

GEO 300

Animals and Society

Spring 2011

Tuesdays and Thursdays,
11:00am-12:20pm
Maxwell 110

Professor: Bob Wilson

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00-3:00pm

Fridays, 1:00-2:30pm

Or by appointment

Overview

This course examines the relation between animals and society in the United States from a historical and geographical perspective. Unlike a course on animals or zoology in the life sciences, this course draws primarily on perspectives from the humanities and social sciences. Some of the questions we will address include: What is the history of our relationship with animals? How have developed places for animal production and consumption such as feed lots and slaughter houses, zoos, wildlife refuges, pet stores, and even our homes? How has race, class, and gender affected our uses of and attitudes towards animals? Finally, in the words of Hal Herzog, how have we decided which types of animals to love, hate, or eat?

Evaluation

10% Class Attendance and Participation

10% Reading Quizzes and Short Reading Responses

15% Field Report

15% Movie Review

30% Research Paper

20% Final Exam

Class Participation

Attending lectures and participating in class discussions are essential aspects of this course. To give you a sense of my expectations for class participation, I offer the following guidelines:

The **A** student reads all the material beforehand and demonstrates a clear understanding of the key aspects of the text. She is able to answer questions posed by the professor, but more importantly, she has developed her own questions and comments about the text. She speaks regularly without dominating the discussion. She also listens carefully to what her classmates say and builds on their contributions.

The **B** student more or less reads the material, though not very carefully. He understands the ‘gist’ of the article or chapter, but when pressed, he has difficulty assessing the implications of the text. He is an infrequent contributor to discussion. In general, this student participates from time to time, but is mostly content to let others do most of the talking and critical thinking.

The **C** demonstrates little evidence of doing the reading and she rarely, if ever, speaks. However, she attends regularly.

The **D** or **F** student never talks, shows no evidence of doing the reading, and may also miss classes. Basically, this student is a pain-in-the-behind. ☹

*** You must bring the day's assigned readings to class. If you don't have the readings and we discuss them, I will mark you as absent.*

Reading Quizzes and Short Reading Responses

During the semester, I will give pop quizzes on the readings and assign short responses for the readings. I will not announce the pop quizzes beforehand. The quizzes will consist of 3 or 4 questions on the readings. If you have read the material carefully, these quizzes should be very easy.

From time to time, I will also assign two-page response papers on the readings. I will alert you about these in advance. The due dates of these short papers are not noted on the syllabus. They should not take you long to complete. Their main purpose is to encourage you to reflect carefully and think critically about what you read so we can discuss it in class.

Field Report

You will write a five-page field report about a place devoted to animals. I will encourage you to visit a pet store *or* the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, but if you have another site you would prefer to visit, I'm willing to consider other ideas. I'll distribute a detailed handout about the assignment in early February.

Film Review

Television shows and films are some of the main ways Americans learn about and experience other animals. We will discuss animals in popular culture later in the course. After doing so, you will write a five-page review and analysis of a film about animals. I'll distribute a detailed handout about the assignment in early March and provide a list of suitable films.

Research Paper

The major assignment for the course is a 10-page research paper due at the end of term (Tuesday, April 19th). I'll distribute a detailed handout about the assignment in late February.

Exam

There will be an exam on the last day of class worth 20% of your final grade. It will cover *all* the material associated with the course: lectures, readings, films, and discussions. It will likely include some mixture of key terms, short answers, and an essay.

Academic Integrity

Cheating in any form will not be tolerated, nor is assisting someone to cheat. The submission of any work in this class is taken as a guarantee that the thoughts and expressions are the student's own unless properly cited. Breaking this policy on exams, essays, or other assignments will, at a minimum, result in a failing grade for an assignment and likely a failing grade for the course. For more information, see the student section of the university's web site about academic integrity (<http://academicintegrity.syr.edu/>).

This is what the university obliges me to tell you. This is my own simple take on the matter: plagiarize a paper or cheat on an exam and you will fail. Period. Other professors may let issues of academic dishonesty slide or let you off with a warning. I am not one of those professors.

Student Athletes

Some of you are student athletes. Athletics is an important part of your time in college, and I will do my best to accommodate your travel schedules.

