

Carleton University
Fall 2024 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English Language and Literature

ENGL 1400A: Literature, Art, and Culture
Animals and Literacy

Prerequisites: None

Preclusions: Precludes additional credit for ENGL 1000, 1009, 1100, 1200, 1300, 1700, and
FYSM 1004

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***** This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change.
A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term. *****

Course description

Neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp argued that all animals, humans included, share several core emotions, which he labels using capital letters, and fundamental to them all is SEEKING. SEEKING drives both the search for resources, such as food and shelter, and the search for meaning. Through this course students will develop a more nuanced understanding of our own human consciousness, cognition, and SEEKING by reading two core texts about animals. These texts trouble (or reinforce) the difference between human and animal by depicting the quests of animals SEEKING both survival and meaning through the use of human habits such as language, literacy, and mythology.

Learning Outcomes

- Define and identify basic terms and concepts fundamental to animal emotion, emotional literacy, and psychological flexibility
- Broaden our understanding of ‘literacy’ (cultural, emotional, etc.)
- Experience reading and thinking critically about various genres
- Analyze representations of animal use of language, mythology, and poetry
- Develop a more nuanced understanding of human and animal cognition and emotion

Texts

Richard Adams, *Watership Down*
Laline Paull, *The Bees*

Evaluation

Test 1	25
Test 2	25
Quizzes and informal writing	25
Participation, presentations, and roundtables	25

Tests: Tests will be administered online. Questions may include multiple choice and/or short answer questions. Tests may be cumulative. Students may use class time to complete the tests on the dates indicated.

Participation and in-class activities: All students begin the course with a zero for participation; there are no “marks lost.” Mathematically, thoughtful participation is required to earn a grade higher than a B (75%) in the course. Thoughtful participation includes answering questions thoughtfully, asking thoughtful questions and making thoughtful comments, as well as thoughtful interactions with other students, including responding to other students’ questions and comments and leaving time for other students to speak. The participation mark will also include in-class activities such as presentations and roundtable discussions both throughout the term and in the last two weeks of class.