

Course Number and section: ENGL 297.101

Course Name or Topic: Reading Animals

Credits: 3

Term: Winter T2, 2020 (Jan.-April, 2021)

Instructor: Dr. Greg Garrard

Course Description:

Humans have placed animals at the centre of their paintings, myths and stories for at least 30 millennia. In art, in popular science, and in everyday speech, we use animal analogies to understand ourselves, while we helplessly endow our pets with supposedly human qualities. Condemnation of fellow humans is easily expressed by calling them ‘beasts’, but the supposed qualities of beastliness – sex and violence in the main – are very much human. Since Darwin and Wallace’s discovery of the principles of evolution, the animality of humans has posed a standing challenge to human-centred traditions such as Christianity and humanism, while in recent years, the identity and status of humans and animals have come to be conceptually threatened by cyborgs and genetically modified organisms. Moral arguments continue over the ethics of hunting, animal experimentation, eating meat and even ‘bestiality’. This course will sample the contemporary debate in all its variety, drawing material from philosophy, literature, film and cultural studies. We will seek to answer a question first posed by art historian John Berger: Why look at animals?

Method of Course Delivery:

On-Campus. At present, Term 2 courses are scheduled to return to face-to-face, live classroom delivery in January 2021.

Requirements:

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| 1. | 1500 word research essay on a required text | 15% |
| 2. | 1500 word research essay on a required text (peer assessed) | 15% |
| 3. | 2500 word research essay on two required texts | 40% |
| 4. | Participation and peer assessment | 20% |

You will be offered the opportunity to have feedback on two drafts of your final research essay.

Tentative Reading List:

Alexis, André. *Fifteen Dogs* (2015; novel)

Hornung, Eva. *Dog Boy* (2009; novel)

Nicholson, Christopher. *The Elephant Keeper* (2009; novel)

Morpurgo, Michael. *War Horse* (1982; children’s novel)

Sewell, Anna. *Black Beauty* (1877; novel) <http://www.literatureproject.com/black-beauty/>

Movies:

Brother Bear (dir. Aaron Blaise, Robert Walker, 2003)

Grizzly Man (dir. Werner Herzog, 2005)

The Bear (dir. Jean-Jacques Annaud, 1988)

NB: I have listed good quality PDF editions wherever possible. If none is listed, though, only the print edition is acceptable.