

LIT167F: Animals and Literature: Text, Tentacles, and Tails

Course Day/Time & Location: Tuesday & Thursdays, 1-4:30pm; Social Science 2, Room 159

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Office Day/Time & Location: Tuesday & Thursdays, 4:30-5:30; Social Science Courtyard, by appointment

"We need another and a wiser and perhaps a more mystical concept of animals. Remote from universal nature and living by complicated artifice, man in civilization surveys the creature through the glass of his knowledge and sees thereby a feather magnified and the whole image in distortion. We patronize them for their incompleteness, for their tragic fate for having taken form so far below ourselves. And therein do we err. For the animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours, they move finished and complete, gifted with the extension of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren, they are not underlings: they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendor and travail of the earth."

--Henry Beston

What does a wombat think about? What's it like to be an octopus? While questions such as these may seem innocent or simplistic at first, inquiring about the lived realities and experiences of non-human animals grows increasingly complex as we consider questions of authorship, subjectivity, identity, and expression. Who can speak for non-human animals? What are their experiences like? How do we know? This course centers on literature about and, in some cases, by the more-than-human world and utilizes these texts to ask larger questions about the ethics and expression of non-human animals. We will also focus on relationships and larger webs of kinship between humans and the non-human world. How does language influence our relationships? How does knowledge about and of the "other" influence our behaviors? We will turn to critical theorists for assistance in answering such questions and to deepen our understanding of the stakes surrounding human-animal relationships. Additionally, questions of human/animal relationships reflect on human nature and behavior. What is the relationship between how we treat non-human-animals and how we treat other humans? What is the relationship between non-human-animals and consumption? What is the relationship between non-human animals and identity? Accordingly, we will examine how authors ask such questions both in their content and through innovations in craft, form, and genre.

We will begin with an examination of language and contemplate how language, naming, and pronouns influence our relationships with others. We will then stabilize our readings of creative texts by discussing the ethics of authorship. Who and what can we write about and why? We will then use poetic texts to anchor our discussions and contemplate larger issues concerning non-human-animals, their experience, and our relationships with them. Given the expansive scope of this course, assignments will be a mixture of imitative writing exercises, analysis, and experimentation. This course satisfies the Power and Subjectivities Critical Approaches requirement and the Poetry/Poetics requirement. Accordingly, half of our texts will be poetic. This course also satisfies the Textual Analysis and Interpretation General Education requirement.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Begin to grasp and explain the complex relationships between humans and non-human animals.
- Discover and begin to articulate the role of animal rights, language, human/animal relations, and power in our own lives and in literature.
- Articulate key terms of literary analysis, genre, form, and animal/human relationships and use these terms in discussion and analysis
- Recognize and explain key terms of poetry and poetics.
- Break down, explain, and interpret texts using close reading.
- Write informed arguments about texts using primary and secondary source materials.

Course Requirements

Students will be responsible for carefully reading the required texts and the work of other students in the class. Each student will be given a class participation grade based on their presence and participation in class. Each student will write guided prompts in response to our readings that are to be turned in online to Canvas. Lastly, each student will turn in a final project that will have multiple parts. All assignment details will be available on Canvas. As a five-credit summer course, you can expect to spend 30 hours per week of course-related work (class meetings, reading, writing, assignments, etc.).

Participation

A key component of this course is your active participation and presence in our classroom activities and discussions. I value active and inclusive learning techniques that aim to engage students in their own learning. Central to this is your attention and presence in the classroom. This includes coming to class prepared to learn by having read the required materials with questions or comments to share with the class. I recognize that participation can happen in multiple ways for students. Given this, I assess your participation based on a combination of your verbal participation in our discussions, your participation in group work and activities, and your written responses during class. I'm happy to discuss this further if you need clarification or have questions. You will fill out a daily participation assessment to keep track of your progress.

Prompt Responses

I value your participation and preparation for our classroom discussions and your final project. As such, I ask that you complete six prompt responses. Prompt responses will either be in response to our readings or they will guide you to brainstorm ideas for your final project. Responses that are about your final project will be clearly indicated and do not need to *be* what you turn in for the final project—think of them as a draft or an opportunity to work through your ideas.

Responses that have to do with our reading for the day will often ask you to reflect on the role of animals in your own life, writing your own personal definitions, exploring your own ethics or feelings, or responding directly to a reading. I recognize that because summer courses can often be intense, especially if you are taking more than one. In light of this, you only have to complete three of the four prompt responses that are about our readings (you must complete all prompt responses that deal with your final project—this will be clearly indicated on Canvas). Specific directions for each prompt will be on Canvas under discussions. Responses should be posted to Canvas by class time. You may also be asked to bring a paper copy per my instructions on Canvas.

