ANST 600: Literary Animals
Course Instructor: Nandini Thiyagarajan

Course Description

What do we learn from animals in literature? As the interdisciplinary field of Animal Studies grows, scholars have opened a space for considering its foundational questions revolving around sympathy, compassion, care, ethics, violence, and kinship in relation to literary engagements with animals. This course engages a range of literary texts from children’s stories and short stories to novels and memoirs in order to unpack how animal presences animate our stories. The course turns around questions of representation— the primary mode through which animals appear in literary texts—that offer a rich landscape to explore the relationship between humans and animals, as well as “real” and literary animals. How do literary animals shape our more general understandings of and relationships to animals in the world? By paying close and critical attention to literary animals, we will envision a more reciprocal relationship to animals that can arise from reading literary animals not simply as symbols and metaphors, but complex representations that reveal important insights into human-animal relationships.

Required Texts (subject to change)

A. Marie Houser (editor) After Coetzee: An Anthology of Animal Fictions
E.B. White Charlotte’s Web (1952)
Jack London White Fang (1906)
Ernest Hemmingway The Old Man and The Sea (1952)
Nilanjana S. Roy The Wildings (2012)
Yann Martel The Life of Pi (2003)
Ruth Ozeki My Year of Meats (1999)
Han Kang The Vegetarian (2016)
Helen Macdonald H is for Hawk (2016)
Amitav Ghosh The Hungry Tide (2006)
Plus critical essays.