

**Senior Seminar, Humans and Animals  
English 4384 Section 01W**

Dr. Laura Miller

Office: TLC 2238

Office hours: MW 11:00-12:00, 2:00-3:30; Virtual hours F 10-12:30, and by appointment

Class Meets: MW 12:30-1:45

Class Location: TLC 1204

Ph: 678-839-4891 (land line in office)

Email: [lmiller@westga.edu](mailto:lmiller@westga.edu)

**Description:** In recent years, many scholars have explored the relationship between literature and the environment. One subset of this relationship—the connections between humans and animals in literature and culture—will be the focus of this course. Because human-animal interactions range from domestication to observation to protection and stewardship, literary scholarship on humans and animals can vary likewise. From ecocriticism to postcolonial criticism to Marxist criticism, there are many ways to explore humans and animals in literary research. We will explore several works that represent humans' relationships to other species, including novels, the film *Jurassic Park*, and even a vegan cookbook, and you will develop your own research project on a related topic that interests you.

**Required Texts:** *Beautiful Joe* (Saunders), *Disgrace* (Coetzee), *The Beetle* (Marsh), *Veganomicon* (Moskowitz and Romero), *Jurassic Park* (dir. Spielberg).

**Departmental Course Learning Objectives:**

- a) Students will understand and apply select theoretical and practical issues in the discipline of literary studies.
- b) Students will become conversant with representative texts and a selected issue in literary history that allows for integration of the aims of the discipline.
- c) Students will develop the ability to work both independently and collaboratively toward the publication of an anthology of essays by class members.
- d) Students will propose, research, and execute a substantive literary argument appropriate to the seminar topic.
- e) Students will be able to make effective oral presentations, both individual and collaborative.
- f) Students will complete an end-of-semester questionnaire to assess how the course and the major have served their professional goals.
- g) Students will demonstrate in both oral and written work a discipline-specific critical facility through convincing and well-supported analysis of related material.
- h) Students will demonstrate their command of academic English and the tenets of sound composition by means of thesis-driven analytical prose.

### Program Goals

- This course fulfills one of the departmental requirements for the completion of the English major.
- Students will develop the analytical, oral and written skills to pursue graduate study or careers in teaching, writing, business and a variety of other fields.
- Students will be able to define and pursue independent research agendas.
- This course contributes to the program goal of equipping students with a foundation in literary history and the issues surrounding literary study in contemporary culture.
- This course broadens students' desire and ability to take pleasure in their encounter with literature.

### Your Grade Breakdown

#### Writing Journal – 20%

Students must write **at least six** research- and career-related journal entries, due **March 27**. For each entry, students should do one of the following three things (you should do **each of them at least once** this semester—you can't just do one of them six times):

- Select a paragraph from a theoretical reading, which you interrogate using close textual analysis. Responses (250-300 words) should not merely summarize/paraphrase your selection. Rather, the assignment is meant to help you enter into a critical conversation with the material.
- Write a short reflective piece (250-300 words) where you describe your own process as a writer working on this research project. Evaluate what you have learned about research writing as an English major, and consider where you still need to go.
- Write a response piece about your chosen career and how it connects to your English major. (250-300 words)

As an informal writing exercise, the journal assignment expects basic adherence to the rules of grammar but will not be graded on its style as much as on the thought you have put into the response. Students should also be prepared to discuss these responses in class. (Outcomes a, b, f, g, h)

#### Short Analytical Essay/Presentation: 20%

a) Students will write one short analytical essay (3-5 pages) about one of our primary texts. Essays must argue a specific thesis and should support that thesis with clearly organized, well-written textual analysis. Essays must be typed, double-spaced with one inch margins in a standard font and should adhere to MLA guidelines.

b) Students will prepare a ten minute oral presentation that “teaches” the rest of class the argument you make in your paper. Students will sign up on the first day of class for specific dates/text so deadlines for this assignment will vary, depending on what you choose from this schedule. Presentations will be used as a starting point for discussion of primary texts. (Outcomes a, b, e, g, h)

#### Seminar Paper: 50%

By the end of the term, each student will have produced a 18-20 page piece of critical writing on the seminar topic. This paper must offer a thesis-driven analysis of a primary text or texts examined through the lens of the seminar's critical focus. As a formal writing assignment, the paper must be clearly organized, should support its thesis with specific, well-explained examples and should express itself with stylistic and grammatical clarity. All papers must adhere to MLA documentation style. The writing of this paper will include a prospectus, multiple drafts, and a reflective cover letter. There will be a checklist of guidelines that will make the paper itself less intimidating to write. At the end, students will complete a comprehensive questionnaire as well as coordinate the class anthology. (Outcomes a, b, c, d, f, g, h)

#### Food Mini-Project: 10%

We have two options for the food mini-project: one option is to cook a vegan recipe from the *Veganomicon* cookbook and analyze what it was like to cook with vs without animal products; another is

to write a short response paper related to the *Veganomicon* and its perspective on the relationship between humans and animals. (Outcomes a, b, e, g, h)

**Grading Scale:** 90-100: A, 80-89: B, 70-79: C, 60-69: D. Below 60: F.

**Course Schedule:**

\*The readings next to a date are due on that date.

