ANST-UA 200/SOC-UA 970/ENVST 610-UA
ANIMALS AND SOCIETY
Spring 2014; Tuesday and Thursday 11:00-12:15 (7 East 12th, LL23)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course analyzes the ways that animal and human lives intersect. Specifically, it examines how relationships with animals both reflect and shape social life, culture, and how people think about themselves. We will explore the myriad and contradictory positions that animals occupy in society [e.g., as pets, pests, mascots, and food] and deconstruct the social origins of these seemingly natural categories. We will also take a grounded look at what actually happens when humans and animals interact, which sheds new light on the nature of human and animal consciousness. Fundamentally, students will learn how the roles that animals take on in our lives, and the ways that we think about and relate to them, are inherently social processes that are patterned by geography, culture, class, gender, and so on. Central questions include: How do ideas about, and relationships to, animals vary across time and space? How and why did pets become honorary members of the American family? Why are some animals, but not others, granted moral status and legal protection in society? How do humans and animals coordinate interaction without language?

The theories and substantive topics that this course covers are varied and complex; and the readings are demanding. In both our class discussions and the written assignments, students must be able to critically analyze and compare the materials. Attendance of, and participation in, lectures is thus essential; and attendance will be taken. Requirements include six short writing assignments and a final essay exam (see “grading” below). All readings are on NYU Classes except:

Required Texts [available at Shakespeare & Co. and on reserve at Bobst]:
*Purchasing used books online saves you money. Bring assigned readings with you to class every time.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: “The College is a “community of the mind.” Its students, faculty, and staff all share the goal of pursuing truth through free and open inquiry, and we support one another’s endeavors in this regard. As in any community, membership comes with certain rights and responsibilities. Foremost among these is academic integrity. Cheating on an exam, falsifying data, or having someone else write a paper undermines others who are “doing it on their own”; it makes it difficult or impossible to assess fairly a student’s interest, aptitude, and achievement; and it diminishes the cheater, depriving him or her of an education. Most important, academic dishonesty is a violation of the very principles upon which the academy is founded. Thus, when students enter the College, one of the first things that they are asked to do is to sign a community compact, recognizing these principles of academic integrity. For this reason also, violations of these principles are treated with the utmost seriousness.” For more information on this policy, and sanctions, visit: http://cas.nyu.edu/page/ug.academicintegrity.
**Disclaimer:** The instructor reserves the right to change any aspect of this syllabus, including readings, assignments, and due dates.
I: LOOKING AT ANIMALS
Week 1: Jan. 28 & 30  **Bryant:** “Zoological Connection;”  **Noske:** “The Animal Question”

II: THINKING WITH ANIMALS
Week 2 (1st class): Feb. 4  **Berger:** “Why look at Animals?;”  **Gibson:** *A Reenchanted World*

Week 2 (2nd class): Feb. 6  **Levi-Strauss:** *Totemism* (p. 1-14, 72-91);  **Angelo & Jerolmack:** “The Looking-glass of Nature”

Week 3: Feb. 11 & 13  **Geertz:** “Deep Play;”  **Jerolmack:** “Animals Practices, Ethnicity, and Community”  **Bell:** *Childerley*;  **Emel:** “Wolf Eradication”

Week 4: Feb. 18 & 20  **Fine & Christoforides:** “Dirty Birds and Filthy Immigrants;”  **Arluke & Sanders:** “Boundary-work in Nazi Germany”  **Harris:** “Cows and Pigs”

Week 5 (1st class): Feb. 25  **Descartes:** “Animals are Machines;”  **Irvine:** *If You Tame Me* (33-56)

III: LIVING WITH ANIMALS
Week 5 (2nd class): Feb. 27  **Ritvo:** “Pet-keeping;”  **Irvine:** *If You Tame Me* (12-32, 57-77)

Week 6: Mar. 4 & 7  **Schaffer:** *One Nation, Under Dog*

IV: COMMUNICATING WITH ANIMALS
Week 7: Mar. 11 & 13  **Sanders:** “Action Speaks Louder Than Words;”  **Irvine:** *If You Tame Me* (147-171)  **Mechling:** “Banana Cannon;”  **Jerolmack:** “Humans, Animals, and Play”

V: WORKING WITH ANIMALS
Week 8: Mar. 25 & 27  **Solot & Arluke:** “Animal Dissection;”  **Ellis & Irvine:** “4-H and Dominionism”  **Lynch:** “Laboratory Culture;”  **Arluke & Sanders:** “Primate Labs”

VI: PLACING ANIMALS
Week 9: Apr. 1 & 3  **Philo & Wilbert:** “Animal Spaces;”  **Scarce:** “Wolves at the Door”  **Jerolmack:** “How Pigeons Became Rats;”  **Wolch:** “Zoopolis”

VII: EATING ANIMALS
Week 10: Apr. 8 & 10  **Foer:** *Eating Animals*

Week 11: Apr. 15 & 17  **Foer:** *Eating Animals*  **Pachirat:** *Every Twelve Seconds*

VIII: ABUSING ANIMALS
Week 12: Apr. 22 & 24  **Ascione:** “Children Who Are Cruel to Animals;”  **Arluke et al.:** “Animal Abuse and Antisocial Behavior”  **readings on Michael Vick.**

IX: VALUING ANIMALS

Week 14: May 6 & 8 Review Session → in-class final exam

GRADING

There will be no midterm. Grades will be based on performance in four areas:

10% Participation: Class participation includes, of course, what the student does when he/she is in class. Students are expected to have read the material, reviewed notes from the previous class, and be ready and willing to discuss the readings and contribute to class debates. Students are expected to attend to the comments of other students and the instructor. Those students who are disruptive will be removed from class (if you are too tired to stay awake in class, don’t come; turn off your cell phones!). On randomly selected days attendance sheets will be passed out, and attendance will be a substantial part of your final grade for the course.

20% Essays: Four half-page (single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, one inch margins) essays will be assigned (5 points each). These essays must be turned in one week after the date assigned. Papers may be turned in early but will receive one grade deduction for each class period they are late. Each half-page essay will be in response to a question that determines whether the student has critically read the assigned material. To receive a top grade, essays should relate the reading to class discussion. Essays longer than one page, or not in accordance with font and margin guidelines, will not be read by the instructor or graded.

40% Papers: Two argumentative papers, each two pages (single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, one inch margins) in length—the form and topics to be discussed and assigned in class. The first paper will count for 15% of the overall grade and will be due somewhere around the middle of the semester. The second paper will count for 25% of the overall grade and is due on December 8. It can be difficult to write an argumentative paper—it is not merely a reflection of having read the material but of being able to critically analyze the most pertinent themes, construct an opinion supported by evidence from the readings and class, and present your argument in a coherent and logical fashion. Keep in mind that presenting a powerful argument is much harder to do in a short format. Papers longer than two pages, or not in accordance with font and margin guidelines, will not be read by the instructor or graded.

30% Final Exam: On the last day of class (Dec. 15) students will take an in-class final exam in which they will choose two essay questions from among three topics addressing and comparing the main themes of the course. Students will have the length of the class period to respond to the questions, which may cover any and all reading and discussion topics from the entire semester.


Descartes, Rene. 1649. “Passions of the Soul.”