Typically, your coaches or another official associated with the team or athletic department will give you a letter explaining your status and a list of your away games. Once you receive this material, make sure to give me a copy. We can then discuss how you can make-up missed lectures and assignments in a timely fashion.

Students with Disabilities

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue or call (315) 443-4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Laptops, Cell Phones, and Texting

Given the ubiquity of wireless connections to the internet on the SU campus, there is a great temptation to multi-task and surf the web during class. Therefore, I do not allow the use of laptops during lectures or discussions. The use of cell phones, iPhones, Blackberries, and other texting devices are prohibited, too.

Students texting during class will have their participation grade lowered ½ a letter grade for the first two infractions; further infractions will result in an ‘F’ for participation in the course. Please let me know if you have a medical reason for needing to use a laptop or other screen-based device that Disability Services has authorized.

Readings

Coleman, Jon. *Vicious: Wolves and Men in America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004.

Grier, Katherine C. *Pets in America: A History*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Singer, Peter. *Animal Liberation* New York: Ecco, 2002 [1975].

Wilson, Robert M. *Seeking Refuge: Birds and Landscapes of the Pacific Flyway*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010.

All of these books except for *Seeking Refuge* are available at the SU Bookstore. (I will be selling discounted copies of this book later in the course...) You can probably find cheaper copies of these books from Amazon or other online retailers.

Course Schedule

(BB) – reading available on Blackboard

Week One

Tues., 1/18

Introduction

Animals: Some we Love, Some we Hate, Some we Eat

Thur., 1/20 Animal Histories & Geographies

Readings

Ritvo, Harriet. "Animal Planet." *Environmental History* 9, no. 2 (2004): 204-20. (BB)

Cartmill, Matt. "The Bambi Syndrome." *A View to a Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature through History*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993. (BB)

** read the Cartmill chapter *after* Thursday's class.

Week Two Natives, Settlers, & Wildlife

Tues., 1/25 Creatures of Empire and Resistance

Readings

Anderson, Virginia de John. "King Philip's Herds: Indians, Colonists, and the Problem of Livestock in Early New England." *William and Mary Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (1994): 601-24. (BB)

Weisiger, Marsha. "The Origins of Navajo Pastoralism." *Journal of the Southwest* 46 (2004): 253-82. (BB)

Thur., 1/27 Commodifying Animals

Readings

White, Richard. "Animals and Enterprise." In *The Oxford History of the American West*, edited by Clyde Milner II, Carol A. O'Connor and Martha A. Sandweiss, 236-73. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. (BB)

Week Three Predators: Those We Hate(d)

Tues., 2/1 Extermination: Laying Waste to Predators in Early America

Readings

Coleman, *Vicious*, Introduction, 1, 3

Thur., 2/3 The Fall and Rise of Wolves, Grizzlies, and other Predators

Readings

Coleman, *Vicious*

A-L last names: 4, 6, 9, and "Reintroduction"

M-Z last names: 7, 8, 9 and "Reintroduction"

Week Four Nature's Ghosts: Wildlife Extinction and Conservation

Tues., 2/8 Wildlife Decline and Extinction

Readings

Barrow, Jr., Mark V. "Sounding the Alarm about Continent-Wide Wildlife Extinction." *Nature's Ghosts: Confronting Extinction from the Age of Jefferson to the Age of Ecology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009, 78-107. (BB)

Price, Jennifer. "1: Missed Connections: The Passenger Pigeon Extinction." *Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America*. New York: Basic Books, 1999. (BB)

Thur., 2/10 Conserving Wildlife

Readings

Price, Jennifer. "2: When Women were Women, Men were Men, and Birds Were Hats." *Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America*. New York: Basic Books, 1999. (BB)

Tober, James. *Who Owns the Wildlife? The Political Economy of Conservation in Nineteenth-Century America*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981, 41-68. (BB)

Week Five **Seeing Like a State: Wildlife, Refuges, and Management**
 Tues., 2/15 Parks and Refuges

