

Animals and Society

Instructor: Dr. Seven Mattes
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Office Hours: Mondays
12:00pm – 2:00pm
5B Berkey Hall or via Zoom

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Once you learn to discern the voice of Mother Culture humming in the background, telling her story over and over again to the people of your culture, you’ll never stop being conscious of it. Wherever you go for the rest of your life, you’ll be tempted to say to the people around you, “how can you listen to this stuff and not recognize it for what it is?”— Daniel Quinn

Delving into the foundational question of, “What is an animal?” this course seeks to explore what, exactly, is a human. Oftentimes we find a single, outdated story about both categories of beings. Here, we will complicate these stories by exploring cross-cultural narratives and questioning our own, everyday relationships with non-human others in a variety of contexts. In this exploration, we will seek to understand how our relationships with other living beings are mediated by culture, how all species navigate human society, and how systems of power contribute to current animal, human, and environmental social problems – and their solutions. Students will become more reflective and critical of their own notions and perspectives by examining the experiences of others (human and non-human) and reframing their own stories through our discussions, readings, and films.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1) Students will explain or apply an understanding of systems of power and how these systems of power affect the subject matter and key questions of the class.
- 2) Students will explain how systems of power shape knowledge, such as how knowledge comes about and how knowledge is used, trusted, or valued.
- 3) Students will discuss and critically think about the concept of culture and how it affects interactions between humans, other species and their habitats.
- 4) Students will reflect on their own positionality and how their own experiences (or actions/behaviors) connect to larger systems of power and histories.

REQUIRED READINGS AND RESOURCES

Hurn, Samantha. 2012. *Humans and Other Animals: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Human-Animal Interactions*. London: Pluto Press. (Available free online via MSU Libraries)

Quinn, Daniel. 1995. *Ishmael*. Random House.

Additional readings will be provided on d2l.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

This course is divided into weekly themed modules that are conveniently set up on d2l. We use modules for course organization and consistency. All materials you will need in a given week will be within the related module – readings, media, discussion forum prompts, etc. Please review the scheduled module prior to attending class each week to ensure you are prepared and pumped to tackle the week’s theme!

You can access this course’s content by logging into the MSU D2L course management system (<https://d2l.msu.edu/>) using your MSU username and password (same as for your MSU email).

All deadlines are listed in the course calendar below, and in the D2L course calendar. Deadlines will always be listed at 11:59pm EST on the specified day. Plan ahead of time for any events that may interfere with course deadlines. Ensure that work is completed before the deadline when needed – such as in the case of a family trip or a job interview.

Assignments

Required Readings/videos/podcasts

You are required to purchase the book *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn. All other readings, videos, and podcasts will be uploaded to or linked from the D2L website. You are expected to read all assigned readings for a given week, watch all videos in full.

Attendance and Participation – 150 points total

To do well in this course, you must be present. Participation and attendance will be assessed using in-class activities and d2l-based surveys. If you must miss a class period, please ask a classmate for the day’s notes, review the posted PowerPoint and media for that class period, discuss what was missed with a PAL, and/or visit office hours. Always visit office hours or a PAL if you feel as though you are behind or lost in the material – we are here to help! Extended absences due to illness or obligations (e.g. sports, work) should be discussed with the instructor.

In-class activities include reflective questions, small-group discussions, and more. These activities will be used to evaluate student understanding of the material and generate in-class discussion. It is not possible to make these up, regardless of the circumstances of the absence (again, if there is an extended absence, talk to the instructor).

A total of 50 points of your Attendance and Participation grade will come from your d2l-based weekly surveys. The questions on the survey will range from multiple choice polls to thoughtful questions requiring a sentence or two response. These are the easiest points you will earn this semester as there are no wrong or right answers. Completion of each survey in full will receive full points in this category. These are pass/fail each week. Nonsensical or otherwise insufficient responses – such as “idk” will receive a 0 for the full survey that week. If these types of responses occur more than once, you will receive a 0/50 in the survey category. **The points for this category will be manually entered at the end of the semester.**

Weekly Quizzes – 150 points total

For each week of class, you will have an assigned Quiz. The quizzes will be short assessments that test the knowledge you acquired from that week’s course content. These short quizzes will take the place of a traditional midterm and final exam. Each quiz will be worth 10 points and be offered for

15 weeks. Please note that your weekly quiz will not open up, or be visible until you finish the weekly survey.

