me if you are uncertain as to what constitutes plagiarism.

**Required Texts**

T. S. Eliot’s *Book of Practical Cats* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 978-0156685702)

May Sarton’s *Fur Person* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1983, 978-0393301311)

Richard Adams’s *Watership Down* (Scribner, reprint edition, 2005, 978-0743277709)

Irene Pepperberg’s *Alex and Me* (Harper Perennial, reprint edition, 2009, 978-0061673986)

The rest of the readings will be posted on Carmen. On the days we cover them, make sure you bring the readings to class in some way (print-out or on a digital device).

Unless otherwise indicated, you can watch the films in OSU’s secured media library at <https://drm.osu.edu/media/>. Typing in “go.osu.edu/SecuredMediaLibrary” should get you there as well.

**Explanation of Assignments**

1. **Class Participation.** Participation includes attendance, thoughtful contribution to class discussion, and completion of readings and small individual and group assignments.

2. **Quizzes.** I will give in-class quizzes that test your knowledge of characters, plot points, and other objective knowledge about the text(s) you’ve read for that day. In addition, I might also ask you to write up the occasional “take-home quiz” to help you prep for discussion.

3. **Midterm and Final Exam.** The midterm will cover material from the first half of the class, and the final will cover material from the second half of the class. They will both consist of two types of questions: 1) definition of terms/identification of key events, people, etc. and 2) identification and analysis of passages from our readings. For passage identification and analysis, you will need to identify the author, title, and year of publication and then write a short paragraph first noting the literal meaning of the text (i.e., what’s going on) and then explaining the significance of the passage in relation to class themes and concepts. Before I make up the midterm and the final, you will need to go to Carmen and post one term, event, etc. and one passage that you think should be on the exam.

4. **Animal Portfolio Project.** Pick an animal. Study it thoroughly. Find out all the latest science on its physiology, intelligence, habitat, habits, etc. Read the important and/or interesting literary or cultural texts in which it is represented. If you can, go observe it yourself and interview people who work with it or study it. Then . . .

* 1. Write an essay about it (7-8 pages), using your research, textual analyses, and observations. The essay should inform us about the history and nature of your animal, but it should also give us a larger “meaning” for it. Be creative and thoughtful. Feel free to use first person, rich descriptions, and your own philosophical reflection. Aim for at least 7-8 sources, some of which should be actual books if at all possible. An example or two of a good essay in this genre will be up on Carmen.
  2. Write, paint, construct, or film, etc. two creative pieces about your animal. The first one should mimic or somehow engage with one of the styles of representation we examine in the first half of the class. The second should mimic/engage with one of the styles we examine in the second half of the class.
  3. Work up a short (c. 8 minute) presentation about your animal, using your essay and creative pieces. Present it to the class at the end of the course.

**Instructor Contact Info**

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Office Phone: 740 725-6203

Office Hours: TR 1:30-3:00 or by appointment

**Other Resources**

1. **Academic Enrichment Center.** Lynda Behan runs The Academic Enrichment Center. She and other members of her staff provide free individual consultation services for Ohio State students who want help with any aspect of their writing. On the Marion campus, you can call ext. 5-6236, stop in 216 Morrill Hall, or e-mail her at [behan.4@osu.edu](mailto:behan.4@osu.edu) to set up an appointment.
2. **Disability Services**. Anyone who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs, and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the office for Disability Services on this campus, I encourage you to do so. You can call 740-725-6247 or drop by the office on the first floor of Maynard Hall, room 128. You can also find more information concerning disability accommodations at the following IP address: <[http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu](http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/)>.

This course fulfills requirements for GE Cross-Disciplinary Seminar.

## Cross-Disciplinary Seminar

**Goals:**  
Students demonstrate an understanding of a topic of interest through scholarly activities that draw upon multiple disciplines and through their interactions with students from different majors.

**Expected Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students understand the benefits and limitations of different disciplinary perspectives.
2. Students understand the benefits of synthesizing multiple disciplinary perspectives.
3. Students synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to a topic of interest.