Final Project:

For your final project, you will identify an animal that you are drawn to (for whatever reason), then **(1) identify and explain this animal's relationship to you** (through commerce, living, eating, loving, healing, etc.), **(2) identify and analyze a poem that this animal features in** (by analyze, I mean argue for what role the animal serves in the poem and what the poem's message is), and **(3) identify and explain this animal's role (as a member of, being eaten in, being cherished in, etc.) larger communities** (by "larger communities" I mean, for instance, Santa Cruz, the Monterey Bay or within a specific country or within the wider globalized economy—you get to choose).

Your Final Project will have four parts. The first three parts will correspond to the three parts of your project outlined above. You get to choose the style of the first and third part—you could write poems, you could do a collage, you could write responses. The second part (a literary work this animal features in) must be written in academic critical prose with close-reading and proper citational practices. The fourth part will be a letter addressed to me that asks you to reflect on our course and your progress and goals. This should be submitted to me as one PDF document (chat with me about alternative submission ideas if this isn't going to work for you).

The prompt assignments directly correspond to the elements of this final and will help you progressively build this final assignment.

Final Project Breakdown:

Part One—You and Your Animal

- In this section, you will identify and explain your relationship to this animal.
- Your “relationship” can look like a lot of different things: your fascination with this animal, how you eat this animal, how you love this animal, how you are like this animal, how your actions impact this animal, how this animal’s actions impact you, how you have taken inspiration from this animal, etc.
- For this section, you have a choice about how to present this information: expository prose, a poem, a collage, a drawing, a personal reflection, a series of fragmented prose chunks, etc.
- Questions about what this could look like? I’m happy to chat more, discuss ideas, or look at drafts.

Part Two—A Poem Featuring This Animal

- In this section, you’ll identify and analyze a poem that features your chosen animal. Your analysis should include a summary of the poem, a close reading of the poem, and an analysis of the poem’s message about your animal. What argument is the poem making? How does it make this argument? How is your animal represented?
- For this section, your work must be written in the form of an academic analysis complete with close-reading examples and proper citational practices. But, it’s short—think of it as a mini-essay about your poem. It should be no longer than 750 words. You don’t need to worry about an introduction or conclusion. This section could read as follows: your thesis, summary of poem, and close reading that proves your argument.
- Having trouble finding a poem about your animal? Come talk to me and we can work together to find a poem that will work for you.

Part Three—Your Animal and the World

- In this section, you will identify and explain your animal’s relationship to a larger community.
- I use the word “community” broadly. The community you choose can be very small or very large. Examples include: Santa Cruz, Monterey Bay, California, the United States, an entire continent, the world.
- Some questions to consider when thinking about your animal’s relationship to a larger community: what are myths or stories are told about this animal? How is this animal treated? Do people eat this animal? Do people revere or worship this animal? Where does this animal live in this community and why? Is this animal bought, traded, or sold? If so, for what and why? What is the history of this animal in this community? Is this animal endangered or threatened? If so, why? You, of course, do NOT have to answer all of these questions—pick what is most compelling to you. These are just some ideas to get you started.
- For this section, you have a choice about how to present this information: expository prose, a poem, a collage, a drawing, a personal reflection, a series of fragmented prose chunks, etc.
- Questions about what this could look like? I’m happy to chat more, discuss ideas, or look at drafts.

Part Four—

- In this section, you will write a letter addressed to me that asks you to reflect on our course and your progress and goals. Exact questions to guide your letter will be available on Canvas.

Points Breakdown

Participation (10 points/class)	100
Prompt Responses (10 points/response)	60
Final Project	50
Total Points:	210

Grading Scale

“A”	210-189 points
“B”	188-168 points

“C”	167-147 points
“D”	146 -126 points
“F”	125 points and below

Materials

All readings will be available as a PDF online via Canvas and a course reader (course reader will be available on reserve at McHenry Library). I encourage you to make use of the McHenry Library’s Interlibrary Loan System if you need materials and/or to check books out from the Santa Cruz Public Library. Please do not hesitate to be in touch if you have questions or concerns about how to access library materials and I would be happy to help you access these materials.

Course Etiquette & Expectations

Classroom Citizenship and Community

One of the most valuable resources we have as students, readers, and writers is the community we find in one another. I hope that through this class we will be able to share our questions, experiences, and resources with one another; and that we can support one another in our respective journeys. Central to this aim is treating one another with respect, tolerance, and openness. I ask that you attentively listen to one another, remain present and participate in our classroom activities and discussions, and give your classmates the benefit of the doubt in their own learning process. I am happy to discuss this further if you have any questions or need clarification.

