

LIBS 497.1HB – Dogs as Cultural Phenomenon

Texas A&M University - Commerce – Fall 2020

Blended Course – Mon/Wed/Fri 1:00-1:50 (302 Talbot Hall)*

(classroom sessions dependent on social distancing/Covid necessities)

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Office Hours: Mon and Wed 2:00-4:00 or by appointment (Zoom meetings welcomed)

Course Description: Man's best friend. Fur babies. Guard dogs. Therapy pets. Costumed dogs. Service animals. K-9 units. Puppy hotels. Dog shows. Gourmet dog food. Movie dogs. Dogs playing poker. Pup videos. Sport mascots... looking at such a diverse list highlights a partial yet illustrative recognition that dogs truly are a cultural phenomenon. This course serves as an interdisciplinary exploration of how dogs hold a prominent presence within popular culture as well as everyday life.

Course Objectives:

1. To encounter and engage in readings from a variety of narrative styles as a means for generating synthesis, analysis and communication of critical thought
2. To apply the principles of interdisciplinary scholarship by reflectively and informatively examining experiences and settings of dogs and their cultural imprint on societal, historical, and social happenings
3. To prompt awareness and application of course content to personal self-reflection and expression

Evaluation:

Reflective Short Papers:	25%
Memes Project:	20%
Readings Project:	20%
Reflective Essay:	20%
Participation and Engagement:	15%

Grading System:

A (exceptional) = 100 - 90% B (good) = 89 - 80% C (average) = 79 - 70%
D (minimally sufficient) = 69 - 60% F (failure) = <60%

Though I am a believer in the philosophies of ungradedness, some versions of grading still exist. That stated, I am also a believer in the intrinsic pursuit of knowledge and discovery. If you join in that pursuit, there should be no worries or concerns of final grades. In nearly all grading instances, I start from a mindset that one begins at middle "C" (75%), and one proves their relative ability to shift above, shift below, or remain at that mark with their work.

Covid 19 Considerations

A&M-Commerce requires the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories. Exceptions may be made by faculty where warranted. Faculty have management over their classrooms. Students not using face-coverings can be required to leave class. Repetitive refusal to comply can be reported to the Office of Students' Rights and Responsibilities as a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.

Please, click on the following link to access A&M-Commerce Covid 19 Information,
<https://new.tamuc.edu/coronavirus/>

Brief Assignment Explanations:

Reflective Short Papers: At three points in the semester, students will reflect on the course as a whole as informed through course content.

Readings Project: Students will further engage readings from the *On Dogs* text as inspiration for their own versions of dog-centric analysis and considerations.

Memes Project: Students will apply course concepts and principles by deconstructing aspects of the significations ascribed to dogs through developing an annotated collection of popular cultural representations of dogs.

Reflective Review: Students will reflect on the course as a whole via a personalized consideration of the whole of the portfolio generated across the term.

Participation and Engagement: The goal is to demonstrate communication, discussion, and interactive engagement. Students are expected to dialogue in a way that provokes, clarifies, challenges, and enlightens the course community.

Additional considerations of a student's relative level of engagement and academic integrity will also be made across all aspects of the course including but not limited to completion and quality of tasks and assignments, communications, following instructions and guidelines, and accessing materials.

Readings

Required

Heys, R. (ed.). (2019). *On Dogs: An Anthology*. Notting Hill: Devon, UK
<https://www.nottinghilleditions.com/product/on-dogs/>
(manufacturer suggested price \$18.56)

All other course readings will be available via D2L Brightspace.

All readings are to be completed during the respective week they are assigned, and their material will be needed for effective discussion. On occasion, students may be asked to complete additional readings beyond those listed on the syllabus. Should this be the case, sufficient time and access to such readings will be provided

Academic Dishonesty

All coursework is to be an original work by the student and created specifically for fulfilling the requirements for this course. Plagiarism, cheating, or otherwise representing another's work or ideas as one's own without proper attribution will not be tolerated. It is the student's responsibility to:

1. research and write their own papers
2. give proper credit through documentation when using words or ideas of others
3. rely on their own knowledge when taking tests
4. refuse to give another student the opportunity to be dishonest

Any act of academic dishonesty may result in the automatic failure of the course and may be subject to further disciplinary action by the university.

