

# Talking about (non-human) Animals

## Syllabus for ENVI/LING 294 - Spring 2022

### Course Description

In modern life, it's uncommon to interact with living non-human animals other than pets. It hasn't always been this way. What does it mean for our relationships with animals and the environment when we talk about animals much more than we interact with them? We will look at the roles that non-human animals play in our lives by examining the language used to talk about them both in areas like industrial pork production and traditional stories. We'll look at metaphors, grammar, and storytelling. How does the way we talk about animals reflect the ways we traditionally interact with them? With how we treat them? With the meanings associated with them? How does the discourse of the food industry obscure the individuality and well-being of non-human animals?

Distribution Requirements: Social science

### Contact Information

Prof. Marianne Milligan

[mmillig1@macalester.edu](mailto:mmillig1@macalester.edu)

You can always reach me by email or Slack. I will usually get back to you quickly, and always within 24 hours on weekdays.

### Call me "Marianne" (She/her/hers)

Students are sometimes not sure what to call their professors. Like many others at Macalester, I invite you to use my first name, though if you are feeling formal, "Professor" or "Professor Milligan" or "Dr. Milligan" are all fine. Please be sure to share what you would like to be called, as well!

### Office Hours

To have a one-on-one Zoom conversation with me or meet in my office, check out [my calendar](#) where you can select an appointment slot. If those times don't work out, you should open your calendar and put my email in the "Meet with..." box on the left to see when I'm free. Then email me with a couple of times that work for both of us

Talking to students is one of my favorite things about being a professor. No question is too small, and no pretext to talk is too flimsy: if you want to talk, we can talk!

# Contract and \*Grades

## Ungrading

In this course, we will take a different approach to assessment and grades. There is evidence that grades can inhibit student learning and particularly “deep learning” of material (e.g., Rust 2002). Research also shows that you learn through practice (e.g., Gladwell 2008) and believing that you can improve (e.g., Growth mindset from Dweck 2007) is key to improvement.

Grading is extremely anxiety provoking both for you and for me, and during these unusual times, I'd like to do whatever I can to relieve anxiety when I can. I love to help students improve their writing, critical thinking skills, and linguistic knowledge. Therefore, following Stommel (2020) "This course will focus on qualitative not quantitative assessment, something we'll discuss during the class, both with reference to your own work and the works we're studying. While you will get a final grade at the end of the term, I will not be grading individual assignments, but rather asking questions and making comments that engage your work rather than simply evaluate it. You will also be reflecting carefully on your own work and the work of your peers. The intention here is to help you focus on working in a more organic way, as opposed to working as you think you're expected to."

At the end of the semester you will reflect critically on your learning and work over the semester and give yourself a grade. I reserve the right to change the grade as appropriate.

## Choose your own adventure

As part of setting up our learning goals and contract, you will have different types of assignments to choose from. They will fall into three general categories:

1. Reflection Journals where you will reflect on your learning. There is research that supports the use of journals to process and understand new material, to develop new ideas, and see connections between course content and personal experience.
2. Short responses to readings or class discussions.
3. Assignments where you can apply what we're learning by collecting and analyzing data.

## Required Text

Stibbe, Arran. 2012. *Animals Erased: Discourse, Ecology, and Reconnection with the Natural World*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

## Learning Goals

We will work together to figure out what your individual and the class learning goals are and draw up a contract. Some of the possibilities include:

- Discourse analysis
- Introduction to linguistics

Research, writing, learning and metacognitive skills

- Gather data/corpus, analyzing data.
- Learn how to read scholarly articles by identifying the main argument, the theoretical framework, or the methodology, and comparing to other research on the topic.
- Learn to think about your learning by tracking your learning through the semester, planning out when and how work will be completed, self-assessment of learning and self-correction, identifying learning needs and strategies.

## Resources & Policies

### Navigating Online Course Information

There are three online locations for information:

1. **This website** gives basic information on the course, ungrading and course policies.
2. The daily schedule is in **Google Sheets**. It lists what we're doing, when and why for each day of the mod. It will link to readings and assignments in Moodle.
3. **Moodle** is where you will find details on assignments and submit completed assignments.

### When you don't feel well, or are isolating/in quarantine

If you are in isolation/in quarantine but are feeling well when we are scheduled to meet in person, I will have an iPad in class that we can move around and add to small group discussions. But if you are not feeling well, please rest and check in with me about how to make up the work you miss. I do not want to set up the expectation that you need to attend class via zoom when you are not feeling up to it.

### Helpful Resources on Campus

Many wonderful resources exist that will help you with this class. To book an online appointment with a writing counselor at the **MAX Center**, visit [WOnline](#). You can find the center's guide to working remotely with a writing tutor [here](#). Our **research and instruction librarians** are also a great resource for many writing-related questions. You may book an online appointment with one of them [here](#), Aaron and Beth are the two librarians who usually work with linguistic classes. Another useful resource is Macalester's [Write Well video series](#).

### Helpful Resources on Campus

I am committed to supporting all students in my class. If course design ever poses barriers to your ability to access or to demonstrate mastery of course content, please let me know. I will make **reasonable academic accommodations** in such cases. If you have a known disability and think that you may need formal accommodations, email [disabilityservices@macalester.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@macalester.edu) or call the office at 651-696-6874. **Given the unusual**

**circumstances this semester**, you may find yourself needing things that you normally would not. In those cases, please let me know what is going on. I may be able to make reasonable accommodations that will help.

## Academic Dishonesty

**Academic dishonesty** erodes the basic foundations of higher education: exchange, debate, and the thoughtful consideration of what we know, how we know it, and why it matters. It has no place at Macalester or in this course. Find Macalester's academic integrity policy [here](#). For help avoiding plagiarism, visit the Library's Academic Integrity materials [here](#). For the Quick Guide to the APA Manual of Style, the citation system used by linguists, visit [here](#).

**Policy on class recordings:** I have no current plans to record our daily class sessions. Should that change for any reason, such as to accommodate a documented disability, I will notify you in advance and any recording will be in a manner consistent with [Macalester's classroom recording policy](#). Please note that all lectures and other recordings distributed to the class on Moodle are covered by this policy, which states that members of the class may not share, replicate, or publish any class recording, in whole or in part, or use any of the recordings for non-class purposes, without my prior written approval.

**Policy on using video during Zoom sessions:** It's hard to talk to a bunch of icons, so I encourage you to turn on your video **if you have the bandwidth** to do so, especially during small group discussions, when you'll be interacting intensively with your peers. I understand that not everyone will be in a physical space that they're comfortable sharing, and not everyone will be comfortable on camera. I invite you to use a virtual background or a filter if this helps. But I do not require that you turn on your video feed, and you will have many opportunities to contribute, over audio and in shared documents that you'll work on in small groups. As a result, being on camera is strongly encouraged but not required as part of active class participation.

Please add a photo to Zoom for when your camera is off. It doesn't need to be a picture of you, but it will help create community.