

Spring 2022

## Social Justice and Racial Equity and Animals

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Semester taught assignment (if applicable): Spring, 2022  
Course Title (if applicable): Animals and Society  
Assignment Title: Social Justice and Racial Equity and Animals  
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Context: Provide approximately 100-400 words to contextualize this assignment.

This assignment asks students to interrogate a cultural text via a human/animal studies lens, to see how that text both racializes/"otherizes" a minoritized segment of US society, and also animals. Moreso, students are asked to use a critical discourse analysis to see how the text utilizes animals as a trope where the animals are demeaned, and that presentation of animals is projected onto a minoritized "other," thus justifying the oppression and exclusion of those in that otherized social category. The goal is that students will recognize this otherizing text that mentally and linguistically justifies oppression, of both animal others and certain humans, is problematic and perpetuates various forms of internalized dominance and oppression.

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**From the syllabus:**

### **SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126 and 2nd floor, MLK Library. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website \(Links to an external site.\)](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook.

### **Library Liaison:**

Our library liaison is Peggy Cabrera. She can assist you with any research or library-related questions you may have. Her e-mail address is [Peggy.Cabrera@sjsu.edu](mailto:Peggy.Cabrera@sjsu.edu) and her campus phone number is 408-808-2034.

### **Assignment description:**

Social Justice and Racial Equity and Animals (*10% of total grade*)— Students will analyze entanglements among racializing and colonial discourses about humans, histories of race/gender/sexuality/colonialism, and the ecology and politics of animals lives.

For this paper you are to undertake a discourse analysis (see Stibbe book) on a movie, book, advertisement (print, media), a political speech, popular meme, or some other data point from mainstream US culture, broadly defined. This data point must be from the 2000s. Utilizing Stibbe and two other peer-reviewed journal sources you are to deconstruct the messaging of the artifact, and:

- 1) Observe how the framing and messaging exhibits speciesism/contributes to the oppression of non-human animals, and
- 2) Connects that oppression and dehumanization, directly to the oppression and dehumanization of a segment of the US population based on an “othered” status (nationality, gender, sexual preference, race, ableism, neurodiversity, religion) where this oppression and scripted dehumanization is also present in the discourse being analyzed.

After making this discourse analysis, you will use 2 more peer reviewed sources on the history of tropes and discourses that correlate certain humans with animals in the history of the US to show how such language is damaging to contemporary inclusivity and justifies the history of “othered” members of society; and then use Stibbe to explore how it perpetuates damaging stereotypes of animal others, as well, that justifies their mistreatment.

Note: Stibbe is required to be used, but the other 4 peer-reviewed journal articles must come from your own research and not assigned course readings. However, other course readings can be used, they will just not count as any of the 4.

The paper should be between 3 to 5 pages in length. Length will vary depending on the discourse data point you are analyzing. Assume I do not know the media piece, so you will have to transcribe and share relevant passages and describe relevant images. You can include the artifact at the end of the paper (or a link to it).

Students who want to create a collage, or video presentation, or poem, or song, or an infographic, or tweet thread, or podcast, of the artifact under question can do so. Please let me know if you want to pursue another creative option via email and we can Zoom to discuss.

Papers should be 12 size font, Times New Roman, double spaced, using MLA formatting.

\*\*\*Please observe SJSU’s academic honesty (i.e. plagiarism) policy when undertaking this assignment.

Grading Rubric:

	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
Structure— introduction, main analysis, conclusion, etc.	No opening, no conclusion, total lack of clarity and flow; minimal mention of an	A basic, short introduction with some structure and brief conclusion; oppressed and	Clear thesis statement, presentation of the discourse data point, and clear transitions	Clear thesis and compelling introduction that sets up the “what’s at stake,” clear presentation of the

	oppressed social group	minoritized social group is identified, but minimal data given on how and why they have been oppressed	between paragraphs throughout the paper; targeted social group is identified and the past and present history of their oppression/s briefly shared	data discourse being analyzed, appropriate and strategic use of sources, clear conclusion; minoritized social group that is being oppressed is clearly introduced and how they are minoritized (past and present) in the US via laws and other structural inequalities
Use of Stibbe	Stibbe is not used, or if used does not adequately clarify what discourses are	Stibbe is used to provide a basic overview of discourses	Stibbe is used strategically, to help clarify what discourses are and how they shape society and people's views of the world around them	Key quotes and passages from Stibbe are strategically utilized to explore and explain how discourses shape society and people's understanding of both animals and others in society
Use of 4 peer reviewed sources	Less than 4 peer reviewed sources are found; sources do not help contextualize and analyze the discourse and its impact on animal and social oppressions	Less than 4 peer reviewed sources are found and utilized to analyze the discourse; or, sources only partly help analyze the discourse, and lack clarity in how the discourse impacts animal and social oppressions	4 sources are found and utilized to help frame the discourse and analyze its impact on animals and society	4 relevant sources on critical race theory, DEI, theories of oppression, and other similar sources are found from leading scholars and expertly used to help drive your analysis of the discourse and dual impacts on both animals and society
Relevant discourse data point is found and analyzed	Data point found is not clear in how it conflates animals to an	Data point is clear in connecting animality and	Data point is compelling and robust in its presentation of	Data point is a clear example of readily available discourse/discourse

	<p>“othered” social group, or is too short of a data point to successfully analyze over 3 to 5 pages</p>	<p>social oppression of a social group and provides enough data to analyze over 3 to 5 pages</p>	<p>animals/oppressed social group connection</p>	<p>used in a venue of power, that will impact viewers/audiences, and is analyzed clearly and succinctly and it its totality, to evidence how it justifies oppression of both animals and a minoritized social group</p>
<p>Formatting, grammar, typos, etc.</p>	<p>Multiple typos, formatting requirements largely not followed</p>	<p>Some typos, lack of concision in writing, formatting is not consistent</p>	<p>MLA formatting is followed, no typos, concise writing and appropriate grammar are all utilized</p>	<p>MLA formatting is followed, no typos, concise writing and appropriate grammar are all utilized</p>