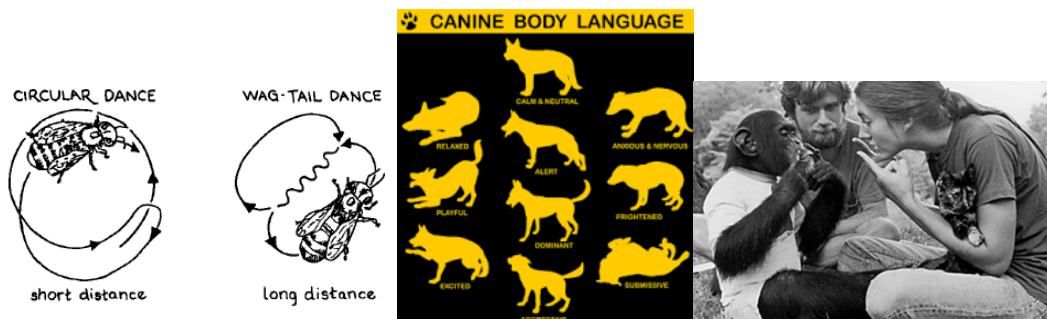


ENGL 4346: Topics in Theories of Language and Discourse: Animals



[August 23rd, this syllabus may be revised]

Dr. Stacy Alaimo
Professor of English

Fall 2017
TuTh 9:30-11
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Course Description: Are humans the only species with language? Can animals talk? If so, can we understand what they are saying? Scientists, philosophers, and other people have been debating these questions for centuries. The answers have broad implications for how we categorize, understand, and treat nonhuman animals and for how we think of ourselves as humans. This course, situated at the cross roads of Animal Studies, Science studies, and Rhetoric, ranges widely in its topics, disciplines, and concerns, as it discusses “the animal” in language, nonhuman rhetoric, and cross species communications. We will read rhetoric, theory, poetry, (popular) science, transdisciplinary work and two very different sorts of novels. We will also watch films, videos, and other media. The topics include indigenous ecological knowledges, human exceptionalism and human hierarchies in Western philosophy and science, the dream and practice of cross-species communication, and futuristic projects and visions.

Course Goals:

- 1) To introduce fundamental concepts, frameworks, and questions in animal studies, especially as they pertain to the question of language.
- 2) To introduce different conceptions of language, rhetoric, and the animal across culture, philosophy, literature, science, and popular culture.

- 3) To engage students in analyzing, interpreting, comparing, and evaluating various arguments, theories, positions, and texts in terms of their meaning, significance, and implications.
- 4) To create a space for philosophical reflection on difficult questions and issues that emerge from the texts.
- 5) To improve students' skills, more generally, in reading, writing, critical thinking, research, use of internet and library resources, and public speaking.

Student Learning Outcomes

- 1) Students should demonstrate an understanding of the texts, concepts, and questions in the course.
- 2) Students should be able to formulate original, illuminating comparisons, analyses, and interpretation of the texts, in class discussions, papers, and exams.
- 3) Students should be able to express their ideas in clear, logical, organized, concise, and persuasive ways, in both written and oral forms.
- 4) Students should be able to conduct research and incorporate that research into a coherent seminar paper that develops and supports an original thesis.
- 5) Students should make valuable and consistent contributions to class discussions and give clear, substantial presentations.

Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials:

- Stephen R. Anderson, *Languages: A Very Short Introduction*
- Vicki Hearne, *Adam's Task: Calling Animals by Name*
- Tristram D. Wyatt, *Animal Behavior: A Very Short Introduction*
- Barbara Gowdy, *The White Bone*
- Nnedi Okorafor, *Binti*
- PDFs available at Blackboard
- Access to a computer and internet, access to a stapler

Requirements/Grading

You must complete all the required work in order to pass the course.

Grades will be calculated based on letter grades from F to A+ on a 0-12 scale.

Students should keep track of their own grades; they won't be posted in Blackboard.

Daily Participation: 10% (based on quality and quantity)

Two Short Papers and Presentations: 20% (10% each)

First Exam: 15%

Research Paper: 20%

Small Group Presentation: 5%

Final Exam: 30%

Descriptions of major assignments and examinations:

Exams

The exams will contain some short-answer and identification questions, but most of the points will be from essay questions. Bring greenbooks and pens for the exam.