Technology

I value your presence, participation, and engagement with our texts, activities, and conversations in our classroom. It is through your full presence in working with our materials and course questions that learning occurs. Sometimes technology such as phones, tablets, and laptops can distract students from being fully present in our classroom and, in turn, precludes their learning. I ask, in general, that you refrain from texting, taking calls, and surfing the internet during our course. That said, I recognize that many individuals productively utilize technology to take notes or read course materials. I also recognize that many students have life circumstances or situations that require them to have a phone close-by. Please let me know via e-mail, during my office hours, or after class if you would like to or need to utilize technology during our course and I am happy to make exceptions to this general rule.

Email etiquette

I welcome your e-mails and encourage you to e-mail me if you have any questions that may arise concerning our class, your work, etc. I value professionalism in correspondence and aim to support undergraduate students as we learn the codes of university discourse together. With these values in mind, I ask that you adopt professionalism when you write to me. As such, I ask that your e-mails include a salutation, message with complete sentences, and closing. I invite you to e-mail me at ckersten@ucsc.edu. Because e-mail is such a valuable tool in our classroom, I caution you against using the message functions on Canvas or myucsc.edu as these messages often disappear into a mysterious folder or sub-folder that I cannot access or respond to.

Attendance

I value each person’s presence, voice, and attention in our classroom; we all contribute to one another’s learning and our classroom environment. Likewise, your presence and engagement with our classroom activities are essential for your success in the course. I believe in crafting class activities that help us understand our texts and materials in greater depth and that actively engage students in ways that can only occur when we are present together in a learning space. For this reason, I ask that you be present for every class. I understand that sickness, emergencies, travel, and other events that may require an absence from our class; such activities and events are often beyond our control and happen to all of us. Please e-mail me to let me know if you need to be absent from class and I am happy to work with you on a case-by-case basis.

Office Hours

I look forward to meeting with you during my office hours throughout the quarter. Please feel free to stop by if you have a question or would like to chat about your work or our class. If my office hours are inconvenient for you, please e-mail me and I am happy to schedule an appointment with you outside of my regular office hours.

Class Deadlines

I ask that you turn in assignments by the listed deadline on Canvas and our syllabus. Our course is designed so that the assignments and their respective deadlines correlate to the activities we will complete in class. Because of this, it is important for your learning and our classroom community that you complete the assignments by the deadlines. I understand that sometimes life events (illness, emergency, personal circumstances, etc.) preclude you from turning in an assignment on time. I am open to negotiating new deadlines and extensions with you on a case-by-case basis. Please contact me 24 hours in advance to request an extension.

A Note on Content:

In this course we will be looking at the topic of animals and our relationships with them on personal, communal, and global levels. Given this, we will talk about the often fraught and painful reality of our exploitation of and profit from animals. We will also talk about how the oppression of animals parallels and intertwines with the oppression of vulnerable populations. More specifically, some of our readings will deal with violence and subjugation of human and animal bodies. Some students may find these readings traumatic or challenging. I recognize we all come from diverse backgrounds and that we are all on our own unique journeys through and around trauma. As such, I'll aim to forewarn you about potentially disturbing content and I ask all students to help to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity.

Important Summer Session 2019 Deadlines:

Session 1:

Drop: Monday, July 1

Request for "W": Friday, July 12

Neither Summer Session nor instructors drop students for non-attendance or non-payment. Students must drop themselves. Dropping results in full tuition reversal/refund. Withdraw posts a W for the grade and full tuition is charged (no refund). For all dates and deadlines, including 'change of grade option' (P/NP) and grades due, here is the summer academic calendar: <https://summer.ucsc.edu/studentlife/index.html>. For questions about dropping, requesting a W grade for a course, or withdrawing from the summer quarter, email summer@ucsc.edu.

Academic Integrity

I ask that all work submitted for this course be your own unique work and invite you to familiarize yourself with what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, and how to cite sources. If you do not understand the standards of academic integrity enforced at UC Santa Cruz, I invite you consult *The Navigator* at <http://registrar.ucsc.edu/navigator/sectionI/academic-integrity.html>, Section I, Academic Integrity. Because academic integrity is such an important facet of intellectual discourse and an issue that UC-Santa Cruz takes very seriously, breaches in academic integrity may result in failure of the plagiarized assignment, the course, and may result in suspension or dismissal from the university. I understand that this can often be unfamiliar or confusing territory for many students. Please do not hesitate to be in touch with me via e-mail, during my office hours, or by appointment if you would like more information or clarification about plagiarism, academic integrity, and citations if you have any questions or need clarification.