**Course Calendar**

T Jan 12 Introduction/Overview

Watch *Call of Life* (2010)

R Jan 14 Pat Shipman’s *Animal Connection* (2011), excerpts (on Carmen)

Sy Montgomery’s “Deep Intellect” and Amy Leach’s “Radical Bears in the

Forest Delicious” (on Carmen)

T Jan 19 Mark Devries’s *Speciesism* (2013) (on Secured Media)

Peter Singer’s *Animal Liberation* (1975, 2009), excerpt (on Carmen) [chapter 5 is

optional] [next time chapter 1]

Shaun Monson’s *Earthlings* (2005) (on Secured Media) [OPTIONAL]

**Ancient and Medieval Animals**

R Jan 21 Ancient Animal Art (in class)

*Genesis* (1500-1100 BCE?) (on Carmen)

Native American Animal Creation Stories (on Carmen)

T Jan 26 Aesop’s (c. 620-564 B.C.E.) *Fables*, selections (on Carmen)

Early English Bestiary (c. 1250), excerpt—skim this, don’t print or read the whole

crazy thing unless you’re seriously intense (on Carmen)

*Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), excerpt (on Carmen)

<http://www.medievalists.net/2013/10/02/why-cats-were-hated-in-medieval-europe/>

**Romantic Animals**

R Jan 28 René Descartes’s *Discourse on the Method* (1637), excerpt (on Carmen)

John Keats’s “Ode to a Nightingale” (1819) (on Carmen)

T Feb 2 Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “The American Scholar” (1837) and Henry David

Thoreau’s *Walden* (1854), excerpts (on Carmen)

R Feb 4 Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Black Cat” (1843) and “Instinct vs. Reason” (1840) (on

Carmen)

**Victorian Animals**

T Feb 9 Anna Sewell’s “Black Beauty” (1877) (short story version, on Carmen)

R Feb 11 Rudyard Kipling’s “The Cat that Walked by Himself” (1902) (on Carmen)

Jack London’s “Brown Wolf” (1906) and “That Spot” (1908) (on Carmen)

T Feb 16 T. S. Eliot’s *Book of Practical Cats* (1939)

**Biosemiotic Animals**

R Feb 18 Jakob von Uexküll’s *Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans* (1934),

excerpt (on Carmen)

May Sarton’s *Fur Person* (1957)

T Feb 23 May Sarton’s *Fur Person* (1957)

R Feb 25 **Midterm**

**Ethological Animals**

T Mar 1 Rachel Carson’s *Under the Sea Wind* (1941), excerpt (on Carmen)

Jane Goodall’s *In the Shadow of Man* (1971), excerpt (on Carmen)

R Mar 3 Richard Adams’s *Watership Down* (1972)

T Mar 8 Richard Adams’s *Watership Down* (1972)

**Cognitive Animals**

R Mar 10 Temple Grandin’s *Animals in Translation* (2005), excerpt (on Carmen)

Nova’s “How Smart Are Animals?” (on youtube)

Spring Break

T Mar 22 Irene Pepperberg’s *Alex and Me* (2009)

R Mar 24 Hyperbole and a Half’s “Dog” (July 2010) and “Dogs Don’t Understand Basic

Concepts Like Moving” (November 2010) and “Wild Animal” (April 2011), see

<http://hyperboleandahalf.blogspot.com/>

**Horrifying Animals**

T Mar 29 Edgar Allan Poe’s “Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841) (on Carmen)

R Mar 31 Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds* (1963) (on Secured Media)

Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962), excerpt (on Carmen)

James Nguyen’s *Birdemic: Shock and Terror* (2008) (watch clip in class)

T Apr 5 Walon Green’s *The Hellstrom Chronicle* (1971) (on Secured Media)

Don Marquis’s “what the ants are saying” (1935) (on Carmen)

R Apr 7 Werner Herzog’s *Grizzly Man* (2005) (on Secured Media)

Gabriela Cowperthwaite’s *Blackfish* (2013) (on Secured Media)

**Mysterious Animals**

T Apr 12 Poetry Selection (on Carmen)

Clips and Images: *Microcosmos*, Benjamin, your finds, etc. (in class)

R Apr 14 Lorcan Finnegan’s *Foxes*

Ylvis’s “The Fox” (2013) (on youtube.com)

Henri the Existential Cat, parts 1-6 (2007-2013) (on youtube.com)

T Apr 19 Wrap-Up

R Apr 21 **Final Exam**

T May 3 (3-4:45) **Animal Portfolio Presentation**