Discussion Boards – 100 points total

Weekly Discussion Board Posts & Responses: 1 post per week worth 5 points each, 2 responses per week worth 2.5 points each. Thus, each week is worth 10 points total. There will be 14 weeks worth of discussion prompts available throughout the semester, but you only need to complete 10. This means you can miss four discussion prompt responses. Doing extra weeks is not required, nor does it award extra credit, but it is always recommended as they are a great way to study and think through the material.

Reflection Portfolio– 100 points total

Throughout the semester you will write three short reflections regarding your work with *Ishmael* and key themes in the class. At the end of the semester, you will be combining these three reflections in a creative form, such as a Zine, and then sharing your work with the class. This project will have a few separate steps, which will be discussed in full in class and given distinct deadlines – by the time the portfolio is complete and ready to present you will have already completed much of it!

GRADING POLICY

Graded Course Activities and point allotment:

Assessment	Points Possible
Attendance and Participation	150
Weekly Quizzes	150
Discussion Boards	100
Reflection Portfolio	100

A total of 500 points are possible in this class, excluding Extra Credit. To find your grade percentage, add up the total points received and divide by 500. Next, use the following scale.

Grading scale, based on your percentage of points earned:

Points	Percentage	Grade
450-500	90-100	4.0
425-449	85-89.99	3.5
400-424	80-84.99	3.0
375-399	75-79.99	2.5
350-374	70-74.99	2.0
325-349	65-69.99	1.5
300-324	60-64.99	1.0
< 299	<60	0

COURSE SCHEDULE

Each week will have a theme and an assigned reading listed. Each week will have a survey, quiz and an assigned discussion prompt. These will be listed here and announced in more detail (and with any updates/changes) in Weekly d2l Announcements. On d2l, each week has its own Module, which will contain all required materials and assignments for that week.

Week 1: Introduction and Syllabus Review – September 1st

Readings/Media:

- A. Review Syllabus

Assignments:

- A. Purchase Ishmael by Daniel Quinn
- B. Take Week 1 Survey
- C. Take Week 1 Quiz (Due Sept. 6th at 11:59pm)

Week 2: Why Animals? Why Social Science? – September 6th

Readings/Media:

- A. Hurn. Chapter 1. Why Look at Human-Animal Interactions?
- B. Ishmael Ch. 1 (be sure you are reading chapters, not sections – this should be about 30 pages!)
- C. Chimamanda Adichie - "The Danger of a Single Story"

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 2 Powerpoint lectures
- B. Respond to Week 2 Survey
- C. Take Week 2 Quiz
- D. Write and post a response to Week 2 Discussion Forum Prompt
- E. Reply to two discussion threads

Week 3: Animality – September 13th

Readings/Media:

- A. Hurn. Chapter 2. Animality
- B. Ishmael Ch. 2-3 (be sure you are reading chapters, not sections – this should be about 30 pages!)

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 3 Powerpoint lectures
 - B. Respond to Week 3 Survey
 - C. Take Week 3 Quiz
 - D. Write and post a response to Week 3 Discussion Forum Prompt
 - E. Reply to two discussion threads
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Week 4: Continuity – September 20st

Readings/Media:

- A. Hurn. Chapter 3. Continuity
- B. Ishmael Ch. 4-5

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 4 Powerpoint lectures
- B. Respond to Week 4 Survey
- C. Take Week 4 Quiz
- D. Write and post a response to Week 4 Discussion Forum Prompt
- E. Reply to two discussion threads

Week 5: Cross-Cultural Perspectives - September 27th

Readings/Media:

- A. Hurn, Chapter 4. The ‘West’ and the Rest: Conflicting Ideas About Animals and ‘Animality’
- B. Ishmael Ch. 6-7

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 5 Powerpoint lectures
- B. Respond to Week 5 Survey
- C. Take Week 5 Quiz
- D. Write and post a response to Week 5 Discussion Forum Prompt
- E. Reply to two discussion threads
- F. Finalize Reflection 1!

Reflection 1 Due on Fri, Oct. 1st!

Week 6: Domestication of Animals - October 4th

Readings/Media:

- A. Hurn, Chapter 5. Chapter 5. Domestication
- B. Ishmael Ch. 8-10

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 6 Powerpoint lectures
- B. Respond to Week 6 Survey
- C. Take Week 6 Quiz
- D. Write and post a response to Week 6 Discussion Forum Prompt
- E. Reply to two discussion threads

Week 7: Domestication of Animals II – October 11th

Readings/Media:

- A. Watch Okja
- B. Ishmael Ch. 11-13

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 7 Powerpoint lectures
- B. Respond to Week 7 Survey

- C. Take Week 7 Quiz
- D. Write and post a response to Week 7 Discussion Forum Prompt
- E. Reply to two discussion threads
- F. Finalize Reflection 2!