Disability Resources:

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization letter from the Disability Resource Center

to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, as soon as possible in the academic quarter, preferably within one week. I encourage you to discuss with me ways we can ensure your full participation in this course. I also encourage all students who may benefit to learn about the DRC and the UCSC accommodation process. You can visit the DRC website at drc.ucsc.edu. You can make an appointment and meet in-person with a DRC staff member. The phone number is 831-459-2089 or you can email them at drc@ucsc.edu.

Title IX:

The university cherishes the free and open exchange of ideas and enlargement of knowledge. To maintain this freedom and openness requires objectivity, mutual trust, and confidence; it requires the absence of coercion, intimidation, or exploitation. The principal responsibility for maintaining these conditions must rest upon those members of the university community who exercise most authority and leadership: faculty, managers, and supervisors.

The university has therefore instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct. [Information about the Title IX Office](#), the [online reporting link](#), applicable campus [resources](#), reporting responsibilities, the [UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#) and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can be found at titleix.ucsc.edu. The Title IX/Sexual Harassment Office is located at 105 Kerr Hall. In addition to the [online reporting option](#), you can contact the Title IX Office by calling 831-459-2462.

Course Schedule

Week One

- **Class Session One:**
 - Key Questions: What key questions and terms are at stake in animal studies?
 - Readings: John Berger, “Why Look at Animals?”; Mike McGriff, “Why I Am Obsessed With Horses”; Marianne Moore, “A Jelly-Fish”
 - **please complete inventory online (will be e-mailed to you)*
- **Class Session Two:**
 - Key Questions: What is the relationship between language and power?
 - Readings: selection from Robin Wall Kimmerer, “Learning the Grammar of Animacy”; Ursula K. Le Guin “She Unnames Them”; Margaret Atwood, “The Animals Reject Their Names and Things Return to Their Origins”; Jody Gladding, “Translations of Bark Beetle”
 - **Prompt 1 Due by Class Time**

Week Two

- **Class Session Three: Entanglement and Witnessing**
 - Key Questions: How are we entangled in animals through commerce, economy, violence, and war? And who speaks for animals in this entanglement?
 - Readings: Greta Gaard, “Toward a Feminist Postcolonial Milk Studies”; Lesléa Newman, “October Mourning”; Michael Benedikt, “The Beef Epitaph”; Nicole Homer, “Petting Zoo”; Leah Naomi Green, “Venison”
 - **Prompt 2 Due by Class Time**
 - **Choose your animal & explore your personal connection**
- **Class Session Four: Fourth of July, No Class**

Week Three

- **Class Session Five: Relationships & Kinship**
 - Key Questions: What are the boundaries between us and the more-than-human world? Can we be family with the more-than-human world?

- Readings: Courtney Kersten, “In The Kelp”; Robert Wrigley, selections from “Lives of the Animals”; Linda Hogan, “First People”; Paula Underwood, “Who Speaks For Wolf”
- **Prompt 3 Due by Class Time**
 - **Explore your animal’s entanglement in the larger world**
- **Class Session Six: Kinship continued...**
 - Key Question: Questions continued...
 - Readings: None, viewing of *Grizzly Man*
 - **Prompt 4 Due by Class Time**

Week Four

- **Class Session Seven: Gender, Animals, Oppression, & Ecofeminism**
 - Key Questions: What is the relationship between the oppression of animals and the oppression of humans?
 - Readings: Greta Gaard, “Living Interconnections with Animals and Nature”; Joy Harjo, selections from “She Had Some Horses”; Joy Harjo, selections from “How We Became Human”
 - **Prompt 5 Due by Class Time**
 - **Find a poem that represents your animal & close-read your poem**
- **Class Session Eight: Gender & Ecofeminism**
 - Key Questions: What is the relationship
 - Readings: Carol J. Adams, “The Sexual Politics of Meat” Chapters 2 & 3; Linda Hogan “The Heron”; Kamilah Aisha Moon, “Shared Plight”; Louise Erdrich, “The Strange People”;
 - **Prompt 6 Due by Class Time**

Week Five

- **Class Session Nine: Healing**
 - Key Questions: How do we heal? Can we heal our relationships with animals?
 - Readings: Robert Wrigley, selections from “Reign of Snakes”; Robin Wall Kimmerer, “The Honorable Harvest”
 - **Prompt 7 Due by Noon**
- **Class Session Ten:**
 - Key Questions: What does it mean to be “broken?” What does it mean to “tame?” To be “wild?”
 - Readings: None, viewing of *The Mustang*

Please e-mail me your final projects by Tuesday, July 30th by midnight.