

Spring 2018
ENGLISH 4997-101
RESEARCH CAPSTONE
Thematic Title: *The Lives of Animals*
MW 2:00-3:15 PM
Lalumiere Language Hall 384

Professor Gerry Canavan
Marquette Hall 244
gerry.canavan@marquette.edu
Office Phone: 414-288-6860
Office Hours: MW 12:35ish PM-1:55ish PM or by appointment

We are currently living through a historical moment that many scientists have begun to call “the Anthropocene”: the moment when the activities of human beings become visible in the geological and climatological record of the planet, recognizable many thousands or even millions of years hence. These activities unhappily coincide—and, to an overwhelming extent, have directly caused—what appears to be the beginning of the sixth mass extinction event experienced on Earth since the first evolution of life. The extinction and endangerment of huge numbers of animal species—as well as new research in biology, genomics, and cognitive science that have utterly blurred the once-clear, once-reliable distinction between “human” and “animal”—now calls on us both intellectually and ethically to reconsider the exclusion of animal life from consideration in human political and cultural institutions. This course seeks to answer that call, serving as an introduction to the interdisciplinary scholarly work in the ecological humanities that is increasingly grouped under the heading of “animal studies.” It will also intersect with fervent debates currently raging about the status of animals in the United States and around the world, including contemporary debates about zoos and aquariums; vegetarianism and medical testing; habitat preservation; and even the potential legal personhood of chimps, gorillas, dolphins, and other higher-order mammals. It will, in addition, serve as the research capstone to your English major experience at Marquette, affording you the academic tools and the creative space to independently develop a project of significant literary-critical scholarship on the troubled and troubling figure of “the animal,” exploring some of the different ways animals have been taken up as a problem by writers and thinkers working in multiple historical periods, media, genres, and literary-cultural forms.

WHAT IS ENGLISH 4997?

ENGLISH 4997 is a relatively new course, first offered in Spring 2015, that is intended to serve as the culminating experience for English majors at Marquette. An advanced course straddling the line between undergraduate and postgraduate work, ENGLISH 4997 offers you the opportunity to integrate the knowledge and skills developed in your previous coursework (both in and outside the major) through the development of a significant self-directed research paper or creative project on a topic of your choosing.

ENGLISH 4997 is also intended to expand the usual range of English department offerings through in-depth and interdisciplinary focus on more specialized themes; in this case, we will be

taking up various religious, philosophical, historical, cultural, and scientific perspectives on “the animal,” as it has been articulated through various works of literary and popular culture.

I want this class both to be wide-ranging and comprehensive, and to focus on topics that are of relevance to you and the research projects you will develop over the course of the semester. Accordingly, the course begins only half-designed; the second half of the course will be planned by us collaboratively over the first two weeks of class.

LEARNING GOALS

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and understand various formal characteristics of major texts in the literary canon;
- Demonstrate understanding of the cultural, historical, and political contexts in which various works of literature have been produced and commented upon;
- Apply techniques of critical analysis as appropriate to texts, literary form, and genre;
- Interpret texts about animals through a variety of methodologies and critical perspectives;
- Understand and participate in ongoing academic debates in “animal studies,” both within and outside the English discipline;
- Propose, develop, and bring to completion a major self-directed capstone project;
- Use literary study to develop skills for careful reading and clear writing;
- Read and discuss literature on the levels of both form and content.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the Book Marq on 16th Street)

Linda Kalof and Amy Fitzgerald (ed.), *The Animals Reader*

J.M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*

Karen Joy Fowler, *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*

During the first two weeks of class, we will collaboratively plan the units following Spring Break, which may require the purchase of an additional novel or two.

Additional readings and course materials will occasionally be made available via D2L.

Please note: An earlier version of this syllabus required the purchase of Franz Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis and Other Stories*. This is no longer required (though it is still a great book!).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Class Participation	20%
D2L Posts	18%
Personal Statement	7%
Final Paper (approximately 4000 words, the equivalent of 12-15 double-spaced pages)	
▪ Pitch	5%
▪ Annotated Bibliography	10%
▪ Abstract	5%
▪ Final Paper Presentation	10%
▪ Final Paper	25%

Additional details on all assignments will be distributed in class well in advance of the due date.

GRADING

Grades will follow the following rubric:

- * To earn a **C**, you must clearly restate the meaning or project of a text in your own terms. A C essay may volunteer an original argument, but will likely lack evidence or analysis of its sources. C essays are clearly written, though they might display some grammatical weakness.
- * To earn a **B**, you must begin to raise important questions about the text under consideration and to use those questions to drive your own interpretive agenda. A B essay typically advances an original argument and provides solid analysis of the text(s) under consideration. B essays are clear, concise, and free of grammatical errors.
- * To earn an **A**, you must construct an essay that does more than simply comment on the work of others; you must forward, counter, or transform what they have to say. An A essay advances an original argument that builds toward a climax and makes a persuasive case for its own significance. A essays are clearly written, and often eloquent.
- * A **D** means that you have not written in clear prose or that you seem to have deeply misunderstood the text. An **F** means that you did not fully or seriously engage the assignment.
- * **A-, B+, B-, C+ (and so on) grades** fall in the gaps between the above categories.

