

ITW 4580: Animals and Animality in Italian Culture Syllabus



Instructor	Deborah Amberson
Section Number	0921
Meetings	T period 7 (1:55-2:45); R period 7-8 (1:55-2:45; 3:00-3:50)
Room	T FLI 0121; R MAT 0004
Office	Dauer 355
Office Hours	T 3-3:45; R 11:20-12:35
Email	damberson@ufl.edu
Phone	(352) 273 3763

Course Description: This course will explore a varied sampling of Italian portraits and considerations of the nonhuman animal. Our itinerary will be, for the most part, chronological, as we examine literary animals such as dogs, cats, spiders, goats, birds, donkeys, flies, and horses, created by authors, poets, directors, and thinkers including Svevo, Verga, Marinetti, Tozzi, Craiese, Morante, and Ortese. These animals are not only characters within poems, short stories, novels, or films, but also serve as a trigger for philosophical and ethical considerations of the relationship between human and nonhuman animal. This consideration encompasses a broad range of topics including but not limited to: the differences that (purportedly) separate the human from the animal, the speciesist legacy of humanism and anthropocentrism, human agricultural and industrial instrumentalization of animals, duties of care, companionship, human-animal communication, shared vulnerabilities and mortality, animal joy and animal thought. Over the course of the semester, we will consider these and other issues as they emerge from our reading. Students will be expected to contribute actively to in-class discussions. This course will, to a lesser extent, address students' language skills through in-class discussion, guided reading, oral presentations, creative assignments, and short papers.

COURSE MATERIALS: MATERIALS WILL BE AVAILABLE VIA E-LEARNING SITE

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance & Class Participation (10%):

Attendance & makeup policy: Attendance is mandatory and will be assessed by roll call. Students will lose 1% from their final grade for each unexcused absence. Absences will be excused in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable excuses include illness, religious holidays, & military obligation: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to the material covered. Except in the case of certified illness or other UF accepted excuse, there will be no make-up option for missed exams/assignments. Where possible, make-ups should be arranged prior to absence. Alternatively, students should contact me on return to classes.

Class Participation: When you come to class, you should be ready to speak, argue, ask questions, and engage with the opinions of your classmates. It is absolutely not expected that you deliver your

opinions and questions regarding the texts in an elaborate and always grammatically accurate Italian. Moreover, class participation is not about having all the right answers. Instead, participation is a question of preparing your homework reading and being alert and active in class. It is about expressing your uncertainties and doubts about our texts and films as much as it is about sharing your opinion on this or that author's representation of animals. It is also a question of listening to your classmates' opinions and questions, and responding when and where you can. Your participation grade will therefore reflect your overall attitude and willingness to engage with the work. It will also reflect the degree to which you have prepared your reading homework and the quality of your interventions in class.

2. Question Sheets (10%): You will be expected to complete and submit (via email) an answer sheet for each reading or viewing, beginning with Verga. The questions will not be complex, but will cover issues such as human and/or non-human characters, status of non-human animal, environment or landscape described, tone of authorial voice, ethical potential of text, etc. While some of the questions do have a "correct" answer, you should consider this exercise as more of an aid to your reading rather than a quiz. Moreover, in "grading" them, I will be more interested in the effort you expend rather than whether all your answers are "correct." You will lose 1% for every time you fail to submit your completed answer sheet. There will be 10 answer sheets in total. The answers should be written in English. I would repeat that this is not an exercise focused exclusively on right or wrong answers; my goal is that these answer sheets reflect the fact that you did your best with the assigned reading.

3. Critical Reading Presentation (5%): Together with a classmate you will deliver a presentation on the critical reading associated with one of the authors on our syllabus. You will read the article and present a summary to the class with a Power Point Presentation or similar visual aid. These secondary readings do not cover all aspects of the authors' representation of animals so your presentation should also reference any remaining questions you have about your author, his or her historical period, his or her representation of animals, and the text itself. You should also be prepared to answer, with my help, any questions the class may have about the secondary reading. Presentations will be scheduled during the second or third week of class.

4. Critical Commentary/ *Explication de texte* x 2 (10% + 15% = 25%): You will be expected to write 2 critical commentaries on 2 of the texts studied. In each case, you will choose a text or a section from a text and analyze the details (lexical, structural, thematic, etc.) of this excerpt, addressing the content of the piece and, as appropriate, how this piece serves to illuminate something important about the entire work, the author's understanding of animals and animality, the social period, etc. We will discuss techniques in class. The first *explication* should be written in English and should be at least 2 pages in length (Microsoft word; double-spaced, 12 pt. font; 1 inch margins); it is worth 10% of your final grade. The second *explication* should be in Italian and should be 3 pages in length (same formatting); it will be worth 15% of your final grade.
Critical commentaries are due on February 8 and March 27.