Reflection 2 Due - October 15th

Week 8: Consuming Animals around the World - October 18th

Readings/Media:

- A. Hurn, Chapter 7. Food.
- B. Review presentation - Thompson, Paul B. The Opposite of Human Enhancement: Nanotechnology and the Blind Chicken Problem. W.K. Kellogg Professor of Agricultural.

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 8 Powerpoint lectures
- B. Respond to Week 8 Survey
- C. Take Week 8 Quiz
- D. Write and post a response to Week 8 Discussion Forum Prompt
- E. Reply to two discussion threads

Week 9: Institutions and Institutional Discrimination - October 25th

Readings/Media:

- A. Watch Dawnland
- B. Review Dawnland viewer's guide

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 9 Powerpoint lectures
- B. Respond to Week 9 Survey
- C. Take Week 9 Quiz
- D. Write and post a response to Week 9 Discussion Forum Prompt
- E. Reply to two discussion threads

Week 10: Attitudes towards Pets - November 1st

Readings/Media:

- A. Hurn. Chapter 8. Pets
- B. On D2l – “If you Tame Me” by Leslie Irvine

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 10 Powerpoint lectures
 - B. Respond to Week 10 Survey
 - C. Take Week 10 Quiz
 - D. Write and post a response to Week 10 Discussion Forum Prompt
 - E. Reply to two discussion threads
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Week 11: Attitudes Towards Pets II - November 8th

Readings/Media:

- A. On d21 - Iliopoulou, Maria A., Carla L. Carleton, and Laure A. Reese. 2018. Beloved Companion or Problem Animal: The Shifting Meaning of Pit Bull." *Society & Animals* 26 (2018) 1-20.
- B. On d21 - Filomena Nina Ribi, Akimitsu Yokoyama & Dennis C. Turner (2008). Comparison of Children's Behavior toward Sony's Robotic Dog AIBO and a Real Dog: A Pilot Study, *Anthrozoös*, 21:3, 245-256,

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 11 Powerpoint lectures
 - B. Respond to Week 11 Survey
 - C. Take Week 11 Quiz
 - D. Write and post a response to Week 11 Discussion Forum Prompt
 - E. Reply to two discussion threads
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Week 12: Extinction, Conservation and the Animal Environment - November 15th

Readings/Media:

- A. Hurn. Chapter 13. Conservation

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 12 Powerpoint lectures
- B. Respond to Week 12 Survey
- C. Take Week 12 Quiz
- D. Write and post a response to Week 12 Discussion Forum Prompt
- E. Reply to two discussion threads
- F. Finalize Reflection 3!

Reflection 3 due on Nov. 19th!

Week 13: Humans as Primates; Humans and Other Primates - November 22nd

Readings/Media:

- A. Hurn. Chapter 11. Humans and Other Primates and Patterson
- B. On d21 - Francine and Wendy Gordon. 1998. "The case for the personhood of gorillas." *Intimate Nature: The Bond Between Women and Nature*. Linda Hogan, Deena Metzger, and Brenda Peterson, eds. New York: The Ballantine Publishing Group, 132-141.
- C. Watch *Unlocking the Cage*

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 13 Powerpoint lectures
 - B. Respond to Week 13 Survey
 - C. Take Week 13 Quiz
 - D. Write and post a response to Week 13 Discussion Forum Prompt
 - E. Reply to two discussion threads
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Week 14: Animals as Entertainment – November 29th

Readings/Media:

- A. Excerpt from, “Why Look at Animals?” by John Berger

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 14 Powerpoint lectures
- B. Respond to Week 14 Survey
- C. Take Week 14 Quiz
- D. Write and post a response to Week 14 Discussion Forum Prompt
- E. Reply to two discussion threads
- F. Finalize Reflection Portfolio!

Reflection Portfolio Due on Dec. 3rd!

Week 15: Cross-Cultural Conflict – December 6th

Readings/Media:

- A. Review of Japanese Whaling

Assignments:

- A. Review Week 15 Powerpoint lectures
- B. Respond to Week 15 Survey
- C. Take Week 15 Quiz
- D. Write and post a response to Week 15 Discussion Forum Prompt
- E. Reply to two discussion threads
- F. Prepare presentation of your Reflection Portfolio

Reflection Portfolio Presentations!

Week 16 - Final Exam Week – December 13th