"One might go so far as to define man as a creature that has failed in its effort to keep its animalness..." So writes the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk. What sort of animal were we? Where, how and by whom has the line between the human and the animal been drawn? With what consequences for our "human" understanding of the world? Of concepts like the "soul," "society,"
politics, the family? Is the line between the human and the animal drawn differently in different genres—in literary works, theological treatises, natural histories, paintings, films? We will come at these questions from different angles, following them in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, pre-Socratic and other classical works (Ovid, Pliny, Euripides), in early modern responses to these questions (in works by Marie de France, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Descartes, Caravaggio, Rembrandt, Michelangelo, Titian), in essays by contemporary philosophers and advocates (Singer, Derrida), and in films that treat the blurring of borders between humans and animals (Walker, Wylie).

**Course requirements:** Attendance at lecture and recitations. Militant participation in discussion. Two essays (4-5pp double spaced), the first essay to be rewritten and resubmitted if the preceptor indicates. In-class midterm OR Visual Assignment (4-5 pp. double spaced), and final exam.

**Grading:**
- Attendance, discussion, and short weekly recitation assignments: 20%
- Two essays: 40%
- Mid-Term OR Visual Assignment: 20%
- Final: 20%

**Unpleasant observation regarding computer use in lecture and in section:** You may use your laptop to take notes during lecture. Computers may not be used in section. It is highly disrespectful—insulting, in fact—to your teacher to check email, IM, go on FaceBook, etc. during lecture. Worse—other students find it distracting. Lecture halls, however, are not police-states in small. We will not parade the aisles constantly, checking that you are making appropriate use of your laptops. If, however, we receive complaints or notice that students are abusing, I will prohibit the use of laptops in lecture altogether.

**Course books** are available at the University Book Store. Screening times for the films will be announced.

**Blackboard:** A good number of the class readings are posted on the class Blackboard site, and all of the images we use in class will be there as well. (On the Schedule below, posted items are marked 'Bb'.) I encourage you to visit the site often.

**Email:** The TAs and I will rely on the Blackboard email function to relay information about the course. These emails go to your NYU.edu email account. If you do not use that account, you should right away give your TA your preferred email address.

**Schedule of readings and assignments**

**September**

8 W Introduction: Animal humans
- Genesis 1
- Genesis 22 (Bb)
- Caravaggio, "Sacrifice of Isaac" (Bb)
- Yeats, "Leda and the Swan" (Bb)

13 M Plato, *Phaedrus* 15

W Plato, *Phaedrus*

20 M Euripides, *The Bacchae* 22 W
- Euripides, *The Bacchae** Essay
- 1 due in lecture**
27 M Ovid, *Metamorphoses*  
Aristotle, *On the Motion of Animals* (Bb)

29 W Ovid, *Metamorphoses*  
Titian, "The Rape of Europa" (Bb)  
Velazquez, "Las Hilanderas (The Fable of Arachne)" (Bb)

4 M Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*  
Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* (Bb)

6 W Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*  
Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* (Bb)

11 M **No class—visit Metropolitan Museum or another museum on your own in preparation for Visual Assignment**  
13 W The Gospel of Luke

18 M The Gospel of Luke  
20 W Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1, q. 75 (Bb)

25 M **In-Class Midterm Examination OR **Hand in Visual Assignment**  
27 W Marie de France, *Bisclavret*  
Agamben, "The Ban and the Wolf" (Bb)

1 M Marie de France, *Bisclavret*  
Agamben, "The Ban and the Wolf" (Bb)


10 W Montaigne, "Of Cannibals" (Bb)

15 M Montaigne, "Apology in Defense of Raymond Sebond" (Bb)  
17 W Montaigne, "Apology in Defense of Raymond Sebond" (Bb)

19 F **Essay 2 due by the end of the day on Friday, Nov. 20**

22 M Descartes, *Discourse of Method*  
Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am" (Bb)  
Singer, "All Animals Are Equal..." (Bb)  
24 W **No class**

**Thanksgiving**

29 M Descartes, *Discourse of Method*  
Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I Am" (Bb)  
Singer, "All Animals Are Equal..." (Bb)  
Hearne, "How to say 'Fetch!'" (Bb)

1 W Shakespeare, *Midsummer Night's Dream*  
6 M Shakespeare, *Midsummer Night's Dream*
Bibliography:

These are the editions I have ordered. You should try to make use of them, since the class readings will be keyed to page numbers in these translations.


Euripides, *Bacchae* (Cambridge Translations from Greek Drama), David Franklin (Editor). Cambridge University Press


Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, A. R. Braunmuller (Editor), Stephen Orgel (Editor), Russ McDonald (Introduction). Penguin Classics

Wells, H.G. *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. Bantam Classics