This course will take an interdisciplinary approach to the cultural history of animals, a new and rapidly growing field of scholarly inquiry. We will examine ways in which animals have been perceived in the West from antiquity to the present day through a study of history, philosophy, literature, and the arts. We will discuss questions such as how and why our view of animals has changed over the centuries, what distinguishes humans from other animals, what ethical obligations we have toward animals, and how different representations of animals relate to the historical, philosophical, and cultural backgrounds of different time periods. The course will include a trip to the Fort Worth Zoo for a tour and a talk on the significance of zoos.

Aug.  28 Introduction: Animals before Antiquity
      30 Animals in Antiquity: Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Pliny the Elder (excerpts); Ovid (excerpt: Pythagoras); Plutarch, “Beasts Are Rational”

Sept.  4 The First Fables: The Jatakas (nos. 316, 385, 407, 476) and Aesop’s Fables (selections)
      6 Christianity and the Bestiary: The Bible, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure (excerpts); Physiologus (nos. 1, 4-6, 8-9, 12-13, 15-16, 18, 20, 27, 30-31, 36-37, 39, 42-43, 45-46); Leonardo Da Vinci, “Bestiary”
      13 Animals and Reason: The Renaissance and the Enlightenment: Michel de Montaigne, “Man Is No Better Than the Beasts” and René Descartes (excerpts)
      18 Reason and Bestiality: Jonathan Swift, Gulliver’s Travels (Part IV)
      27 The Sublime Beast: Herman Melville, Moby-Dick (“Moby Dick,” “The Whiteness of the Whale”)

Oct.  2 The Realist Horse: Fyodor Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment (excerpt); Anton Chekhov, “Heartache,” Leo Tolstoy, “Kholstomer,” Vladimir Mayakovsky and Nikolai Zabolotsky, horse poems
      4, 9 Darwinism: Charles Darwin (excerpts); H.G. Wells, The Island of Dr. Moreau
Take-Home Midterm Due
16 A Modernist Menagerie: Rainer Maria Rilke, selected poems
Paper Proposal Due
18 Modernist Metamorphosis and More: Franz Kafka, The Metamorphosis
23 Kafka, “A Report to the Academy,” “Investigations of a Dog,” “Josephine the Mouse Singer, or the Mouse Folk,” “The Burrow”
25 Woman’s Best Friend: Virginia Woolf, Flush; Elizabeth Browning, poems to Flush
30 Racism and Speciesism: Art Spiegelman, Maus

Nov. 1, 6, 8 Animal Ethics: Peter Hoeg, The Woman and the Ape; Lori Gruen: Ethics and Animals: An Introduction
15 No class
20 The Postmodern Animal: Julio Cortázar, “Axolotl”; Italo Calvino, Mr. Palomar (pp. 19-28, 51-66, 76-78); Eric Chevillard, Palafox (ch. 4)
Paper Due
22 No class

Dec. 4, 6 Don LePan, Animals
13, 10:30-12:30 Final Exam

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance and Punctuality (20%): You are permitted three unexcused absences. Other absences will be excused on the basis of a note from a doctor, dean, or coach. If it is not possible for you to get a note but you feel your absence is justified, you must inform me of your situation and I will decide whether or not to excuse you. Communication is absolutely essential! If you are absent and do not tell me why, your absence will be counted as unexcused. Repeated lateness may add up to an absence. If you are absent for any reason, please see me, as you may have to do an extra assignment to make up for your absence.

2. Participation (10%): You will get the most out of class and improve the verbal formulation of your thoughts if you participate in the discussions. Please bring the readings to class. I encourage you to speak with all of your classmates and respond to one another’s ideas during discussion, rather than addressing your thoughts only to me.

3. Daily Assignments (20%): For each class meeting, I will post one question on the readings on Blackboard under Assignments. You should briefly respond to that question and pose one discussion question of your own by 11 a.m. on the day of the class.
question should not be a yes/no or a factual question, but rather one that you believe will stimulate class discussion. If you would like, you may post additional questions, including factual questions. Only I will see your responses and questions, though I may use them in class anonymously. I will publish the most interesting assignment responses of the day on Blackboard, particularly if we did not get around to discussing them in class. Please read all published responses! This will not only stimulate your thinking about the material, but also help you to improve your own responses and study questions. **PLEASE NOTE** that I will respond to all assignments and send you your HW grade (√-, √, √+) as soon as possible, usually within one day. You must read my responses to your assignments—they are for you! No late responses will be accepted after the beginning of the relevant class. *If you will not have regular Internet access, please see me at the start of semester.*

