Historically, colonization and discourses of species have worked to strategically animalize and dehumanize racialized people in order to “see them as trees walking, or as wild animals infesting the country” (Toynbee qtd. in Mavhunga 151). Such discourses have produced a conflicting relationship between people of color and animals. Throughout the course, we will attend to one primary contradiction: on the one hand, histories of dehumanization and animalization compel racialized people to assert distance and differentiation from animals in order to gain agency, political visibility, and human rights. On the other hand, people of color often carry both histories of kinship with animals, as well as worldviews that emphasize respect and interdependence between humans and animals, contradicting Western instrumentalizations of animal life.

This course examines the relationship between race and species through a range of contemporary literary and cultural texts. We will investigate how race informs our relationships with animals in a variety of contexts—from agriculture, conservation, extinction, and advocacy to companion animals, kinship, labor, and cultural traditions. By situating our discussions of animals within critical race and postcolonial theories, this course intervenes in the largely Western-focus of the field of animal studies.

Required Texts

All books are on order from NYU Bookstore, posted on NYU Classes, as an ebook through NYU Libraries, or available through other vendors. Please note that all readings are subject to change.

Ceyda Torun Kedi (film)
Amitav Ghosh The Hungry Tide
Zadie Smith White Teeth
Jesmyn Ward Salvage the Bones
Helena Maria Viramontes Their Dogs Came with Them
Claire Jean Kim Dangerous Crossings: Race, Species, and Nature in a Multicultural Age
Timothy Pachirat Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight
Althea Arnaquq-Baril Angry Inuk (film)
Grading Criteria and Overview

Grading Criteria: This seminar is designed to develop close reading, critical thinking, and conceptual analysis across a range of interdisciplinary subjects and texts. Active participation alongside careful reading and analysis is required to work through assumptions, unpack prior knowledge, and build and awareness of the significance and implications of the course topics. For all assignments (including participation) the grading criteria seeks: comprehension, clarity in presentation and writing, and innovative, critical thinking. All written assignments must use current MLA formatting.

1. Participation (20%): I expect substantial, and regular participation in this seminar. As we will be dealing with difficult topics that may challenge your worldview, prioritizing respectful and thoughtful conversation is crucial. Anecdotal, disrespectful, off-topic, or distracting participation will negatively impact your grade. In-class verbal work, such as responding to position papers, participating in our workshop, and generally contributing to class discussions will comprise your participation grade.

2. Position Papers (30%): I will divide the class into two groups, group A and group B, and these groups will take turns writing and presenting short (2 page) position papers three times throughout the course. Since I will stop reading at two pages, strictly limit your paper to two double-spaced pages. You are not required to, but if you do cite any external sources, include a works cited page, which won’t count toward your page limit. Two weeks before the paper is due, I will post two questions on NYU Classes based on the readings/topics assigned for the day your paper is due and you will respond to one question. These questions will require you to take a position (not necessarily either/or, yes/no) and, as long as you are engaging thoughtfully with the readings and our focus in the course, there is no “right” position. When your paper is due, you will bring a hard copy to class and each member in your group will present their position, thereby sparking brilliant class discussion. You will then hand your paper in to me at the end of class and I will return it the following week. The schedule for these assignments is below and I have arranged so that no one will present on the day of our workshop.

3. Paper proposal, annotated bibliography, and outline (20%): These three components will form the basis of our workshop on November 20. Two weeks before the workshop, you will submit the following to NYU Classes: a) two-page, double-spaced proposal that could act as a submission to a conference. It will set out your proposed topic (engaging some aspect of race and animals), your theoretical frameworks, scope, and texts, and explain how your critical project contributes to the field. b) annotated bibliography that includes six external scholarly sources. Each entry should be only a few sentences: identify both the arguments the piece and significant (to your topic) concepts, explain why the text is useful to you. c) a point-form outline for the rest of your paper (2-4 pages).
4. Workshop: This workshop is designed to you in writing the final paper. You will submit your workshop materials two weeks before the workshop (11/7). Please note that although I will be marking these materials, I will also share clean copies with the entire class so that everyone will read each other’s work in preparation for the workshop. On the workshop day, having read your your colleagues’ materials, you will come prepared to present your proposal, as well as give and receive feedback both in small brainstorming sessions and in larger discussion groups.

5. Final Paper (30%): 10-12 page paper that builds on your proposed ideas in response to feedback from the workshop and grading. This paper should provide the foundation for either a conference paper or a publication.

Reading and Assignment Schedule
*Readings are subject to change throughout the course

**9/4: Introductions**

**9/11: Storytelling & Unpacking Whiteness**
- Alexander Macleod “Lagomorph”

**9/18: Critical Race & Postcolonial Theory**
- Junot Díaz “The Mongoose and The Emigré”

**9/25: Race & the Nonhuman**
- J.M. Coetzee *Disgrace*

**10/2: Kinship - Group A**
- Ceyda Torun *Kedi* (film)

**10/9: No Classes**

**10/16: History, Inheritance, & Science - Group B**
- Zadie Smith *White Teeth*

**10/16: History, Inheritance, & Science cntd. - Group A**
- Zadie Smith *White Teeth*

**10/30: Violent Kinship & Resilience - Group B**
- Jesmyn Ward *Salvage the Bones*

**11/6: Animal Agriculture** - Guest Speaker: Timothy Pachirat
• Timothy Pachirat *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight*
*Workshop materials due by end of day 11/7.*

11/13: Activism & Advocacy - Group A
• Althea Arnaquq-Baril *Angry Inuk* (film)

11/20: Workshop

11/27: Conservation & Extinction - Group B
• Amitav Ghosh *The Hungry Tide*

12/4: Film Screening
• Michelle Dougherty & Daniel Hinerfield *Sonic Sea*

12/11: Last Class - Decolonization

**Course Administration**
Students who require accommodation for a disability should consult with the Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at www.nyu.edu/life/safety-healthwellness/students-with-disabilities. If you have any disability or health or family situation that you think I should know about, please come see me in confidence.
Plagiarism results in failure in the class and referral to an academic dean. Plagiarism includes: copying sentences or fragments from any source without quotes or references; not citing every source used in your papers; citing internet information without proper citation; presenting someone else’s work as your own; or copying verbatim from any source. You are subject to CAS’s guidelines on plagiarism: cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity.

Attendance: in every class is mandatory. Any unexcused absences may lower your grade.
Email Policy: Other than coming to my office hours, email is the best way to communicate with me. I will respond to emails within two days of receiving them and may take longer over the weekends or holidays.
Late Policy: Late assignments will be subtracted one grade-point for lateness starting immediately after the due date/time.