

Animals as Teachers and Muses

Course Description

Lecture, discussion and short readings (poems and excerpts from stories) will be the format. The subject will be enhanced by photos and short videos. Materials will be provided. No textbook required. Class members will do a small amount of reading outside class.

Weekly Layout:

Introduction to the topic: What can we learn from animals, wild and domestic? Instructor will give an overview of a recent African safari which inspired the course. Show photos and talk about class goals. Read one example poem and discuss.

Predators: What can we learn from these animals? Read several well-known poems about carnivores (e.g., *The Panther* by Rilke and *The Tyger* by Blake). View instructor's photos from an African safari plus several paintings of predators. Discuss the similarities and difference between human and animal predators.

Prey: What lessons can we learn from this type of animal? As in week 2, we will view photos, see a short video, read several poems and an excerpt from literature (e.g., an essay from *On Animals* by Susan Orlean).

Insects, song birds, small reptiles, etc. Read haiku poems by the masters (Basho, for one) regarding these creatures. What can we learn from butterflies, snails, etc. that we cannot learn from larger animals?

Wrap up: Class members are invited to share their experiences with animals of all kinds - domesticated and wild. We will also discuss how indigenous peoples view animals. Lastly, we will discuss how Edward Hicks' famous painting *Peaceable Kingdom* might affect us. Does it offer a metaphoric sign of hope?

N/A

N/A

N/A

N/A

N/A

N/A

N/A

N/A