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| GTF:         | Paul Guernsey (guernsey@uoregon.edu)<br>240 Columbia 240, 6-5426<br>Office Hours: TR 4:30-5:50 and by appt. |   |

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course interrogates the human-nature relation by enacting a dialogue between art and philosophy at three points of encounter: animality, embodiment, and materiality. After a brief examination of the distinct but complementary practices of art and philosophy, we first trace the destabilization of the human-animal divide and consider its consequences for both human and nonhuman animal natures. Turning next to our shared embodiment, we trace the transition from the lived body as an organized medium of meaning-making, through the routinizations of habit and institutions, to the dissolution of the body in abjection. Lastly, with the dissolving of the body, we recover an insight into the resistance and autonomy of materiality at the limits of representation and conceptualization. Our inquiry will be guided throughout by contemporary art, philosophy, and interdisciplinary scholarship, and we will draw from a range of texts, visual arts, podcasts, guest speakers, and a field trip to nearby installations. Guiding questions throughout our inquiry will include the following: How do art and philosophy think nature, and what is distinctive or complementary in their approaches? What is environmental art, and what is its relationship with activism? What is at stake in the ways that humans distinguish themselves from nonhuman animals, and what consequences follow from destabilizing this self-segregation? How do our bodies condition our making-sense of the world, while simultaneously subjecting us to the limits of sense? And how does the materiality of things exceed our representations, demanding a new account of what it means to think, to act, and to create? Throughout, our focus will be on encouraging wide-ranging, experimental, and interdisciplinary inquiry into what nature means to us today.

This course meets the upper division requirement for ART majors, and the theory/methodologies requirement for ART graduate students. For ENVS undergraduates, the course satisfies an elective in the Area 3B Humanities. For PHIL majors the course will count as an upper-division elective for undergraduates and as a "Society and Value" requirement for PHIL graduate students.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required materials for this course will include readings, podcasts, images, and films. All materials will be posted on Blackboard, with the exception of the film *Beasts of the Southern Wild*. This film may be viewed on your own or at a special screening outside of class time.

Please print texts and bring them with you to class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

|   | <u>undergraduate</u> | <u>graduate</u> |
|---|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. participation                                    | 10%                  | 10%             |
| 2. weekly reading responses (best five)             | 40%                  | 30%             |
| 3. grad presentation on individual research         |                      | 10%             |
| 4. field trip participation or alternate assignment | 10%                  | 10%             |
| 5. proposal for final essay/project                 | 10%                  | 10%             |
| 6. final essay/project                              | 30%                  | 30%             |

- o **Participation:** Students will be expected to come to class prepared to actively participate in discussion of academic and artistic works. You will be evaluated on the consistency and thoughtfulness of your engagement with class concepts and on your alert and respectful attention to fellow class members. Please bring your texts to class. Missing **three** classes *for any reason* will result in a full grade reduction. An additional full grade reduction will be made for each additional missed class after the third. Three late arrivals for class will count as one absence. The quality and quantity of your participation in the class discussion will be evaluated in assigning 10% of your final grade.
- o **Weekly reading responses:** You have the opportunity to submit a written or creative reading response once per week, beginning with the first week. Reading responses are intended to develop critical reading skills and prepare you for class discussion. The response should engage with all readings assigned for that class day. No late responses will be accepted. Written responses should be 2-3 typed pages and should first identify the main claims of the texts and summarize their arguments before articulating your own response. Creative responses should engage with the main theses of the assigned texts; you will be asked to share your creative response with the class and to verbally articulate your concept. Your best five reading responses (written, creative, or a mix) will count toward your final grade (and you may choose to complete only the minimum number).
- o **Presentation of creative or conceptual work-in-progress (graduate students):** Graduate students will individually present to the class their own creative or conceptual work-in-progress and relate this to course themes. Although the presentation may be a preview of the final essay or project for the course, it may instead focus on other of the student's current projects or interests that are relevant to the class. We will visit the studios of Art grads at Northsite on 13 February. The remaining grads will present in class on 6 March.

- **Field Trip participation or alternate assignment:** The class will take a day-long field trip on Friday, February 15, to visit several art installations in the Portland area. We anticipate leaving Eugene around 9 am and returning around 5 pm. Please plan to bring your own lunch and snacks. If you are not able to participate in the field trip, you must inform us in advance. Those who are not able to attend and have informed us in advance will have the opportunity to complete an alternative assignment, an essay on a critical theme or an artist’s project related to the course (3-4 pages for undergraduates; 5-6 pages for graduate students). Alternative assignments will be due in Week 8.

- **Proposal for final essay/project:** Each student will complete a final essay or creative work for the course, and a proposal describing this essay or project is due in Week 8. The proposal must be submitted and approved in order for your final essay or creative work to be accepted for course credit.

Students completing a final essay will explore an independently chosen topic or theme from the course in detail. Undergraduate students should submit a two-page typed proposal describing the plan for their essay, including a statement of the essay’s main thesis and a description of how the thesis will be supported. Proposals should answer the questions *What is my point?*, *Why should the reader agree with me?*, and *So what?*

Graduate students will submit a proposal for the final essay with two components: (1) a 2-3 page detailed description of the topic and outline of the proposed argument; and (2) an annotated bibliography of five peer-reviewed texts (articles or books), additional to the course readings, that you intend to consult. Each annotation should be around one double-spaced page and include both a summary of the book or article and an explanation of its relevance for your project.