5. Racconto (15%): For this creative assignment, you will be asked to write a short story in Italian that, drawing inspiration from the texts on the syllabus, explores the figure of an animal. These stories should be approximately 3 pages in length. **The *racconto* is due on March 1**

6. Final Discussion (5%): We will close the semester with a broad and relatively informal discussion (in Italian) of the animal question. I will also be soliciting your feedback concerning the content of the course in terms of structure, assignments, and texts. All students will be expected to contribute to this discussion --- ideally each student will contribute at least 4 times to the discussion. Your grade for this assignment will reflect the quality of your content, the accuracy of your Italian, and the frequency with which you intervene. **Discussion will take place on April 19.**

7. Paper Proposal (5%): For the final paper you will work with a topic of your choosing. This proposal will be a paragraph length indication of your planned topic or area. It should contain a working title, a thesis statement, and a brief indication of your planned direction. We will discuss possible topics in class closer to the date. **The proposal is due on April 10.**

8. Final Paper (25%): You will write a research paper in Italian of approximately 7 pages in length (Microsoft word; double-spaced, 12 pt. font; 1 inch margins). This paper should reflect your original thinking and research on an aspect of the animal question as elaborated in the work of one or more of the authors studied over the course of the semester. *Papers must be submitted on the due date unless you have received permission to extend the deadline or unless you have a signed medical excuse explaining your delay. Late papers are penalized and receive no comments. Papers will be graded with regard not only to content and organization, but also to grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Secondary sources, whether textual or web based, must be adequately acknowledged. UNATTRIBUTED USE OF SOURCES WILL EARN YOU AN E FOR THE COURSE. The final paper is due via email (dambers@ufl.edu) by 5pm on April 29.*

Final Grade at a Glance:

- Attendance, Class Participation & Homework Preparation, 10%
- Question Sheets, 10%
- Critical Reading Presentation, 5%
- Critical Commentary x 2, 10% + 15% = 25%
- Racconto, 15%
- Final Discussion, 5%
- Paper Proposal, 5%
- Final Paper, 25%

Grading Scale (& GPA equivalent):

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
100-93	92-90	89-87	86-83	82-80	79-77	76-73	72-70	69-67	63-66	62-60	59-
(4.0)	(3.67)	(3.33)	(3.0)	(2.67)	(2.33)	(2.0)	(1.67)	(1.33)	(1.0)	(0.67)	(0)

Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>;
<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

Academic Honesty: Students are required to be honest in their coursework, may not use notes during quizzes or exams, and must properly cite all sources that they have consulted for their projects. Any act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students, and may result in failure of assignment and/or course. For University of Florida's honor code, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>.

Accommodations for Students with 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 provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resources Center (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) for information about available resources.

Counseling & Mental Health Resources: Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352-392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).

Online Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide feedback on quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. Evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

COURSE CALENDAR: ITW 4580 ANIMALS & ANIMALITY

(Schedule subject to change over the course of the semester)

TOPICS AND READING	T period 7	R periods 7-8
INTRODUCTION: (R) Aforismi: la questione animale	1/9 Intro	1/11
PHILOSOPHIES OF ANIMALITY (T) Berger, "Why Look at Animals?"	1/16	1/18
ANIMAL HUMILITY AND SUFFERING (R) Saba, "La capra" e "L'uomo e gli animali"	1/23	1/25 Saba
INSTRUMENTALIZING ANIMALS (T) Verga, "Storia dell'asino di san Giuseppe" (R) Biasin, "Lo zoo di Verga," 19-29.	1/30	2/1
ANIMALS, HUMANS, AND TECHNOLOGY (T) Marinetti, "All'automobile da corsa" (R) Cesaretti, "Eco-Futurism? Some Thoughts on Nature, Matter, and Body in Marinetti," 232-246	2/6	2/8 Critical Commentary 1
UNCANNY ANIMALS (T) Tozzi, <i>Bestie</i> (excerpts) (R) Moe, "Observations on <i>Bestie</i> ," 113-124	2/13	2/15
ANIMAL PERSPECTIVES: A DOG'S DIARY (T) Svevo, "Argo e il suo padrone" (R) Caracciolo, "Three smells exist in this world," 484-505	2/20	2/22
HORRORS OF ANIMALITY (T) Landolfi, "Mani," 205-213 (R) Castaldi, "Word Made Animal Flesh," 75-91	2/27	3/1 Racconto
SPRING BREAK		
MEDITERRANEAN ANIMALS (T) Crialesse, <i>Nuovomondo/Golden Door</i> (2007) (R) Past, "Island Hopping, Liquid Materiality, & the Mediterranean Cinema of Crialesse," 49-66.	3/13	3/15
ANIMAL TEMPORALITY (T) C. Levi, "La mosca bambina" (R) Faleschini Lerner, "Contemporaneità and Ecological Thinking in Carlo Levi's Writing," 197-215	3/20	3/22
ANIMALS AND URBAN SPACE (T) Calvino, "Il giardino dei gatti ostinati," <i>Marcovaldo</i> (R) Sanna, Adele, "The Hybrid 'Biocitizen' in Calvino's Marcovaldo or the Seasons in the City," 31-42.	3/27 Critical Commentary 2	3/29
ANIMAL KINSHIP & SPEECH (T) Ortese, "Madri di famiglia"; (T) Morante; <i>La Storia</i> , 494-96; 507-11; (R) Vani, "Talking Animals "Talking" with Animals in Morante's <i>La Storia</i> ," 42-58	4/3	4/5
METEMPSYCHOSIS (T viewing) Frammartino, <i>Le quattro volte</i> ; McMahon, "Animal Agency in <i>Le quattro volte</i> ," 108-114	4/10 Proposal	4/12
DISCUSSION	4/17	4/19 Final Discussion
NO READING	4/24 final paper discussion	

REMINDER: FINAL PAPER TO BE EMAILED TO DAMBERS@UFL.EDU by 5pm on April 29.