Can we imagine what it’s like to be an animal? Why do we call some animals our “fur babies” but eat others? In this course we will be reading short stories, scholarly essays, music videos, and other forms of media to explore the relationship between humans—particularly women—and other animals. We will also focus on the representation of women in literary texts and popular culture, with attention to the relationship between women’s social and cultural status and the impact of race and class. You do not have to be a woman, a feminist, or a vegetarian to take this class; you just need to be a curious person willing to explore the relationship between these ideas.

This is first and foremost a writing course, and we will be using these texts to talk about the various ways in which arguments are made. We’ll talk about strategies for reading difficult texts and will approach writing as a process, with a strong emphasis on planning and revision. Over the course of the semester students will develop skills that will help them through the rest of their academic career; these include researching, identifying arguments, understanding texts from a variety of disciplines, and reading and writing in a variety of genres.

Course Requirements:

Students will complete weekly blog posts, creative assignments based on the reading material, and more traditional academic essays driven by their own interests.
This course builds on skills in reading a foreign language by translating literary texts into English, integrating broad theoretical concepts about translation into the textual practice of translating. The course begins with readings and writing assignments that introduce students to the history and theory of the practice of translation, extending a language-based approach to translation into a literary framework that emphasizes the process of reading and re-writing texts. Rather than assume we know what we mean when we commend a translation for being “faithful,” for example, students are asked to compare different versions of the story of Babel or of a Sapphic fragment, to identify the values being prioritized. While students are expected to write critical responses to these literary texts, periodically they will also be asked to engage with the readings through short translation exercises focusing on key issues in translation studies. They will be asked to preface these exercises with a short discussion of their aims in terms of the critical debates. The critical and creative writing assignments are designed to build on one another, enabling students to become more attentive readers, to produce increasingly articulate responses to the translated texts, which in turn inform their own translation strategies. Once in the semester students are expected to do an oral presentation on a theoretical article recommended to be read alongside the world literature text assigned for that day. For the final project, each student will be expected to translate 8-12 pages of literature of their choosing from the language of their expertise, prefaced with an accompanying 5-8 page introduction that situates their practice in terms of the history of translation in English.

Course Requirements:

Writing: five in-class translation exercises; portfolio of twelve 2-page papers written in response to critical readings (total 24 pages); one extended response paper (4-5 pages); one extended translation project (8-12 pages) written in a series of drafts with a critical preface (5-8 pages), developed and revised through peer-editing workshops. About 50-75 pages of readings in world literature in translation plus critical essays on history/theory of translation. No midterm or final.

Intended Audience:

Designed for students who have completed the FYWR and have some experience in a foreign language (e.g., through LSA, study abroad, bilingual background). It will appeal to students in a wide range of concentrations including language and literature, creative writing and international studies.