Over the past two decades, the interdisciplinary field of Animal Studies has attracted extraordinary intellectual energy and academic interest, registered in the appearance of new journals, book series, annual conferences and institutes, as well as in enormous scholarly output in the form of books and articles. At the same time, contemporary art and culture, including film and literature, have increasingly engaged with the figure of the animal, and what Jacques Derrida called “the question of the animal.” Finally, the fields of animal law and animal welfare have made significant progress in dismantling systemic cruelty and exploitation of non-human animals. Together, all these developments constitute a cultural shift, an “animal turn,” that sees animals as subjects of their own lives rather than merely objects for literal and symbolic use by humans.

Using J.M. Coetzee’s academic novella *The Lives of Animals* (1999) as a point of departure, this course will explore modern and contemporary literary engagements with the question of the animal as framed by Animal Studies. After encountering key topics (anthropomorphism, interspecies understanding, agency, empathy, suffering, and cruelty) in Coetzee’s text and its several classical pre-texts (Montaigne, Kafka) we will step back to consider certain intellectual discourses (Nietzsche, Darwin, Freud) that shaped thinking about the human-animal relation at the threshold of modernity. Following that, we will study how animals appears—and alter—a variety of literary animal genres (social comedy, speculative fiction, biography, the graphic novel), even as we see how they illuminate vital contemporary cultural and ecological imperatives, including social justice, species preservation, and climate change.

Readings include:

- J. R. Ackerley, *My Dog Tulip*
- J.M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*
- Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*
- Karen Jay Fowler, *We Are Completely Besides Ourselves*
- Nick Hays, *The Rime of the Modern Mariner*
- Franz Kafka, “Report to the Academy,” “Investigations of a Dog,” “Josephine the Singer”
- Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*
- Michel de Montaigne, *Apology for Raymond Sebond*
- Ruth Ozeki, *My Year of Meats*
- H.G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*
- Virginia Woolf, *Flush: A Biography*
Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco, eds. *Animal Philosophy*
Steve Baker, *The Postmodern Animal*
Jacques Derrida, *The Animal that therefore I am*
Donna Haraway, *Between Species*