Readings

Wilson, *Seeking Refuge*, Foreword, Introduction, chapters 1 (skim) & 2

Thur., 2/17 Managing Wildlife

Readings

Wilson, *Seeking Refuge*, chapters 3, 4, 5 (skim), Conclusion

Week Six **Nature on Display: Animals in Zoos and Theme Parks**
 Tues., 2/22 From Menageries to Zoos

Readings

Kisling, Jr., Vernon N. "The Origin and Development of American Zoological Parks to 1899." In *New World, New Animals: From Menagerie to Zoological Park in the Nineteenth Century* edited by R. J. Hoage and William A. Deiss, 109-25. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. (BB)

Thur., 2/24 Spectacular Nature & Theme Parks (or unraveling the riddle of Shamu)

Readings

Davis, Susan G. *Spectacular Nature: Corporate Culture and the Sea World Experience*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, 19-39, 197-232. (BB)

Week Seven **Pets: Those We Love**
 Tues., 3/1 Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets

Readings

Grier, *Pets in America*, Make sure to read Introduction, chaps. 1, 5, 6, epilogue. Skim the other chapters. If you're writing your field report about a pet store, make sure to read these other chapters closely. They'll help you interpret and analyze what you see at the store.

Thur., 3/3 Making Fido: Breeding and Pet Production

Readings

Finish *Pets in America* (if you haven't done so already)

Week Eight **Reel Nature: Animals on Film and T.V.**
 Tues., 3/29 True-Life Adventures: The History of America's Romance with Wildlife on Film

Readings

Mitman, Gregg. "Domesticating Nature on the Television Set." *Reel Nature: America's Romance with Wildlife on Film*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009 [1999]. (BB)

Thur., 3/31 The New Green Wave: Wildlife in Contemporary Popular Culture

Readings

Bouse, Derek. *Wildlife Films*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003, 4-36. (BB)

Week Nine

Tues., 3/15 **** No Classes. Spring Break. ****

Thur., 3/17 **** No Classes. Spring Break. ****

Readings

None.

Week Ten **Industrializing Animals**

Tues., 3/22 From Cows to Beef

Readings

Cronon, William. "Annihilating Space: Meat." *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: Norton, 1991. (BB)

Pollan, Michael. "Power Steer." *The New York Times Magazine*, March 31 2002.
<http://michaelpollan.com/articles-archive/power-steer/>

Thur., 3/24 From Chickens to Poultry

Readings

Boyd, William. "Making Meat: Science, Technology, and American Poultry Production." *Technology and Culture* 42 (2001): 631-64. (BB)

Emel, Jody, and Roberta Hawkins. "Is It Really Easier to Imagine the End of the World Than the End of Industrial Meat?" *Human Geography* 3, no. 2 (2010). (BB)

Week Eleven

Tues., 3/29 Emotional Lives of Animals

Readings

Siebert, Charles. "An Elephant Crackup?" *The New York Times Magazine* October 8 2006.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/08/magazine/08elephant.html>

Thur., 3/31 Guest Speaker: Geography Professor James Newman, Primates in Africa
**** Film Review Due ****

Readings

To be announced.

Week Twelve Animals and Evolutionary History

Tues., 4/5 Animals as Laborers

Thur., 4/7 Animals as Products

Readings

To be announced

Week ThirteenTues., 4/12 **** No classes. Away at AAG conference. ****Thur., 4/14 **** No classes. Away at AAG conference. ****Readings

None. Complete your research papers.

Week Fourteen Animal Rights

Tues., 4/19 Film: To be announced

**** Research Paper Due ****Readings

None.

Thur., 4/21 Dominion and Rights of Animals

ReadingsSinger, *Animal Liberation*, Preface to 1975 and 2002 edition, chapters 1 & 6.**Week Fifteen Should We Eat Them? & Concluding Thoughts**

Tues., 4/26 The Case For and Against Vegetarianism

ReadingsSinger, *Animal Liberation*, Chapter 4 Becoming a VegetarianPollan, Michael. "An Animal's Place." *The New York Times Magazine*, 10 November 2002.<http://michaelpollan.com/articles-archive/an-animals-place/>

Thur., 4/28 A History and Place for Animals

Week Fifteen

Tues., 5/3 Final Exam

Readings

None. Prepare for exam.