4. **Wikispace Postings (10%):** We will have a course wikispace, where we will be posting images and other media related to our readings. Wikispace assignments will be given in class in the course of the semester. You must post something that has not already been posted on the wikispace; this means that you will have to look at everyone else’s posts before adding your own. You will receive a √+ if you provide all of the requested information (i.e., in the case of artworks, title, artist, and date) and do the assignment on time. If some of the information is lacking and/or the assignment is late, you will receive a √ or √-. You will get no credit for posting a duplicate. I can tell who posted first! Choose the most interesting media you can find, because at the end of the semester we will vote for the best posts. You may post as much as you want on the wikispace, and you will get extra credit for everything you post in addition to the assignment, including written descriptions of your posts, comments on why you chose what you posted, and all additional images or other media.

Once you have joined the wikispace, you can sign into it at [www.wikispaces.com](http://www.wikispaces.com). You may want to bookmark this address for convenience. I will also post a link on Blackboard.

**Final Wikispace Contest Rules:** Review all of the posts and vote for at least five and at most ten favorites. Send me your vote by email, including the students’ names and the titles or descriptions of their posts. You may cast a “double vote” for any posts you especially like. The winners will receive extra credit, which may raise their final grade. However, you cannot win if you do not vote!

5. **Take-Home Midterm (3-4 pp., 15%).** The take-home midterm will be an essay question on the material of the first half of the semester. It is due on **Oct. 11**.

6. **Paper (4-5 pp., 10%):** You will write a paper of at least 4-5 pp. on a topic of your choice related to the course. The topic may be in any discipline. You should submit a brief topic proposal by **Oct. 16** for my approval, and the paper is due on **Nov. 20**.

7. **Final Exam (15%):** The final will be an essay exam focusing mainly, but not exclusively, on the second half of the semester.
Course Policies:

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: If you plagiarize on any assignments or tests, or engage in any other form of academic dishonesty as defined by the MSU Student Handbook and the Columbia University Academic Dishonesty Policy, you will get an F in the course and disciplinary proceedings will be initiated, as described in the MSU Student Handbook.

Cell Phones: No cell phones should be visible in class at any time! If you try to hide your phone under your desk or behind your bag, don’t think I won’t see it. If I see you use your cell phone during class, you will be marked late or absent without any warning. You may not leave class to use your cell phone except under exceptional circumstances, of which you have informed me beforehand. The same policy applies to iPods and other electronic devices.

Food and Beverages: You may bring only bottled water to class, in accordance with the building rules.

Computers: You may bring your computer to class to take notes or consult the readings only with my explicit permission. If you do take notes or consult the readings on your computer, you must show them to me. If you use your computer for any other purpose during class, you will be marked late or absent without warning.

Full Attention: Please be alert and do not lay your head down on your desk during class, or I will mark you late or absent without warning.

Class Dismissal: Please do not start to pack up your things or leave until I have dismissed the class. If you believe I have gone over the allotted time, please raise your hand and let me know.

Email Communication: The only way I can communicate with you outside of class is through email. You are responsible for checking your “preferred” email daily for any reminders, clarifications, or other communications from me.

Safe Zone Statement: This classroom is a “safe zone” in which all students will be treated and will treat one another equally, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Diversity of thought is encouraged.

REPEATED AND/OR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF ANY OF THESE POLICIES WILL RESULT IN A LOWERED GRADE WITHOUT WARNING, ESPECIALLY IF YOUR GRADE IS BORDERLINE.
Additional Information:

PowerPoint Presentations: I will provide a link on Blackboard to all PowerPoint presentations shown in class so that you may review them. Additional recommended materials will occasionally be posted on Blackboard.

Office Hours: My office hours are given above, and I am always happy to help you with any questions you may have, whether they are about the texts we are reading, assignments, absences, or anything else—or you may just come by to talk. If you can’t make my office hours, we can make an appointment or even have a live chat on Blackboard!

Academic Accommodations: If you require special accommodations, please contact Disability Support Service, 168 Clark Student Center, 397-4140, at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Arrangements cannot be applied retroactively.

Required Books:

Asterisks mean that you must use that edition. These books are available at the bookstore.

Kafka, Franz. *Collected Stories*. Everyman’s Library, 1993. (You may use any translation of the stories on the syllabus, but this book contains them all.)
Spiegelman, Art. *Complete Maus: A Survivor’s Tale*. Pantheon Books, 1991. (You may purchase or borrow volumes 1 and 2 separately if you prefer.)