Papers

Each student will sign up for two short papers, that analyze the readings for that day, which will be presented at the start of class. For the research paper, students will be able to determine their own topics, within the broad topics--such as film or science fiction or animal training--that the class determines. Each student will present something from their research paper as part of a coherent small group at the end of the semester (All papers are due at the very beginning of the class and will be marked down one grade for every day that they are late.)

Mechanics: All papers must be “typed,” stapled, and have a significant title. Please do NOT use plastic folders for your paper—a staple is sufficient. Standard form: double-spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins. Papers must be submitted to Safe Assign on Blackboard and handed in as paper copies.

- Please Note: plagiarism is a serious offense and will be punished to the full extent, according to university procedures. You must always give people credit for their intellectual property by citing them properly—this includes ideas and language.
- Resources on plagiarism : <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism/>; <http://usingources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k70847&pageid=icb.page342054>.
- Please take this tutorial before writing any papers for this class: <http://library.uta.edu/plagiarism/>

****Participation/Attendance/Punctuality****

This is a real-time, face to face, discussion class. Your active, informed participation is crucial to the success of the course. Carefully prepare for each class period by doing the reading in a rigorous and inquisitive manner. Every day that you come to class you should have something valuable to say. I will grade on actual participation, rather than on mere attendance. However, if you miss class five times, your course grade will be lowered and if you miss six classes you will fail the course. Everyone gets four absences; use them wisely. You do not need to tell me why you were absent—that is your own private business--just don't miss more than four classes. There are NO excused absences. If you come in after I have marked the rolls, that will count as an absence—so come to class on time. If you can't come to class or you can't get here on time you will need to drop. Everyone is required to attend class during the final student presentations.

Contacting the Instructor: The best way to contact me is through email: alaimo@uta.edu. Please do not contact me through Facebook regarding anything having to do with this class. I do not accept emailed or faxed papers.

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11-12:30 and by appointment. Office: 411 Carlisle

OFFICIAL UTA POLICIES THAT UTA REQUIRES BE INCLUDED IN THIS SYLLABUS.

“Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student’s responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/ao/fao/>).

Disability Accommodations: UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a **letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: **The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Non-Discrimination Policy: *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos.*

Title IX Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or jmhood@uta.edu.*

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/> **[NOTE FROM DR. ALAIMO: IF I SEE A GUN IN CLASS OR IN MY OFFICE I WILL CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY]**

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” are directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students’ anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: for semester-long courses, a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, [which is located \[insert a description of the nearest exit/emergency exit\]](#). When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

[As you see, this section requires faculty members to be fully aware of the exits nearest their classrooms, even before the semester begins. Evacuation plans may be found at http://www.uta.edu/campus-ops/ehs/fire/Evac_Maps_Buildings.php. In the case that you are unable to ascertain this information in time for your syllabus, you must be sure to explain to your students on day one how best to exit the building. Inclusion of this verbiage as well as a brief discussion on the matter with your students at the beginning of the term is mandated by UT Arlington Procedure 7-6: Emergency/Fire Evacuation Procedures (http://www.uta.edu/police/Evacuation_Procedures.pdf)

[Should you learn that your class roster includes students with physical/sensory disabilities, you should arrange to meet *in private* with each of these students to discuss their needs for assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation.]

Students should also be encouraged to subscribe to the MavAlert system that will send information in case of an emergency to their cell phones or email accounts. Anyone can subscribe at <https://mavalert.uta.edu/> or <https://mavalert.uta.edu/register.php>

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include [tutoring](#), [major-based learning centers](#), developmental education, [advising and mentoring](#), personal counseling, and [federally funded programs](#). For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.

University Tutorial & Supplemental Instruction (Ransom Hall 205): UTSI offers a variety of academic support services for undergraduate students, including: 60 minute one-on-one [tutoring sessions](#), [Start Strong](#) Freshman tutoring program, and [Supplemental Instruction](#). Office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm. For more information visit www.uta.edu/utsi or call 817-272-2617.

The IDEAS Center (2nd Floor of Central Library) offers **FREE** tutoring to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. Students can drop in, or check the schedule of available peer tutors at www.uta.edu/IDEAS, or call (817) 272-6593.

Emergency Phone Numbers In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911.