“Attendance” policy, instructor’s rights and expectations:

All courses demand active participation and regular attendance. It is imperative that the student do all assigned work in a timely fashion. In particular, the benefits from discussion specifically depend on each student’s respective preparation and distinctive contribution. Failure to do so hurts not only the individual student, but the collective community as a whole.

Given the pandemic conditions and the needs of social distancing, the mechanics of conducting in-person sessions will need to be fluid both in structure and happening. As the term starts, hopefully a clearer understanding as to how to best conduct class sessions safely, inclusively, and adaptably to all will emerge. As it stands, our Covid number for the classroom is 8. Including myself, this allows for a maximum attendance of 7 students. Some form of rotational system will be proposed if/when in-person sessions will occur. These sessions will be recorded and may be accessed synchronously should the students wish to share in the discussion as it occurs. They will also be available asynchronously if the student is unable to access during the course meeting times. Ideally, having the whole of the course community interacting simultaneously would be best for all involved.

All assignments are devised for the explicit purpose of offering educational benefit, be that academic growth, hands-on experience, development and display of critical thought, or expression of our academic selves. Coursework is to be completed as assigned and is to be turned in via the D2L Brightspace dropbox no later than the formal due date. Any work turned in after due dates may incur a penalty respective of its relative degree of tardiness (to a point of no credit whatsoever). Given conditions of the Covid 19 pandemic, considerable flexibility in applying this will be enacted. Failing to complete assignments not only inhibits the immediate learning process but, again, ultimately hurts the overall learning community as discussion of the process and its results can prove insightful as well.

Student Conduct

Course participation includes aspects of respectful, thoughtful, class interaction and engagement in group discussions. This course’s expectations work in conjuncture with what the [Student Guidebook](#) describes as Civility in the Classroom. Additionally, all students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Policies and Procedures, Conduct, pg. 35-45).

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Concealed Carry Notice

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student

needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Brightspace Support

Need Help?

Student Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Course Outline:

Note: The course outline is only a guideline. It is subject to change based on discussion, current events, or other such influences. Additionally, there is considerable fluidity to when reading assignments will occur. These will be updated in class and through D2L announcements.

Week 1 (8/24-8/30)

- general course information
- ungradedness
- readings:
 - Blum (p. 1-5)
 - TBA

Week 2 (8/31-9/6)

- Dogs as dogs
- readings:
 - TBA

Week 3 (9/7-9/13)

- Dogs as human's best friend
- readings:
 - TBA
- **First reflective paper due Sept 13**

Week 4 (9/14-9/20)

- Dogs as workers
- readings:
 - TBA

Week 5 (9/21-9/27)

- Dogs as cultural product
- readings:
 - TBA

Week 6 (9/28-10/4)

- Dogs as cultural product II
- readings:
 - TBA
- **Second reflective paper due October 4**

Week 7 (10/5-10/11)

- Dogs as commodity
- readings:
 - TBA

Week 8 (10/12-10/18)

- Dogs in popular culture
- readings:
 - TBA

Week 9 (10/19-10/25)

- Dogs in popular culture II
- readings:
 - TBA
- **Third reflective paper due October 25**

Week 10 (10/26-11/1)

- Dogs as style
- readings:
 - TBA

Week 11 (11/2-11/8)

- Dogs as inspiration
- readings:
 - TBA

Week 12 (11/9-11/15)

- Dogs and psychology
- readings:
 - TBA
- **Reading Project due November 15**

Week 13 (11/16-11/22)

- Dogs and sport
- readings:
 - TBA

Week 14 (11/23-11/29)

- Dogs and memes
- readings:
 - TBA
- **Memes Project due November 29**

“Week” 15 (11/30-12/4)

- Reflections on dogs
- readings:
 - none

Finals “Week” (12/5-12/11)

- **Reflective Essay due Tuesday, December 6**

final grades available via MyLeo on Tuesday, December 15

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Reading list bibliography – Fall 2020

Week 1

Blum, S. (2017, November 14). Ungrading: The significant learning benefits of getting rid of grades.

Inside Higher Ed. Retrieved December 7, 2017, from

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2017/11/14/significant-learning-benefits-getting-rid-grades-essay>