QUIZZES

I do not like to give reading quizzes; I think they infantilize the college-level scholar. However, this is by necessity a very reading-intensive class; if it seems to me that people are not keeping up with the reading, pop quizzes may become necessary despite my philosophical objections. You have been warned.

FORMAT OF WRITTEN WORK

Your personal statement, annotated bibliography, and final paper should all be typed in twelve-point font, double-spaced with one-inch margins, saved in a format Microsoft Word can open. Your filename should contain *your name* in it, for example, yourlastname-firstpaper.docx.

I expect you to *edit* and *proofread* all written work, even D2L posts. Drafts that contain excessive typos or grammar mistakes may be returned to the author for correction before I offer comments.

Please give each piece of writing an original title, and include your name, assignment, and due date in a header on the first page. Insert page numbers if your work spans more than one page.

All sources relied upon for the writing of your paper, including the primary text, must be appropriately cited.

PAPER SUBMISSION

Major work should be submitted via D2L's Dropbox by class time on the due date. **Late papers will be penalized a full grade for each day that it is late; due to university policy late final**

papers will not be accepted at all. Except in very unusual circumstances, work will not be accepted by email.

Your other written work (which will primarily take the form of discussion forum comments) will be posted on the D2L forums. These mini-papers will have **flexible due dates** driven by your own interests and responses. **It is thus your responsibility to make sure you are properly keeping up with this portion of the course.**

TECHNOLOGY IS TERRIBLE: PLAN AHEAD!

The Internet goes down. Files become corrupted. Computers crash. These are predictable facts of twenty-first century life, not emergencies. For this course, for all your courses, for the rest of your career and your life in this world you need to develop work habits and strategies that take into account the basic, inescapable unreliability of computers. Start your assignments well in advance of the due date; save them often; save backup copies of essential documents, including copies off-site using a service like Carbonite, Dropbox, or Google Drive.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class discussion is an essential component of this seminar; class discussion, not lecture, will be the primary means by which we will investigate these texts together. It is therefore crucial that you come to class every day having read the required material and prepared to discuss it.

Consequently, attendance in this class is absolutely mandatory. You should plan on attending every class. Please talk to me (in advance if possible) if you ever find you will need to miss a class meeting.

The course adheres to Marquette University's attendance policy, which can be found on the Internet at <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#attendance>.

You are allowed **three absences** over the course of the spring semester. **After that, your class participation will drop by a letter grade for each additional unexcused absence.** Upon the seventh unexcused absence, you will receive a WA (Withdrawn—Excessive Absences) for the semester.

Merely being present in class is insufficient to earn an “A” for class participation. Each student is expected to *participate in* and *contribute to* our discussions. Just being in the room is not enough.

D2L FORUMS

This course will make extensive use of the D2L forums at <http://d2l.mu.edu>. In addition to being a place where you can find electronic copies of the syllabus and other course handouts, D2L also features an online forum where you can express your response to the material before class begins and where we can continue our discussions after class is over.

The D2L discussion forums are an excellent place for people who may feel inhibited by in-class discussion to share their opinions with the class. I will be reading the discussion forum regularly and I recommend you do the same. I encourage you to think of your D2L posts as possible

“seeds” for the longer paper; feel free to begin to develop your thoughts there. You may choose either to begin a discussion thread on a new topic or to respond to a post composed by one of your classmates.

Before class next Wednesday, every student is required to take the following actions:

- * **upload a picture of their face to their D2L profile;**
- * **write a substantial, two-to-three-paragraph post commenting on or responding to the Book of Genesis, Charles Darwin, or Jared Diamond.**

After that, students must write **five more short posts** responding to **any three texts** across the remainder of the course. These posts should be completed by noon before one of the class discussions devoted to that text. You should aim to post half of these before Spring Break.

Responses should be approximately 250-400 words that move beyond mere plot summary towards interpreting a given text; you may choose either to begin a discussion thread on a new topic or to respond to a post composed by one of your classmates. I encourage you to think of your blog comments as possible “seeds” for the final paper; feel free to begin to develop your thoughts there.

Up to two additional posts beyond the required six will count towards extra credit on your final grade. Additional posts beyond that number, and posts that respond substantively to other students’ arguments, will be looked upon very favorably when I calculate your final grade.