Dr. Alaimo's classroom policy:

Class time is valuable and important! Please actually be here when you are here. If you are here but not here you are not here.

1. **TURN OFF** all pagers, cell phones, laptops and other electronic devices while in class! You may not text message or read email or engage in any other electronic activities during class. You may not use laptops in class; the only exception is the use of laptops for accessing the PDFs, the OED or other materials in the course. [Anyone who is looking at anything other than our class materials on line will be counted absent that day and will be asked to leave the class.]

The challenge: To unzombify ourselves!



2. Arrive to class **ON TIME**. It is distracting to both the professor and the students to have someone come in late. If you come in late, you will be marked absent.
3. Always arrive **PREPARED** to work. Every day we will have work to do in class. Some days we will work in small groups. If you are not prepared then you will not be able to contribute to the class or to your small group. You may be asked to leave class if you are not prepared. Also, remember that for English classes you **MUST BRING** whatever **TEXTS** we are discussing that day to class.
4. Treat your classmates with **RESPECT**. Learn to disagree without being disagreeable. We will discuss controversial, volatile topics, so everyone needs to learn how to disagree with someone's views, beliefs, or perspectives while maintaining a sense of civility—or even compassion! Civil discourse is important for an educated, humane, democratic society.

Respect your fellow students! Respect your brain! Seize your education! Focus! Be here!



As the instructor, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule. Dr. Alaimo

Always come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Bring your own interpretations, comparisons, analyses, and questions. Always bring the books or other readings we are discussing, which should be all marked up by your active, inquisitive, analytical reading practices.

- Books that you need to purchase are marked with a *
- PDF = PDFs available on Blackboard. Please print them out or download them. You need to be able to mark them up. Do not rely on Blackboard or the internet.

Introductions: Animal Language

Week One. August 24

Tuesday: Watch in class: "Animals Like Us: Animal Language" 51 min (Keebe Kennedy, 2006) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHFon1HMT1o>

What is Language and Who Gets to Have It?

Week Two. August 29 & 31

Tuesday:

"Language" + "Rhetoric," full entries in the Oxford English Dictionary (available from UTA library electronic resources)

* Stephen R. Anderson, *Languages: A Very Short Introduction*

Thursday:

Anderson, "The Place of Human Language in the Animal World" [PDF]

Louden, "Language: Who Has it?" [PDF]

Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Species Extinction, Language Extinction

Week Three. Sept. 5 & 7

Tuesday:

Charles Eastman, "Wild Animals from the Indian Stand-point" [PDF]

Gary Paul Nabhan, "Interspecific Relationships Affecting Endangered Species" [PDF]
 Enrique Salmon, "Kincentric Ecology" [PDF]

Thursday:

"As Forests Are Cleared and Species Vanish. . ."

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jun/08/why-we-are-losing-a-world-of-languages>

Harmon and Loh, "Preserving Biocultural Diversity" [PDF]

Robin Wall Kimmerer, "Weaving Traditional Ecological Knowledge into Biological Education" [PDF]

Conceptions of Animals, Animality, and the Human in Western Culture

Week Four. Sept. 12 & 14

Tuesday:

"Animal" full entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (available from UTA library online)

Linda Hogan, "Naming the Animals" [PDF]

Jacques Derrida, "The Animal that Therefore I am (More to Follow)" [PDF]

Thursday:

Stacy Alaimo, "Animal" [PDF]

Sunaura Taylor, "Walking Like a Monkey," "Animal Insults," and "Claiming Animal,"
 from *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation* [PDF]

Lisa Uddin, "Reconsidering Claudia Rankine's Citizen" [PDF] + Kate Clark's work:

<https://www.kateclark.com>

Bruce Bagemihl, *Biological Exhuberance* (excerpt) [PDF]

It's a Hoot! Creaturely Rhetoric

Week Five. Sept 19 & 21

Tuesday:

George A Kennedy, "A Hoot in the Dark: The Evolution of General Rhetoric" [PDF]

Doxtader, "Addressing Animals" [PDF]

Thursday:

Debra Hawhee, "Toward A Bestial Rhetoric" [PDF]

Diane Davis, "Creaturely Rhetoric" [PDF]

Week Six. Sept 26 & 28

Tuesday: Time off to study for first exam

Thursday: **First Exam**

Communicating with Companion Species

Week Seven. Oct. 3 & 5

Tuesday:

* Vicki Hearne, *Adam's Task: Calling Animals by Name*, chapters 1, 2, 4

Thursday:

Vicki Hearne, *Adam's Task*, chapters 7 & 11

Donna J. Haraway, "Training in the Contact Zone: Power, Play and the Sport of Agility." [PDF]

Animal Communication in Western Science

Week Eight. Oct 10 & 12

Tuesday:

* Tristram Wyatt, *Animal Behaviour: A Very Short Introduction*

Thursday:

Franz de Waal, "Magic Wells" and "Talk to Me" from *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are* [PDF]

Virginia Morell: *Animal Wise: How We Know Animals Think and Feel*, "Introduction," and "Parrots in Translation"[PDF]

Week Nine. Oct. 17 & 19

Tuesday:

Thomas A. Sebeok, "Talking with Animals: Zoosemiotics Explained" [PDF]

Barbara Smuts, "Encounters with Animal Minds" [PDF]

Margret Grebowicz, excerpt from *Whale Songs* [PDF]

Thursday:

Project Nim (James Marsh, 2011)

Week Ten. Oct. 24 & 26

Tuesday:

Discuss *Project Nim* in class.

Also, watch/listen before coming to class; discuss in class:

A Conversation with Koko the Gorilla, 56 min., PBS Nature 1999

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8oh1uhrdc6w>

Koko the Gorilla with Robin Williams, 4 min.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GorgFtCqPEs>

<http://gorilla.org>

“Interspecies Communication”: <http://gorilla.org/interspecies-communication>

<http://www.projetogap.org.br/en/>

“Speaking Bonobo” [PDF]

“What Do Dolphins Talk About” 25 min. Radiolab:

<http://www.radiolab.org/story/hello/>

Literary Imaginings of Animal Perspectives

Thursday:

Poems from Les Murray, *Translations*, and more TBA [PDF]

Week Eleven. Oct. 31 & Nov. 2

Tuesday:

* Barbara Gowdy, *The White Bone*, chapters 1-6

Thursday: Time off to work on your research papers

Week Twelve. Nov. 7 & 9

Tuesday:

Barbara Gowdy, *The White Bone*, ch. 7-12

Thursday:

Barbara Gowdy, *The White Bone*, ch. 13-end

Futuristic Communication Across Species

Week Thirteen. Nov. 14 & 16

Tuesday: Afrofuturism

* Nnedi Okorafor, *Binti*

Thursday: Digital Worlds

Bear 71: <http://foryourconsideration.ca/bear71/> + <http://bear71.nfb.ca/#/bear71> (20 minute digital interactive documentary)

Denise Herzing: Dolphin Communication: Cracking the Code,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mfb6zoB_yII

“If Squids Could Talk,” <http://thedishonscience.stanford.edu/posts/if-squids-could-talk/>

Diane Ackerman, “Apps for Apes.” “The Interspecies Internet,” [PDF]

Apps for Apes: <https://redapes.org/multimedia/apps-for-apes/>

Great Ape Project: <http://www.projetogap.org.br/en/>

The Interspecies Internet on TED:

- https://www.ted.com/talks/the_interspecies_internet_an_idea_in_progress
- <http://blog.ted.com/the-interspecies-internet-diana-reiss-peter-gabriel-neil-gershenfeld-and-vint-cerf-at-ted2013/>

Dog Decoder App: <http://www.dogdecoder.com>

Google Translate for Animals

<https://www.google.co.uk/intl/en/landing/translateforanimals/tour.html>

Watch short video: <https://www.treehugger.com/natural-sciences/google-launches-translate-for-animals-android-app-endangered-animals-can-now-talk-to-us.html>

Research Papers and Presentations

Week Fourteen. Nov. 21 & 23

Tuesday: **Research paper due at the start of class.**

Plan group presentations in class.

Thursday: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week Fifteen. Nov. 28 & 30

Tuesday: Presentations

Thursday: Presentations

Week Sixteen. Dec. 6

Tuesday: Presentations

[Please do electronic course evaluations on your own]

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 14, 8-10:30. Bring "green books" and pens.



Translate Turn off instant translation

Dolphin Spanish French Detect language English Spanish Arabic Translate

EeeeEEeEee *click click* x
 EeeEeee eh eh *squeak*

Dude, your blowhole looks messed up