

## International Summer School

### **“Animalia: Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Explorations”**

(05. - 09.09.2016)

What is an ‘animal’? And what is the relationship between animals labelled ‘human’ and ‘non-human’? How (and by whom) are these groups produced as fundamentally different or as closely related? Various answers to this field of questions are provided by disciplines ranging from the Humanities to the Natural Sciences and prove the process of negotiating the dividing line between human and non-human animals to be highly dynamic and contested. *When Species Meet* (Haraway 2007), *Thinking with Animals* (Daston/Mitman 2005), *Eating Animals* (Foer 2009), or *Animals and Society* (De Mello 2012) are some of the titles that fuel the debate being carried out in academia, feuillets, and lifestyle magazines under the labels *Animal Studies* or *Human-Animal Studies*.

*Animal Studies* scholars question the ‘naturalness’ and ‘thingness’ often attached to animals and, with a distinctly anti-essentialist perspective, focus on ‘the animal’ as a product of complex processes of construction that involve both human and non-human animals, are clearly structured according to categories of difference like race, gender, and class, and are historically and locally situated. Moreover, a critical perspective on agency leads scholars to interrogate traditional models of human-animal relations.

Biologically speaking, a mouse may be described as a mammal displaying complex social behavior. In historical representations, however, the mouse is typically depicted as a harbinger of sickness and death. Popular representations such as Disney’s *Mickey Mouse* or *Tom & Jerry* do little to improve the reputation of the small rodent, yet the genetically manipulated and internationally patented OncoMouse™ acts in laboratory experiments to end (human) cancer (cf. Haraway 1997). Considering these semantic and normative implications and connotations attached to (the construction of) animals, it seems obvious that the relation between human and non-human animal is different between human and mouse or between human and chimpanzee or human and shark. Yet whether the shark is described as a bloodthirsty aggressor or as an individual worthy of protection depends much more on the human and on contemporary prevailing discourses than on the shark. An *Animal Studies*-informed perspective analyzes practices, actors, and representations of ‘the animal’ in the context of ethics, economy, ecology, culture, and biology, and links them with intersecting categories like race and gender.

The summer school “Animalia: Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Explorations” focuses on questions of human and non-human animal relations and aims at discussing notions of ‘the animal’ from various disciplinary perspectives.

**Visit our website for a preliminary programme and further information:**

<https://www.uni-oldenburg.de/en/english-american/research/projects/animal-studies/>

**Teaching format:** The summer school consists of a mix of lectures, seminar discussions, workshops and field trips. Students are encouraged to present their own research ideas and to propose topics and materials for the workshop sessions in advance.

**Eligibility:** The summer school is particularly aimed at graduate students, but also invites post-graduate students (M.A., M.Ed., PhD candidates) of all disciplines to apply. Depending on capacity, applications from BA students will also be considered. The number of participants is limited to 25.

**Language:** Texts, talks, and discussions will be in both English and German.

**ECTS:** Participation in the summer school is rewarded with 6 ECTS for full participation and preparation of assigned materials; 9 ECTS for participants presenting a research project / workshop material *or* a written assignment after class; and 12 ECTS for participants presenting a research project / workshop material *and* a written assignment. Written assignments may include term papers, response papers, conference reports, or articles published in the student online journal *forsch!*

**Costs:** Participants will have to cover costs for their own travel and accommodation. The organizers will provide a list of reasonably priced hostels and hotels prior to the summer school. The tuition fee for the summer school is 40 Euros (early bird-registration, i.e. transfer within 14 days after confirmation of the application) or 60 Euros (regular registration, i.e. transfer later than 14 days after confirmation). Tuition fees cover teaching materials, entry fees to the museum and the cinema, coffee breaks and refreshments during the day, and the conference dinner.

**Application:** Write a motivation letter (up to one page of text; pdf format; see website for further information) that explains your interest in the summer school and fill in the online registration form. You'll receive a confirmation e-mail with bank details and will be asked to transfer the tuition fee (indicating dates for early bird fee or regular fee). Enrollment is complete only after the transference of the fee.

**The deadline for application is July 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.**

Contact us via e-mail [animalstudies@uni-oldenburg.de](mailto:animalstudies@uni-oldenburg.de) or find us on facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/uniolanimalia>