INITIAL ASSIGNMENT: THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

Separately from your D2L posts, you are asked to submit to me by January 29 a “personal statement” reflecting on your time at Marquette. Who are you, and how do you see yourself as a scholar now that you have spent some time studying at Marquette? What are your passions and your key interests both in class and outside class, in the Marquette community and beyond? What experiences in class, outside class, in internships or study abroad, while working on or off-campus, have influenced your ways of thinking about the world and have contributed to your development as a whole person (*cura personalis*)? What is your sense of Marquette’s identity, its mission and values, and how do you fit into that picture? How are you beginning to envision your life after Marquette, and how might any of the things you’ve been working on here influence that life? Are there topics, questions, problems from your previous classes—either in the English department or in other fields—that you want to continue to explore? What topics or issues have you explored in other courses that you can see connecting to the issues we are raising in this capstone course? Write a short, 500-750-word autobiographical narrative that explains how you see your formal education connecting to your life after graduation, and if possible highlight the areas of study that you think you’d like to explore further in this capstone project.

EMAIL

Students in this class are required to check their official Marquette email account—whatever account D2L sends its emails to—at least once a day, in case there are any last-minute announcements or disruptions.

I endeavor to respond to all emails within 24 hours, usually much less—but please do not send me urgent emails regarding your assignments on the night before they are due and expect an immediate reply.

LAPTOP POLICY

In-class use of laptops, Kindles, iPads, etc. is permitted for access to electronic versions of our texts and for notetaking. However, students *must* refrain from non-class-related computer use, including email, instant messaging, Facebook, Twitter, and the like. **I reserve the right to ban individual technological devices if this becomes a problem.** Except in cases of emergency, cleared with me in advance, no use of cell phones will be permitted during class time; please turn off your ringers and put them out of sight.

CONFERENCES

All students are asked to meet with me in at least one short one-on-one conference at my office at least once during the semester, to discuss the course and your work within it.

Please know I am very happy to meet with you individually to discuss either graded work or work-in-progress in excess of this requirement as many times as you like. Simply come to my weekly office hours, or see or email me to set up an appointment.

FLEXIBILITY

If it will benefit the class, changes may be made to the above.

WRITING CENTER

Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the Writing Center, located in Raynor Library Room 240, at any stage of the writing process. Please visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.marquette.edu/english/writingcenter/> to find out how to schedule an appointment and to access the studio's online resources.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who believe they may require accommodations in this course should contact me early in the semester so your learning needs can be appropriately met.

I am of course more than happy to work with you to make sure you are successful in this course and to make this course most accessible for you. However, without documentation, I am limited in what I am able to do. Therefore, in order for me to help you most effectively, I need you to be proactive in contacting Marquette University's Office of Disability Services (located on the fifth floor of the 707 Building).

ODS can be reached by phone at (414) 288-1645 or by email at ods@marquette.edu.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are expected to abide by the academic honesty policy outlined in your undergraduate bulletin. I urge you all to examine this material and consult me with any questions you may have about plagiarism or academic integrity *before* it becomes an issue.

Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. **Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course.** No exceptions or special dispensations will be made.

Marquette students now sign an Honor Pledge, which states:

- *I recognize the importance of personal integrity in all aspects of life and work.*
- *I commit myself to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, by which I earn the respect of others.*
- *I support the development of good character, and commit myself to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity as an important aspect of personal integrity.*
- *My commitment obliges me to conduct myself according to the Marquette University Honor Code.*

Full details of Marquette’s academic integrity policy are available on the Internet at <http://www.marquette.edu/provost/academic-integrity.php>.

On a personal level, I (like everyone) hate being lied to. Please, do not feel you need to concoct elaborate stories. Simply be honest with me about whatever is going on and we will work it out.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

We all enter this classroom with preexisting political, ethical, philosophical, and intellectual commitments. You are all required to engage the material—but you are absolutely *not* required to agree either with any of the writers we will discuss, or with me, in whole or in part.

RESPECT

This classroom is a community. It is crucial that we treat each other with the appropriate level of courtesy and respect. No one should be made to feel unwelcome here.

Failure to treat other students with the respect they deserve will **severely** negatively impact your class participation grade.

KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN!

I want this class to be a meaningful and valuable experience for you, both in its own terms and in service of the development of your larger college experience. If you have any ideas, suggestions, or concerns about the way things are going, my door is always open.

FOLLOW FAME: FRIENDS AND ALUMNI/AE OF MARQUETTE ENGLISH

On Facebook (page): www.facebook.com/marquettefame

On Facebook (group): www.facebook.com/groups/496438583889194
(search for “Undergraduate English at Marquette”)

On Twitter: @MarquetteFAME

I will also be inviting you to events in the pop culture and pizza series I run periodically during the semester. I hope you can attend!

