Human culture has always been deeply interested in, and closely connected to, animals. Not surprisingly, literature reflects this interest in a variety of ways. In this course, we’ll use literary texts to explore philosophical and moral issues that arise from our relationships with animals. We’ll also examine the complexity of representing animals in literature by reading poetry, novels, and plays that imagine being animal, or use animals as symbols for other purposes. The course is organized as a historical survey, so we’ll be tracing continuities and change in our thinking about animals, as well as getting experience in reading and thinking about literature in a historical context.

Because the course is writing-intensive, we will be paying very close attention to the skills of essay writing. You already know, I’m sure, that writing is difficult, but we’ll review the crucial skills that can make your writing more accurate, better organized, and more insightful. My goal is to show you the fundamentals of an essay in literary criticism, including the formulation of an argument, methods of research, and the use and documentation of secondary sources. You’ll have to write four essays, and participate in some writing workshops. I’ll require you to use the Writing Center. You will have to revise your second and fourth essays. You may seek feedback from me about your essays at any point before handing in the final draft. You should note that I do not re-grade essays.

Finally, because this course is a pro-seminar, active participation in classroom discussion is essential. One of the goals of a pro-seminar is to give you an opportunity to develop and improve your oral communication skills, and confidence in your own ability to speak before a group.

**Texts:**
J.M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals*
Barbara Gowdy, *The White Bone*
Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Book*
Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*
William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*
Art Spiegelman, *Maus*
Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*
Grading:

Class participation: 20%
Blackboard Discussion participation: 10%
Essay #1: 10%
Essay #2: 15%
Essay #3: 20%
Essay #4: 25%

Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation because of a disability of any kind should make an appointment to see me in the first two weeks of the semester during office hours.

Participation:

The participation component of your final grade is largely based upon your attendance, preparation for class, contributions to class discussion, and presentations you make to the class. Class discussion is not a matter merely of quantity, but of quality as well. Each student should come to class having read the assigned text, having thought about it, and having questions or ideas about it. Remember that what you get out of a class is to a very large degree dependent upon what you put into it. You will thus need to get into the habit of using class discussion to develop and enhance your ability to analyze texts and communicate your ideas. I will often call on students in class, and I will expect you to be prepared to discuss your ideas. The participation grade will also in part reflect your attendance record. If you miss more than three classes, you will lose a portion of this grade.

I have also created a Discussion Board on BLACKBOARD. I will assign one people to begin a discussion for each class period. The entry should include a brief observation or response to some portion of the reading for the assigned class, and raise one or two questions. I imagine that these initial posts should be about 250-400 words, and that others in the class will respond to these posts to continue the discussion.

These first posts should be entered by 7 pm on the day before the class!

Contributions to the board (both initial posts and contributions to threads) will be evaluated as part of the final course grade.

Essays:

Essay assignments will be handed out in class. For information about formatting, style, and documentation, please visit the Hamilton College Writing Center website: https://my.hamilton.edu/writing/home

Pay attention to details of formatting and style. Make sure your essay has a clear and descriptive title. Number and staple your pages. Use a standard 11 or 12 point font, and double space. Indent paragraphs (rather than leaving a blank line to signify the paragraphs). Quote poetry properly. Do not use right justification.

For the first essays, I do not want you to use secondary sources for your essays. Essays are to be handed in at the beginning of the class in which they are due. Extensions will be given only for extenuating circumstances, and should be requested at least a week in advance. Late papers will be penalized 3% per day.
When you use any secondary sources, you must cite them clearly and thoroughly. *Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of secondary sources, and thus includes paraphrasing as well as direct copying. Taking ideas, phrases, sentences, etc., from the web is equivalent to taking them from a book. All plagiarism is forbidden by the honor code, and will be punished.*

Essays are graded on the following factors:
-- the originality, insight, and clarity of your argument;
-- use and explanation of examples to prove your argument;
-- the accuracy of your writing (number and severity of errors of grammar, punctuation, spelling, diction, etc.);
-- the grace and style of your writing;
-- the general formatting of your essay.

