



"PET SOUNDS": ANIMALS AND THE LITERARY TRADITION | DR. JAMES MCADAMS

From ancient times, texts and cultural practices such as cave paintings, Biblical passages, fables and parables, and ritual sacrifice involving animals have been central to the human experience. Fast forward to 2019, and we now have “all-star animals” with their own Insta, Snap, and Twitter followers; they have entered social media via YouTube videos of elephants painting, monkeys drumming, and birds harmonizing. In our culture, it’s easy to say that animal practices are “hidden in plain sight.” We will, therefore, be studying, novels, movies, video games, social media, poetry, drama, painting, cuisine, tourism, and other cultural expressions to broaden our understanding of how imbricated our lives are with these splendid creatures, and how we may respond to this awareness more conscientiously and responsibly.



JAWS, Gorillas in the Mist, The Fantastic Mr. Fox



William Blake, Emily Dickinson, Billy Collins



Cujo, Flush: A Biography, PEANUTS

INTRO TO LIT-002

M & W

2:00-3:15

COOPER 118

LIT 2000: Introduction to Literature: Animal Studies

USF College of Arts and Sciences
Department of English
Fall 2019

Location: CPR 118
Class Schedule: MW 2 PM
Instructor: Dr. James McAdams
Office: 301 C
Email: jtmcadams@usf.edu
Office Hours: MW 11:00-1230

Hi, it's James, your actual professor! You should read all of the syllabus policies below, but definitely read my interpolations in BOLD for specific information about our class functionality. Have fun!

University Course Description

The nature and significance of literature in its various forms: fiction, drama, poetry; emphasis on techniques in literary studies for analyzing, assessing, and applying the linguistic and cultural dimensions of knowledge.

General Education Statement

This course is part of the University of South Florida's General Education Curriculum. It is certified for Knowledge. Students enrolled in this course will be asked to participate in the USF General Education assessment effort. This will involve submitting copies of writing assignments for review via Canvas.

Course Purpose

This is a 3 credit course designed to introduce undergraduate students to the study of literature. It aims to explore the formal, cultural, historical, and theoretical dimensions of literary texts, encouraging students to hone imaginative, interpretive, and expressive practices that allow them to engage meaningfully with other discourses of knowledge.

Student Learning Outcomes

Because this course is a required General Education course within the Humanities—meaning that students are expected to develop and build upon foundational knowledge in the Humanities and Literature—students will:

1. Use concepts and terms in literary studies to analyze the aesthetic features of a text.
2. Discuss and interpret a broad variety of writers, their works, and connections among works.
3. Analyze cultural and historical features of literary texts with attention to human diversity.
4. Construct a clear, coherent, sustained argument.
5. Articulate differing positions on critical issues within literary studies.
6. Communicate meaning in a variety of written and spoken formats with clarity and fluency in language appropriate to the audience.
7. Develop critical thinking skills that allow students to exercise curiosity and empathy.
8. Experiment with distinctive technologies of reading, exploring scribal practices, computational tools, archival resources, or digital databases.

Course Objectives

The objective of the course is to provide students with opportunities to explore:

1. The formal features of literary texts and the major genres in which they appear.
2. The diverse cultural and historical contexts in which literary texts are produced and interpreted.
3. Argumentation as a tool for analyzing, assessing, and applying knowledge.
4. Selected approaches to literary criticism and how they generate interpretive perspectives.
5. Written and oral communication as process-oriented forms of inquiry.
6. The expression of human values within literary texts and how they influence and inform students' own experiences.
7. The various technologies of reading through which literary texts can be expressed, including manuscript, print, or digital media.

Creating Intentional Learners

This course is part of the “Humanities” section of the “Knowledge” base, helping you to develop the intellectual and practical skills that provide a foundation for creative thinking, information literacy, and human and cultural diversity. Additionally, this course emphasizes the skills of critical and analytical thinking, written communication, and problem solving, which are necessary to all other courses in the curriculum. The humanities encourage the exploration of human society and experiences, and the study of literature, in particular, allows students to investigate the influence of language and culture on all forms of knowledge. By gaining an appreciation for literary art and its capacity to challenge unexamined assumptions and to generate new insights, this course will allow you to develop skills of interpretation and communication relevant to disciplines across the university. Students will also become familiar with methods foundational to the literary studies track of the English major and minor.

Foundations of Knowledge and Learning (FKL)

This course is part of the University of South Florida's Foundations of Knowledge and Learning (FKL) Core Curriculum. It is certified for FKL Humanities or General Education Core Humanities and the State Communication Course requirement. Students enrolled in this course will be asked to participate in the USF General Education assessment effort. This might involve submitting copies of writing assignments for review, responding to surveys, or participating in other measurements designed to assess the FKL Core Curriculum learning outcomes.

Diversity and Inclusion

At its best, the study of literature should foster greater curiosity and empathy toward others. This classroom should be a safe space for a diversity of voices and perspectives, and the course aims to address the distinctive learning needs of all students.

Respect for others is imperative. This class asks you to challenge and discuss your current thinking with others. You will participate respectfully in these discussions, whether written, spoken, or submitted online. Disparaging or disrespectful comments or behavior directed at another's gender, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, class, identity, etc. are unacceptable.

Course Assignments

Paper 1: (15%)~9/23

Literary Analysis (25%)~10/23

Paper 3 (20%) ~11/23

Short Exercises (10%)

Participation (20%)

Part of your participation grade is taking “Minutes.” This phrase denotes the act of super-active note-taking during a class session and posting these to a communal area on Canvas. This way we all have an active record of what went on in class-an archive, so to speak. You’ll probably only have to do this once per semester and believe it or not most of my students seem to dig it.