PRE-SPRING-BREAK PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class as they become necessary.
Students should come to class prepared to discuss the listed texts or chapters.

W	Jan. 17	FIRST DAY OF CLASS—MEET IN HAGGERTY ART MUSEUM
M	Jan 22	The Book of Genesis, chapters 1-9 [online] <i>Post-Spring-Break Discussion</i>
W	Jan 24	Charles Darwin, <i>The Descent or Origin of Man</i> , Chapter 1 [online] Jared Diamond, <i>The Third Chimpanzee</i> , excerpts [D2L] <i>Post-Spring-Break Discussion, Final Decisions</i>
M	Jan 29	PERSONAL STATEMENT DUE (NO CLASS)
W	Jan 31	movie: <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> (1996) (in class)
M	Feb 5	Franz Kafka, "A Report to an Academy" [D2L]
W	Feb 7	J.M. Coetzee, <i>The Lives of Animals</i> (part one)
M	Feb 12	J.M. Coetzee, <i>The Lives of Animals</i> (part two)
W	Feb 14	J.M Coetzee, <i>The Lives of Animals</i> (Garber, Singer, Doniger, Smuts)
M	Feb 19	Karen Joy Fowler, <i>We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves</i> (Parts One and Two)
W	Feb 21	Karen Joy Fowler, <i>We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves</i> (Parts Three and Four)
M	Feb 26	Karen Joy Fowler, <i>We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves</i> (whole book)
W	Feb 28	John Berger, "Why Look at Animals?" [AR] Randy Malamud, "Zoo Spectatorship" [AR] Octavia E. Butler, "Eye Witness" [online]
M	Mar 5	movie: <i>Blackfish</i> (2015)
W	Mar 7	<i>Blackfish</i> discussion FINAL PAPER ELEVATOR PITCH DUE ON D2L
M- W	Mar 12- 14	SPRING BREAK

POST-SPRING-BREAK SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

WEEKS 10-11 (MARCH 19-MARCH 28): STUDENT-DEVELOPED UNIT #1!
WEEKS 12-13 (APRIL 4-APRIL 18): STUDENT-DEVELOPED UNIT #2!
WEEKS 14-15 (APRIL 23-MAY 2): GROUP PRESENTATIONS!
WEDNESDAY, MAY 9: FINAL PAPER DUE VIA D2L DROPBOX BY 12:30 PM!

MONDAY EXERCISE: BRAINSTORMING OUR POST-SPRING-BREAK UNITS

Please select five of the following very general topics for possible investigation in the second half of the class, and please rank your interest in the topics 1-5.

climate change, the Anthropocene, mass extinction
 animal conservation
 science fiction
 fantasy
 fables, folk tales, fairy tales
 children's literature and animated films
 pets, love, friendship, ownership
 exotic pets
 zoos
 animal rights and animal personhood
 science and scientific experimentation
 cloning
 disease and contagion
 industrial agriculture and slaughterhouses
 vegetarianism and veganism
 animal liberation
 eco-terrorism
 animals as workers; animal labor
 service and companion animals
 cognition and theory of mind
 animals and language
 Uplift (something like *Sirius*)
 allegory, metaphor, symbolism (something like *Animal Farm*)
 animals and humor/satire
 "cute" animals (kitties and puppies)
 "ugly" animals (worms, slime molds, octopuses, etc.)
 other _____

Generally speaking, which sorts of media texts would you be interested in exploring together?

prose fiction
 prose nonfiction
 film and/or television
 documentary film
 comics or graphic novels
 games
 children's literature
 animated films
 Internet or digital media
 other _____

Please try to brainstorm at least a few specific texts (books, films, games, etc.) you think you might be interested in studying in the context of this course.

Right now, I think I might want to write my final paper on:

ENTRANCE SURVEY**NAME****YEAR****MAJOR****HOMETOWN****MY FAVORITE BOOK THAT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH ANIMALS****MY FAVORITE SHOW, FILM, GAME, COMIC, OR OTHER SORT OF MEDIA TEXT ABOUT ANIMALS****MY FAVORITE STORY ABOUT ANIMALS FROM WHEN I WAS A KID**

I EAT MEAT**Y N****I WEAR ANIMAL PRODUCTS (SHOES, BELTS, JACKETS, ETC)****Y N****I AM IN FAVOR OF MEDICAL ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION****Y N****I AM IN FAVOR OF COSMETIC ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION****Y N****I HAD A PET WHEN I WAS YOUNG****Y N****I HAVE A PET NOW****Y N****I LOVE ANIMALS****Y N****I THINK ANIMALS CAN LOVE HUMANS****Y N****I THINK AT LEAST SOME ANIMALS SHOULD LEGALLY BE CONSIDERED PERSONS****Y N**