

ENGL 477 (3/9) d Literature and Science

Advanced critical analysis of engagement with science in contemporary literary texts. Focusing on a specific area of science, such as climate change, complexity theory, cognitive psychology, or genetic modification, the course seeks to build constructively critical relationships between disciplines. [3-0-0]

Prerequisite: 3 credits of 300-level ENGL.

ENGL 477C/IGS 530A 101/CULT 490K-W ENGL 521T-

TERM 2 W/LEC/101 in 2022W T2 in [ART 218](#)

Literature and Science—**ENGL 477C: LITERATURE & SCIENCE**, CULT 490K (Topics in Identities and Power)/ENGL 521T(Topics in Historical Periods and Movement)/IGS 530A

3 hours/week in two blocks

Literature & Science: The Human/Animal Divide

Everywhere in popular culture today, one finds deep-rooted anxieties about science, technology, and the fate of the human. Thus, in recent films such as *The Fly*, *Jurassic Park*, *Splice*, *Species*, *Godzilla*, and *Deep Blue Sea*, the focus has been on biological mutations, experiments gone awry, and the creation of monstrosities in regards animals often as chimeric beings.

Already, science has genetically engineered mice, cows, and pigs to use in research involving xenotransplantation, raising animals to transfer organs from one species to another, while de-extinction research is involved in the aim to clone a woolly mammoth.

Yet the use of animals in contemporary society and biomedical and technological research is increasingly invisible: they are hidden away in laboratories and factory farms, weaponized in military applications and instrumentalized in other context all the while their mediated and idealized forms appear on *Animal Planet* or *National Geographic* television, but purged from city geographies.

This course aims to bring constructive criticism to the use of animals in scientific contexts and will engage with this issue by considering the role of literature (and, possibly film) in determining an alternative truth of animal existence in relation to the official discourse of science which recounts their experiences primarily as objects in an anthropocentric world. In contrast to this world view, a differently-centered story can be told in literature, which enables us imaginatively to engage with the question of the animal's place in philosophical systems and, therefore, calling into question what it means to be human.

We will explore these issues in novels such as Wilkie Collins' *Heart and Science*, H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr Moreau*, Richard

Adams' *The Plague Dogs* and Don LePan's *Lucy and Bonbon*, all of which raise extremely important ethical and philosophical issues regarding animals and science.