Attendance (10%)

Based on years of research and teaching experience, I believe the default university attendance policies are misdirected and of very little consequence. Quibbling over whether an absence is “acceptable” or not isn’t my job, really. I’m aware that many of us may well have invisible chronic illnesses, psychological issues, traumas, financial/car problems, domestic tensions, etc., which may affect our ability to attend class. I want to be clear that I’m not giving you a blank slate to disappear whenever you want, attending class is a priority, but just stay in communication with me if you’re missing a lot of time and we’ll be fine (you don’t have to tell me everything if it’s personal). I primarily calibrate

“attendance” grades through participation anyway, for example if you show up and don’t talk and play with Insta all class that’s not really being present/participating anyway. Questions lmk.

Grading Scale (%)

94-100 A 74-76 C

90-93 A- 70-73 C-

87-89 B+ 67-69 D+

84-86 B 64-66 D

80-83 B- 60-63 D-

77-79 C+ 57-59 F

Course Readings

Cujo, Stephen King

How the Dead Dream, Lydia Millet

Other readings via .pdf on Canvas

For books, I would like you to purchase the cheapest version of the actual book you can. If you want to download a .pdf or ebook, you will have to write me a 2-page persuasive essay outlining the reasons saving ~\$4 will help you. If you convince me, then you can do it. I’m sorry I’m twice your age and can’t wrap my head around reading a 300-page book on a phone:)

Movies:

Cujo

Jaws

The Lion King

Technology Usage

This course requires you to have access to the Internet, a word processor, a printer, and digital tools, including Canvas.

You must check your USF email account and this course’s Canvas page for updates every 24 -**12 hours please!** If you use an e-mail address other than your USF address, you will be required to forward your USF mail to your regular e-mail address so that you do not miss any announcements. (Mail forwarding sometimes delays messages; technical difficulties are not an excuse for missed notifications or updates.)

Students are provided access to numerous technology resources, including an IT Help Desk that is available by e-mail at help@usf.edu, or by phone at (866) 974-1222. You have access to free printing (up to \$2.50 a day) and computer use in the library and campus computer labs.

Access [Canvas Guides](#) for answers to common questions about Canvas. Do not contact your instructor regarding technical difficulties.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is essential to a productive academic experience for both you and your classmates. Students are free to miss up to 3 class meetings in the semester without an impact on their grades. However, starting with the fourth, each subsequent absence will reduce your participation grade by 1.5 points. 8 or more absences will result in a failing grade for the course. Arriving late to class by 10 minutes or more may be counted as 1/3 of an absence.

The University recognizes the following as documented absences: court imposed legal obligations, jury duty, court subpoena, military duty, religious holy days, etc.

Note: Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, by the second class meeting. Should an examination or the due date for an assignment fall on one of these dates, I will make arrangements with you for a make-up exam or an alternate date for submission of written work.

Cell Phone Usage: I promise I'm not being mean, if you need to use your phones during class it's really okay with me. However, I thoroughly believe that our phones are terribly affecting our ability to concentrate and truly experience my life. Therefore, I would like this class to function as a model, or practice zone, for you to see what it's like to not look at your phone for over one hour. It's fun! Lmk if you will participate in this turning of off phones, and that will be 1% overall credit pt for your final grade-this is usually the difference between an A- and an A.

Ongoing Medical Conditions: Students facing extenuating circumstances, such as a debilitating illness or injury (physical or mental) that inhibits him or her from attending class or completing assignments, should work with the appropriate on-campus organization—including Center for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention, Students with Disabilities Services, and Students of Concern Assistance Team (SOCAT)—which will then act as a liaison on behalf of the student and help the instructor determine appropriate action.

USF Athletics' Participation: Any student who intends to miss class because he or she is participating in a scheduled USF athletics event is expected to present a schedule of such participating events to his or her instructor by the third week of the semester if he or she intends to be absent for a class or an announced examination.

[University Policies url](#)

Tentative Course Schedule That Will Definitely Change So Stay Aware!! ☺

Week 1: Intros| Learning names| purchase *Cujo*

Week 2: Discussion post| freewrite| *Cujo* 1-80| Quiz | Conference #1

Week 3: *Cujo* 80-300 | discuss nascent paper ideas | Peer Review

Week 4: Finish *Cujo* | Lecture: Animals as “Other” | rough draft P1 due

Week 5: Watch *Jaws* | Watch *Cujo* | P1 due

Week 6: *How the Dead Dream* 1-100 | Lecture: The Ethics of Zoos

Week 7: *HtDD* 100-300 | Groupwork on animal controversies/persuasion

Week 8: *HtDD* finished | Paper 2: Literary Analysis ideas | Conference #2

Week 9: Short readings: Temple Grandin, Naomi Klein, Joy Williams, Derrida (maybe?), Annie Dillard, Lydia Davis, et al. | P2 due

Week 10: Watch *The Lion King* | Read Hamlet Wiki | Lecture: “On *The Lion King* and a play called *Hamlet*.”

Week 11: Groupwork on animal representations in media | break

Week 12: Portfolio review | P3 paper ideas

Week 13: Peer Review | Conference #3 |

Week 14: We’ll see what happens here with hurricanes, etc. !

Week 15: P3 due | Evaluations | Happy Holidays!