

Sophister Module Description 2026-7

Full Name: Humans, other animals, and literary genres

Short Name: Humans and other animals

Lecturer Name(s) and Email Address(es): Aileen Douglas adouglas@tcd.ie

ECTS Weighting: 10

Semester Taught MT/HT: MT

Year JF/SF/JS/SS: SS

Module Content:

This course includes material in a variety of genres and modes: fable; the literary fairy tale; poetry; and the novel. Beginning with a consideration of how animals are represented in Western creation stories (The Book of Genesis and extracts from John Milton's *Paradise Lost*), the course is organized around topics with seminars dedicated to: metamorphosis; animals and 'marginal' humans; animal narrators; and animals in writing for children. The course concludes with consideration of what literature might contribute to the emerging field of animal studies.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course a student should be able to:

1. Recognize and distinguish between various representations of human animal relationships in literature
2. Describe the imaginative, philosophical, and ethical dimensions of representing non-human animals in literature
3. Deploy appropriate critical vocabulary in the analysis of a number of literary genres

Learning Aims:

The aim of the course is to highlight the variety of animal representation in literature and to encourage reflection on the aesthetic and ethical aspects of these representations.

Assessment Details

- Number of Components: 2
- Name/Type of Components: Mid-term assignment; final essay
- Word Count of Components: 1,000 words and 4,000 words

- Percentage Value of Component(s): 20%, 80%

Preliminary Reading List:

Module texts may include: Anna Letitia Barbauld, *Lessons for children* (1778-79); William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789), Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1898); J. M. Coetzee, *The Lives of Animals* (1999); Karen Joy Fowler, *We are all completely beside ourselves* (2013); John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667); Anna Sewell, *Black Beauty* (1877); Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726); Sarah Trimmer, *Fabulous Histories. Designed for the instruction of children, respecting their treatment of animals* (1786).

Please note:

- Curricular information is subject to change.
- Information is displayed only for guidance purposes, relates to the current academic year only and is subject to change.