

LANG 3061 LITERARY ANIMALS

Credit Points 10

Legacy Code 101724

Coordinator Christopher Peterson ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Christopher Peterson/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Christopher%20Peterson/))

Description This subject explores a selection of literary works that invite us to examine the tenuous border separating the "human" from the "non-human." Readings will allow students to learn how literary texts employ various formal techniques (allegory, anthropomorphism, etc.) that call into question the conventional opposition between human and animal. Particular attention will be given to the intersection of animality, race, gender, and sexuality. Readings may include one or more national literatures, such as American or Australian literature.

School Humanities & Comm Arts

Discipline Literature

Student Contribution Band HECS Band 1 10cp

Check your fees via the Fees (https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/fees/) page.

Level Undergraduate Level 3 subject

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this subject, students should be able to:

1. develop knowledge of the human/animal distinction in literature.
2. gain the ability to identify and analyse formal techniques (allegory, anthropomorphism, etc.) that literary texts employ to explore the human/animal distinction.
3. develop knowledge of the historical contexts from which literary and cultural texts emerge.
4. explore how the concepts of animality, race, gender, and sexuality intersect.
5. develop advanced skills in writing and argument.

Subject Content

-Philosophical perspectives on animals: consideration of John Berger's claim that animals have disappeared from modern life; Cartesian notion that animals are machines and therefore lack language and reason; Bentham's assertion that animal suffering is un

-Ethics and politics of carnivorousism: Elizabeth Costello's claim that humans and animals are essentially the same; the limits of sympathy for nonhumans.

-Allegorical animals: consideration of Steve Baker's assertion that literary animals are not transparent allegories about humans; anthropomorphism and anthropomorphobia.

-Intersection of animality with race, gender, and sexuality: how and why social and cultural minorities become associated with animals; investigation into how the opposition between human and animal conditions the bestialization of minorities.

-Emergence of the "posthumanities"; what does it mean to be posthuman? Can humans fully leave their humanity behind? What are the implications of the posthuman for the discourse of human rights?

Assessment

The following table summarises the standard assessment tasks for this subject. Please note this is a guide only. Assessment tasks are

regularly updated, where there is a difference your Learning Guide takes precedence.

Type	Length	Percent	Threshold	Individual/ Group Task	Mandatory
Essay	1,000 words	25	N	Individual	N
Essay	1,500 words (4-5 pages)	35	N	Individual	N
End-of-session Exam	1,500 words (5-6 pages)	40	N	Individual	N

Teaching Periods

Spring (2025)

Bankstown City

On-site

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View timetable (https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=LANG3061_25-SPR_BK_1#subjects)

Parramatta - Victoria Rd

On-site

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