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10 January 2012

## Proposed Course: EN 103: “Animals”

This 103 course we’ll study argumentation through the lens of animals. We will examine people’s complicated relationships to animals—the ones we love, the ones we hate, the ones we eat—and ultimately students will develop their own arguments about how those relationships are, aren’t, or ought to be.

### Textbooks

- Wilhoit, Stephen. *A Brief Guide to Writing Academic Arguments*. Longman, 2009.
- Hacker, Diana. *A Writer’s Reference*. Custom UA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Bedford, 2012.
- Herzog, Hal. *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat: Why It’s So Hard to Think Straight about Animals*. Harper, 2010.
- Course packet, including excerpts from the following
  - Jonathan Safran Foer’s *Eating Animals*
  - Gabrielle Hamilton’s *Blood, Bones, and Butter*
  - Novella Carpenter’s *Farm City*

### The Theme

Animals provide one of the most provocative forums for analyzing argumentation, since people have such strong feelings about the role animals should play in humans’ lives. Many of the hot-button issues that arise in composition classes are difficult to discuss since students get so caught up in the pathos of argumentation; however, arguments people make about animals are driven by more than pathos—logos and ethos play central roles in the way authors and students feel about animals as they relate to pets, food, clothing, etc. And it’s always complicated. In this class, I’ll ask students to think deeply about the often-contradictory roles animals play in our lives by analyzing thoughtful (and often entertaining) writings and developing their own animal-related arguments.

### Units of Study and Writing Assignments

To Eat or Not to Eat: In the first unit, we’ll spend some time looking at the way writers make arguments about human-animal relationships. We’ll read from across the spectrum: vegan animal-lovers, carnivorous animal-husbands, and those who sit somewhere in the middle, possibly wearing leather shoes. We’ll study Aristotelian, Toulmin, and Rogerian argumentation. This unit will lead to an **textual analysis essay**.

Oh, the Poor Puppy!: In the second unit, students will move from textual analysis to **visual analysis**, looking at the way that animals are used in advertising (or are advertised about, in the case of SPCA or PETA).

Animals in Daily Life: In the third unit, we’re going to look at specific examples of animal-human relationships. Students will conduct an interview with a person and write a **profile essay** that examines the subject’s ideas about animals. Using their analytic skills, students will

be able to critically examine the interview while also presenting the conversation to their audience with details, dialogue, and descriptive elements.

The Definition of an Animal: In the fourth unit, students will study the **definition essay** in order to make their own categorical or stipulative definitions that relate to animals. Some examples: animal slaughter should be just; animals should be either pets or food, not both; a pig is different from pork.

Research: The four major essays will culminate in a 4-week **argumentative research paper** that includes a **formal proposal**. This paper must in some way examine the theme of animals (and I will offer a few specific topics not covered by the above units).

Visual Argument: In the final weeks of the semester, students will develop their own **visual argument** (related to their research paper or not), in which they use animals as some central theme or image.

## Objectives

In addition to the usual 103 objectives (listed below), by the end of this class, students will be able to do the following:

- understand the necessity of objective, critical perspectives when analyzing controversial subjects;
- conduct a formal interview and write an objective profile based on that exchange;
- be able to examine an abstract concept from a variety of perspectives;
- understand and use the writing/revision process as tools for analyzing topics and evaluating their own writing;
- revise their work with attention to purpose, development, style, grammar, punctuation, and spelling;
- collaborate productively with their peers and instructor;
- use a variety of rhetorical strategies and processes of analyzing;
- use writing strategies and processes to write for different audiences and purposes;
- understand their part in the university discourse community and how its written conventions operate;
- understand and apply the principles of formal argumentation in their writing;
- locate, evaluate, and synthesize source material in order to write extended papers incorporating source material;
- use at least one citation format correctly and understand that there are different formats for different disciplines;
- summarize, paraphrase, and quote source material accurately and ethically;
- reflect on their own development as writers.