



## **REL 3938: Religion and Animals**

Spring 2016

Tues. 5/6 (Turl 2336), Thurs. 6 (And 34)

Instructor: Anna Peterson

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Office: 105 Anderson Hall (Mailbox in 107 Anderson)

Office Hours: Tues. and Thurs., 1:45-2:45 and by appointment

### **Description**

This course examines the place of non-human animals in the cosmologies and ethical systems, as well as in practices and institutions, in various religious traditions. Non-human animals have been important in most religions, playing diverse roles as subjects of myth, objects of sacrifice or worship, and symbols and members of communities. We will explore the interpretations and roles of animals in different religions both to illuminate important elements of the religions themselves and to understand the roles of non-human animals in human history and culture generally. Specific topics in the course will include mythical and symbolic animals, animal totems, ritual and sacrifice, ethical concerns about human treatment of animals, relations to domestic/companion animals, and scientific perspectives. Requirements will include full participation in class discussions as well as a number of writing assignments.

## Required Books

Paul Waldau and Kimberley Patton, eds., *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science, and Ethics* (Columbia 2006; ISBN 9780231136433)

Richard Nelson, *Make Prayers to the Raven: A Koyukon View of the Northern Forest* (University of Chicago Press, 1986; ISBN 9780226571638)

Andrew Linzey, *Animal Theology* (University of Illinois 1998; ISBN 9780252064678)

Marc Bekoff and Jessica Pierce, *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals* (Chicago 2010), ISBN 9780226041636

## Requirements

1. Active participation in class discussions, based on timely and close reading of all assigned texts and punctual attendance of all class meetings (10% of final grade)
2. Short essay (30%) due Monday, Feb. 6
3. Short essay (30%) due Wed., March 15
4. Short essay (30%) due Monday, April 24

## Schedule

Th 1/5 Introduction to the class

Tues 1/10 Introduction: Patton, "Caught with Ourselves" (27-39) and Waldau, "Seeing the Terrain" (40-57) in *A Communion of Subjects*

### Part One: Animals in Indigenous Traditions

Th 1/12 Opoku, "Animals in African Mythology" (351-359) and McIntosh, "Why Umbulka Killed his Master" (360-369) in *A Communion of Subjects* (335-369)

Tues 1/17 Grim, "Knowing and Being Known," 373-390; Mortenson, "Raven Augury," 423-432, in *A Communion of Subjects*

Th 1/19 Nelson, *Make Prayers to the Raven*, Introduction and Ch. 1 and 2

Tu 1/24 Nelson, *Make Prayers to the Raven*, Ch. 4 and 6 (SKIP 3 and 4)

Th 1/26 Nelson, *Make Prayers to the Raven*, Ch. 7 and 8

Tu 1/31 Nelson, *Make Prayers to the Raven*, Ch. 9-11

Th 2/2 Nelson, *Make Prayers to the Raven*, Ch. 12 and 13

\*\* First paper due Monday 2/6 \*\*

Part Two: Animals in Asian Traditions

Tu 2/7 Hinduism: Doniger, "A Symbol" (335-347), Nelson and Bryant essays in *A Communion of Subjects* (179-202)

Th 2/9 Buddhism: Harris and Vargas essays in *A Communion of Subjects* (207-232)

Tu 2/14 Jainism: Chapple and Wiley essays in *A Communion of Subjects* (241-254)

Th 2/16 Daoism and Confucianism essays in *A Communion of Subjects* (275-306)

Part Three: Comparative Studies

Tu 2/21 Sacrifice: Sterckx, "Of a tawny bull" (259-269), Patton, "Animal Sacrifice" (391-403) and Lawrence, "Hunting the Wren" (406-411) in *A Communion of Subjects*

Th 2/23 "East meets West": Ames, "Human Exceptionalism" (311-323) and Paper, "Humans and Animals" (325-331)

Part Four: Animals in Western Traditions

Tu 2/28 Judaism: Cohn-Sherbok, "Hope for the Animal Kingdom" (81-90) and Kalechofsky, "Hierarchy, Kinship, and Responsibility" (91-98) in *A Communion of Subjects*

Th 3/2 Islam: Foltz, "This she-camel," Kassam, "The Case of the Animals," and Asani, "Oh that I could," in *A Communion of Subjects* (149-169)

\* SPRING BREAK, March 4-11 \*

Tu 3/14 Christianity: Kienzle, "Bestiary," Steiner, "Descartes," and McDaniel, "Practicing," in *A Communion of Subjects* (pp. 103-145)

\* Second essay due Wed. 3/15 \*

Part Five: Animal Theology and Ethics

Th 3/16 Linzey, *Animal Theology*, Ch. 1

Tu 3/21 Linzey, *Animal Theology*, Ch. 2

Th 3/23 Linzey, *Animal Theology*, Ch. 3

Tu. 3/28 Linzey, *Animal Theology*, Ch. 4 and 5

- Th. 3/30      Linzey, *Animal Theology*, Ch. 6
- Tu 4/4        Linzey, *Animal Theology*, Ch. 7 and 8
- Th 4/6        Bekoff and Pierce, *Wild Justice*, Ch. 1
- Tu. 4/11      Bekoff and Pierce, *Wild Justice*, Ch. 2 and 3
- Th. 4/13      Bekoff and Pierce, *Wild Justice*, Ch. 4
- Tu. 4/18      Bekoff and Pierce, *Wild Justice*, Ch. 5 and 6

\*\* Final essay due Monday 4/24 \*

### **Policies, rules, expectations, and resources**

1. *Attendance and reading*: I expect you to attend all meetings of the class, barring extraordinary circumstances, and to come prepared to discuss the reading at each and every class meeting.
  
2. *Handing in Assignments*: Place all papers in my mailbox in the Religion Department, 107 Anderson Hall. DO NOT slip them under the door or leave them on the door of my office, the main department office, or the teaching assistant's office. Please also keep a dated electronic copy of all your papers.
  
3. *Late or Make-Up Assignments*: You may receive an extension on an assignment only in extraordinary circumstances *and* with prior approval from the instructor. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down ½ grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.
  
4. *Completion of All Assignments*: You must complete all written and oral assignments and fulfill the requirement for class participation in order to pass the course. I will not average a grade that is missing for any assignment or requirement.
  
5. *Common Courtesy*: Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. Students who receive or make calls during class will be asked to leave. You may take notes on a laptop computer or other device, although the instructor reserves the right to ask you to turn off the computer. The instructor also reserves the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class. Repeat violations of these rules will result in dismissal from the class.
  
6. *Honor Code*: On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The university specifically prohibits cheating,

plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. For more information about the definition of these terms and other aspects of the Honesty Guidelines, see <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>. Any student demonstrated to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in any assignment for this course will fail the course. In addition, violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and the sanctions listed in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code.

7. *Accommodation for Disabilities:* Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

8. *Counseling Resources* available on campus for students:

- a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575
- b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171
- c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161
- d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601

9. *Software Use:* All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.