

# The Animal Turn: Posthumanism and the Anthropocene



Franz Marc: The White Bull (1880-1916)

This course will focus on the new interdisciplinary field of study, Critical Animal Studies. This is a field dedicated to the examination of our culture’s ideas about animal lives and where we as human beings stand in relation to those lives. Our readings are shaped by two concepts, two philosophical discourses—Posthumanism and the Anthropocene. Posthumanism in Animal Studies refers to a set of ideas that seek to go beyond the sense of human exceptionalism that underwrites Humanism. The Anthropocene is a geologic term used to mark the impact of human beings on the planet since at least the advent of the industrial age and encompasses what has come to be called “the sixth Great Extinction” as well as the transformations of life through direct human intervention (genetic engineering, wildlife “management” etc.). We will read works by literary writers (both popular and highbrow), historians, sociologists, ethologists, philosophers, and Environmental Humanities Scholars.

**ENGL 617 Summer 2024 TTH 11:00-1:45 p.m. Instructor: Ziba Rashidian**  
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