Alternatively, students may choose to complete a creative work as a final project, in which case they will submit a written proposal of 2 pages (undergraduates) or 3 pages (graduates) describing the proposed work and explaining its relevance to the themes, readings, and artworks from the course.

- **Final essay/project:** Final essays for undergraduates will be 6-8 pages; for graduate students, 10-12 pages. All essays must have an explicit thesis claim and develop an argument to support the position. Graduate essays are expected to engage with at least five peer-reviewed sources in addition to texts discussed in class. Papers are due on the date scheduled for the final exam, and extensions will be granted only in the case of genuine, documented emergencies. Late papers will lose one letter grade for each calendar day that they are late.

Final artistic projects will include 1) a project statement that integrates class concepts and readings; 2) a three-page annotated bibliography relating your project to 8-10 artists’ projects and critical texts; and 3) a class presentation in the final week of the term.

Undergraduates will submit final essays and creative works to the course GTF. Graduate students should submit essays and art to their instructor of record.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (any changes to these assignments will be announced in class)

|        | <i>Topics</i>  | <i>Assignments</i>  |
|--------|--|---|
| Week 1 | 1/7 Introduction to course   |   |
|        | 1/9 <b>Where is Art Today?</b>   | Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field”<br>Verwoert, Tate podcast   |
| Week 2 | 1/14 <b>How Does Art Think?</b>  | Mitchell, “What do Pictures ‘Really’ Want?”<br>Ranciere, “The Paradoxes of Political Art”   |
|        | 1/16 <b>ANIMALS</b><br>Territory, Sensation, & Communication<br><br>Guest Artist: <b>Julia Oldham</b><br>Guest Scientist: <b>Peter Wetherwax</b> | Grosz, <i>Chaos, Territory, Art</i> , Chapter 1<br>Griffin, “Symbolic Communication”  |
| Week 3 | 1/21 No classes: MLK Jr. Birthday  |   |
|        | 1/23 The Open  | Rilke, “Eighth Duino Elegy”<br>Uexkull, <i>A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans</i> , 41-52, 157-161, 171-181<br>Agamben, <i>The Open</i> , selections |
| Week 4 | 1/28 Becoming-Animal   | Deleuze & Guattari, <i>A Thousand Plateaus</i> , selections<br>Grosz, <i>Chaos, Territory, Art</i> , Ch. 2  |
|        | NOTE: An optional screening of <i>Beasts of the Southern Wild</i> will be held at Wilkinson House, Northsite, 7:00 - 8:45 pm.                    |   |

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|              | 1/30  | Guest Humanist: <b>Janet Fiskio</b>  | <i>Beasts of the Southern Wild</i> (view prior to class)   |
| Week 5       | 2/4   | The Animal Side<br><br>Grad Presentation: <b>Lisa Lombardo</b>   | Bailly, <i>The Animal Side</i> , selections<br>Wolfe, "From Dead Meat to Glow-in-the-Dark Bunnies"   |
|              | 2/6   | Guest Philosopher: <b>Christy Reynolds</b>   | Wolfe, "Learning from Temple Grandin"  |
| Week 6       | 2/11  | <b>BODIES</b><br>The Meaning of the Body   | Johnson, <i>The Meaning of the Body</i> , selections<br>Dolezal, "The Remote Body"   |
|              | 2/13  | Grad Presentations – Art Grads (meet at Northsite)   |  |
|              | 2/15  | <b>FIELD TRIP, 9 am - 5 pm</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paula Rebsom, <i>Threshold</i> Project, Marylhurst U.</li> <li>• Maya Lin, <i>Confluence</i> project sites at Sandy River and Fort Vancouver</li> </ul> | <i>Echo of Water Against Rocks</i> (video)   |
| Week 7       | 2/18  | Resistant Practices  | Bourdieu, <i>The Logic of Practice</i> , selections<br>Certeau, "Walking in the City"<br>Villar, interview with Øyvind Renberg   |
|              | 2/20  | *CLASS CANCELLED*<br>(work on final proposals)   |  |
| Week 8       | 2/25  | Body/Machine   | Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto," selections<br>Hayles, <i>How We Became Posthuman</i> , selections<br>Winner, "Resistance is Futile"                                       |
|              | 2/27  | The Abject<br><br><b>FINAL PROPOSALS DUE</b>   | Kristeva, "Approaching Abjection"<br>Bataille, "The Big Toe"<br>Krause, "Informe without Conclusion"   |
| Week 9       | 3/4   | <b>MATTER</b><br>Earth & Elements  | Boetzkes, <i>The Ethics of Earth Art</i> , Chapter 1<br>Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," selections<br>Levinas, <i>Existence and Existents</i> , selections |
|              | 3/6   | Grad Presentations – non-Art grads   |  |
| Week 10      | 3/11  | Object-Oriented Ontology   | Latour, <i>We Have Never Been Modern</i> , Ch. 1<br>Bennett, <i>Vibrant Matter</i> , Chapter 1<br>Bryant, <i>The Democracy of Objects</i> , selections                 |
|              | 3/13  | Presentation of Final Projects   |  |
| Monday, 3/18 | Final Essays/Creative Works due before 5 pm |  |  |