

The Lives of Animals: fictional and nonfictional representations of the human-animal relationship

Fall 2011

Instructor: Dr. Williams

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Office Hours: M 1:30-2:30, TR 2:20-3:30 or by appt.

Class Time/Location: Village, room 107

Course Description

This course examines some of the fictional and nonfictional representations of the lives of animals and our complex relationship with them. We will also analyze some of the ethical issues relating to animal welfare and the human-animal relationship. As a class, we will attempt to answer the following questions: What is the nature of our relationship with animals? What can we learn about ourselves from our relationship with other animals? How should animals be treated?

Required texts/readings

- *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn
- *The Island of Dr. Moreau* by H.G. Wells
- *Eating Animals* by Foer
- *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows* by Melanie Joy
- E-reserves/handouts

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the term, students are expected to:

- improve their reading comprehension and writing skills;
- identify some of the important comparisons between fictional accounts and the realities of animals lives;
- gain valuable knowledge about the lives of animals, especially farm animals;
- develop a deeper understanding of our complex moral relationship with animals.

Methods of evaluation and distribution of graded work

- 50% = four essays (3-4 pages each)
- 30% = three group presentations
- 20% = short writing assignments (a series of reflection essays 1-2 pages each)

Grading Scale* (percentage): A =100-94; A- = 93-90; B+ = 89-87; B =86-84; B- =83-80; C+ = 79-77; C =76-74; C- =73-70; D =69-60; F =below 60

*Grades in this course are based on academic achievement and competence.

Late Work

All work is due at the beginning of class. For every day an assignment is late, one letter grade will be deducted.

Attendance

Attendance is required in this class. You are allowed two absences with no grade reduction, thereafter three points off your final grade for every unexcused absence. However, I have the right to drop you from the class due to excessive absences. I will record attendance at every class meeting and you are required to arrive at class on time and remain for the entire period in order to be counted as present. Persistent tardiness will result in a lower grade.

Honor Code

Academic dishonesty will be handed in accordance to Wofford's honor code, which can be found at http://www.wofford.edu/studentlife/honor_code.pdf

Disability

If you have a disability that requires my attention please let me know as soon as possible so that I may accommodate you.

Reading and class schedule

Week 1 – Sept. 5 Humans and Nature

Introduction and *Ishmael*

Novel Experience

Week 2 – Sept. 12

Ishmael

Week 3 – Sept. 19

Ishmael

Prof. Linda Powers: How to give effective classroom presentations

Essay #1 Due

Week 4 – Sept. 26 Experimenting on Animals

The Island of Dr. Moreau

Week 5 – Oct. 3

The Island of Dr. Moreau

Library Tour

Week 6 – Oct. 10

Group presentations on animal vivisection

Film: *Hole in the Paper Sky* (34 min.)

Week 7 – Oct. 18-20 Farmed Animals

Film: *Babe*

E-reserve: "Big-Bellied Cow"

Essay #2 due

F-Fall Break

Week 8 – Oct. 25-27

E-reserve: Michael Pollan: “This Steer’s Life”

Video: *Life Behind Bars* (15 min.)

Eating Animals by Foer (pp. 1-77)

Video: *Meet Your Meat* (15 min.)

Week 9 – Nov. 1-3

Eating Animals (pp. 78-148)

Documentary: *Death on a Factory Farm*

Week 10 – Nov. 8-10

Eating Animals (pp.149- 199) / Video: *Farm to Fridge*

Documentary: *Behind Closed Doors* (57 min.)

Week 11 – Nov. 15-17

Eating Animals (pp.203-267)

From Farm to Fridge: Group presentations on factory farming (beef, pork, chicken, eggs, and dairy)

Week 12 – Nov. 22-24 A Sociological Perspective

Why We Love Dogs..., by Joy (Chaps. 1-3)

Thanksgiving Break (T-F)

Week 13 – Nov. 29-Dec. 1

Why We Love Dogs (Chaps. 4-6)

Why We Love Dogs (Chap. 7) / Video: *The Emotional World of Farm Animals* / **Essay #3 due**

Week 14 – Dec. 5 Making a Difference

Group presentations on animal welfare organizations *How are organizations and individuals making a positive difference in the lives of animals?*

Essay #4 due on exam day (Topic: TBA)