All essays should be submitted on the Assignment page on Blackboard. Please submit as a Word document. Be sure to include the file extension (.doc or .docx).

*Revision policy:* Revision is an important part of the writing process. For every essay assignment, I welcome the opportunity to give you feedback on drafts of your work. This is especially useful to you in the early stages of the essay, particularly in the development of the thesis. For any essay, I’ll give extensive feedback on drafts of introductions, theses, and outlines. For any one essay, I’ll give feedback on an entire draft. *However, once I have given a grade to an essay, it may not be resubmitted for a new grade.*

*Reading Schedule:*
Underlined titles are hyperlinks to on-line sources, clickable on the Blackboard version of this syllabus. Unlinked poems are on Blackboard (under Course Documents). Please print out the poems and bring them to class.

**F Aug 30**
Introduction  Blake, “The Lamb,” “The Tyger” [hand-out]

**M Sep 2**
Aristotle, from *Politics, Book 1* (Parts 1-5),
Genesis, *Chapters 1 and 2*,
Nagel, “What is it like to be a bat?” (Blackboard)
de Waal, “Are We in Anthropodenial.”

**W Sep 4**
Menely, “Community of Creatures” (Blackboard)

**F Sep 6**
Chaucer, *Nun’s Priest’s Tale*

**M Sep 9**
*Nun’s Priest’s Tale*

**W Sep 11**
*Nun’s Priest’s Tale*, Renaissance Sonnets (Spenser 67, Sidney 49, Shakespeare 1, 20)
F Sep 13       Sonnets, and *The Tempest* (Act 1, continued)

M Sep 16       *The Tempest* (Acts 2 and 3)

W Sep 18       *The Tempest* (Acts 4 and 5)  FIRST ESSAY DUE

[T Sept 19      Lecture by Verlyn Klinkenborg, author of “Timothy’s Book,” a
journal of Gilbert White’s pet tortoise]

F Sep 20       Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* “Voyage to Brobdingnag” (Part 2)

M Sep 23       Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* “Voyage to the Country of the
Houyhnhmns” (Part 4)

W Sep 25       Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*, continued.
Descartes, from *Discourse on Method, Part V.*

F Sep 27       CLASS CANCELLED

M Sep 30       Gray, “Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat”;
Smart, “For I will consider my Cat Jeffrey”.

W Oct 2        Burns “To a Mouse”; Barbauld, “The Mouse’s Petition;”
Blake, “Auguries of Innocence;” Coleridge, “To a Young Ass”

F Oct 4        Coleridge, “Rime of the Ancient Mariner”

M Oct 7        Keats, “Ode to a Nightingale”
Draft of second essay due

W Oct 9        Essay Workshop

F Oct 11       Clare, “The Badger,” “The Nightingale’s Nest”
Whitman, from *Song of Myself*, Section 32

M Oct 14       Dickinson 359, 591, 905, 1096.
SECOND ESSAY DUE


F Oct 18       Fall Break

M Oct 21       Kipling, from *The Jungle Book*—“Preface,” “Mowgli’s Brothers,”
W Oct 23  Kipling, “Kaa’s Hunting,” “Tiger, Tiger”  
M Oct 28  London, *Call of the Wild*  
W Oct 30  London, *Call of the Wild*  
F Nov 1  London, *Call of the Wild*  
F Nov 8  Hughes, “The Jaguar,” “A Second Glance at the Jaguar”  
F Nov 15  Levine, “The Animals are Passing from Our Lives,”  
John Kinsella, “Goat”  
THIRD ESSAY DUE  
M Nov 18  Spiegelman, *Maus*  
W Nov 20  Spiegelman, *Maus*  
F Nov 22  Spiegelman, *Maus*  
Nov 25-30  Thanksgiving Break  
M Dec 2  Gowdy, *The White Bone*  
W Dec 4  Gowdy, *The White Bone*  
F Dec 6  Gowdy, *The White Bone*  
M Dec 9  Student Choice  
W Dec 11  Student Choice  
F Dec 13  Student Choice
Monday, Dec 17. Final Essay Due, 12 pm.