Other Important Dates:

Drop period ENDS Jan 9

Add period ENDS Jan 10

Withdrawal deadline to receive a grade of W 2/27

Week	Monday	Wednesday
1 and 2 The Anthropocene and the K-T Extinction	Jan 7 Intro: quizzes, getting to know you as a writer and researcher.	Jan 9 Dinosaurs and film: context. Begin <i>Jurassic Park</i> .
	Jan 14 <i>Jurassic Park</i> and article discussion	Jan 16 <i>Jurassic Park</i> finish discussion.
3 and 4 The Postcolonial Humanities and Anthropocentrism	Holiday MLK	Jan 23 <i>Disgrace</i> , first half. Presentation
	Jan 28 <i>Disgrace</i> , second half. Presentation	Jan 30 Article discussion and writing practice
5 and 6 Queer Postcolonial Hybridity	Feb 4 <i>The Beetle</i> . Presentation	Feb 6 <i>The Beetle</i> . Presentation
	Feb 11 <i>The Beetle</i> . Presentation	Feb 13 Article discussion and writing practice
7 Human Rights and Animal Rights and Good Doggos	Feb 18 <i>Beautiful Joe</i> . Presentation	Feb 20 <i>Beautiful Joe</i> . Presentation
8 Eating Animals	Feb 25 <i>Veganomicon</i>	Feb 27 <b>FOOD DAY</b> . Bring food or be ready to talk about it--either way, this is an edutainmenty transition to the second half of our class.
Weeks 9-12, pre-writing and the research process	Mar 4 Discussion: understanding yourself as an academic writer.	Mar 6 3 Starting Your Essay: Finding your focusing question.
	Mar 11 Reviewing the critical literature <b>***For every class from now until 4/22, you must bring a current draft of your essay and/or notes/sources to class You need to have something to work on in class.</b>	Mar 13 Upgrading your argument/focusing your thesis.
	Mar 25 Research day/no class meeting: make sure you physically go to the library to look at books.	Mar 27 Evidence: selection and presentation 1 <b>Journals Due Online</b>
	Apr 1 Evidence: selection and presentation 2	Apr 3 Honors convocation--no class meeting
Weeks 13-16 The Writing and Editorial Process	Apr 8 Opening and Concluding	Apr 10 Format and Citation
	Apr 15 Returning to the primary text	Apr 17 Editing Sentences
	Apr 22 Editing the collection: Cover design, TOC arrangement.	Apr 24 Careers discussion. Final draft of essay due.
	Apr 29 Evaluations and careers discussion.	

**Support:**

- [24/7/365 D2L Help Center](https://d2lhelp.view.usg.edu/): [Call 1-855-772-0423]: <https://d2lhelp.view.usg.edu/>
- [Accessibility Services](https://www.westga.edu/cas/) [Call: 678-839-6428]
- [Center for Academic Success](http://www.westga.edu/cas/) [Call: 678-839-6280]: <http://www.westga.edu/cas/>
- [Center for Disability Services](https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php): <https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php>
- [Common Language](https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php): <https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php>
- [CourseDen D2L Home Page](https://westga.view.usg.edu/): <https://westga.view.usg.edu/>
- [Counseling](mailto:counseling@westga.edu): [counseling@westga.edu](mailto:counseling@westga.edu)
- [D2L UWG Online Help](http://uwgonline.westga.edu/students.php) (8 AM – 5 PM) [Call: 678-839-6248 or 1-855-933-8946 or email: [online@westga.edu](mailto:online@westga.edu)]: <http://uwgonline.westga.edu/students.php>
- [Distance Learning Library Services](https://www.westga.edu/library/resource-sharing.php): <https://www.westga.edu/library/resource-sharing.php>
- [Ingram Library Services](http://www.westga.edu/library/): <http://www.westga.edu/library/>
- [Proctored Exams](http://uwgonline.westga.edu/exams.php#student): <http://uwgonline.westga.edu/exams.php#student>
- [Student Services](http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php): <http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php>
- [University Bookstore](http://www.bookstore.westga.edu/): <http://www.bookstore.westga.edu/>
- [UWG Cares](http://www.westga.edu/UWGCares/): <http://www.westga.edu/UWGCares/>
- [UWG Statements of Accessibility](https://docs.google.com/document/d/16Ri1XgaXiGx28ooO-zRvYPraV3Aq3F5ZNJYbVDGVnEA/edit?ts=57b4c82d#heading=h.yrqeffvts1f): <https://docs.google.com/document/d/16Ri1XgaXiGx28ooO-zRvYPraV3Aq3F5ZNJYbVDGVnEA/edit?ts=57b4c82d#heading=h.yrqeffvts1f>

**Rubrics**

[Online Discussion Rubric](#)

[Other Rubrics](#)

[UWG Rubrics](#)

Please see the [Common Language for Course Syllabi](#) for official information on UWG's Academic Integrity Policy.

I aim to answer all emails within 24 hours (48 hours on weekends). At times it might take longer, especially if I need to check in with a colleague about an answer. Feel free to follow up if it's been more than a day.

**Statement of Communication**

- Be sensitive and reflective to what others are saying.
- No outbursts of extreme emotion or opinion.
- Use clear subject lines in email.
- Be forgiving. Anyone can make a mistake.
- Keep the dialogue collegial and professional.

**Course Policies**

Please miss no more than three classes. We need to all be present and accountable. Late work will lose five points per 24 hour period of lateness following the end of our class period, up to one week. Work more than a week late will receive no higher than a 50%.

More importantly, DO NOT SUFFER IN SILENCE. Contact me in advance if you are struggling so you don't have to resort to lateness.

**Americans with Disabilities Act Statement:**

If you are a student who is disabled as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act and require assistance or support services, please seek assistance through the [Center for Disability](#). UWG also provides [Accessibility Statements for Technology](#) that you may be required to use for this course.

For more information on the Americans with Disabilities Act, UWG Email, Credit Hour, and UWG Honor Code policies as well as information on Academic Tutoring, Student Services, and Technical Requirements, Privacy Policy, and Accessibility Statements, please see the [Common Language for Syllabus](#) document.