

Course Syllabus B Fall 2009

English 2306: Predators in Literature

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MAB 112



Office Hours: TT 9:30-11, 3-4:00, W 2-

Or by appointment
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Texts: London, Jack. **The Call of the Wild** (Prestwich House)
Lynch, Tom. **El Lobo: Readings on the Mexican Gray Wolf** (U of Utah)
George, Jean Craighead. **Julie of the Wolves** (Harper/Teen)
Baron, David. **The Beast in the Garden** (Norton)
Texts will be supported by handouts

Course Objectives: Students will be able to

- ! recognize and appreciate literary types and genres (fable, beast epic, legend, magical realism, fiction, natural history)
- ! recognize and evaluate differences between science and imagination
- ! become familiar with major authors who have written about predators
- ! become familiar with literary theory and criticism which is especially illuminating to the predator (Marxism, Orientalism, Romanticism, Ecocriticism)
- ! become familiar with various political, economic, race, and gender issues connected to and influenced by representations of predators in literature
- ! recognize connections between literature and environmental issues
- ! become familiar with literary and environmental terminology
- ! improve their own critical reading and thinking skills

Evaluation: Students will complete assigned readings in accordance with the course schedule. Quizzes, written responses, and discussion will be part of the course format, although the major portion of the grade will be determined by performance on examinations. A short research project will be required. Grades will be determined based upon the following percentages:

50% Exams (four, one of which is the final exam)	A=90% or above
20% Class participation--quizzes, discussion, assignments	B=80-89%
20% Imagination vs. Reality Research project	C=70-79%
10% Extra credit (bringing in found items to share with class	D=60-69%
Or various other opportunities to be announced)	F=59 or below

Make-up work: Since exams will be shared with the class, students missing an exam date will also need to make up an oral presentation. No make-ups will be given for quizzes or other daily exercises that are missed. Grades on all late work will be lowered one letter grade.

Attendance: Class attendance is governed by the policy stated in the current SRSU bulletin.

Research project: Students will choose a topic either from the following list or an approved topic of their own selection for a “Nature Faking Poster” research project. You will need to find an appropriate quotation from the literature, illustrate it, and find science or natural history to refute or support. (Warning...internet sites are totally unacceptable! We will discuss the reasons for that in class.) The goal is to contrast the difference between imagination (from the literature read in the class) and reality (science and/or natural history). The final presentation of the research will be a poster with grade determined by choosing and explaining a topic appropriate to literature from the class (50%), appropriate illustrations (25%), and science/fact (25%).

Possible topics:

- Alpha wolves
- Cannibalism
- Mate for life
- Friendly to women
- Raise human children
- Kill only sick & crippled
- Maintain balance of nature
- Sex with humans
- Habituation to humans
- Wolves eat mice
- Scrapes are communication
- Practices surplus killing
- Example: Never kill humans



Literature: “The pose was disarmingly relaxed: the right arm rested comfortably on the ground, the left arm was bent at the elbow with the hand placed gently on the abdomen, the legs were extended, and the feet tilted slightly outward. The sneakered feet, the bare legs, the gloved hands that emerged from the sleeves of a sweatshirt appeared intact, normal, but the young man’s chest was not intact, far from it. A cavernous hole gaped in the upper torso, and the insides had been removed. The left lung was missing. So was the heart” (205). **From *The Beast in the Garden* by David Baron.**

Science: “Documentation from the years 1890 to 2000 of 185 instances of **pumas** (*Puma concolor*) attacking humans in the United States and Canada has provided statistical evidence that **pumas** are less likely to kill or injure humans in certain circumstances. We identified incidents of fatal **attacks**, severe injuries, light injuries, and no injuries as a function of human age class, group size, body posture, and conspicuous action, such as noise making, running, or shooting. Ordinal multinomial regression revealed that age class (< 13 years old vs. older) was not a statistically reliable predictor of **attack** severity. This statistical method also revealed that there was no reliable association between the number of individuals present during the **attack** and **attack** severity. Nevertheless, examination of specific **attack** outcomes indicated that the likelihood of escaping injury increased when two or more people were present. The speed that individuals moved during the **attack** did not predict **attack** severity, but it was apparent that the lowest likelihood of escaping injury (26%) and greatest frequency of severe injuries (43%) occurred when individuals remained stationary. In contrast, half of the individuals who ran when they were attacked escaped injury, whereas running was associated with only a small increase in the frequency of fatal **attacks** (28%), compared with remaining stationary (23%). Evidence that half of the individuals who ran escaped injury suggests that **pumas** are assessing immobility in humans as they might with other prey, using it as an index of prey inattention or disablement and hence greater vulnerability.”

Coss, R. G., E. L. Fitzhugh, S. Schmid-Holmes, MW. Kenyon, K. Etling. 2009. “The Effects of Human Age, Group Composition, and Behavior on the Likelihood of Being Injured by Attacking Pumas.” *Anthrozoos* 22:77-87.

Predators in Literature – Tentative Schedule Fall 2009

Date	In Class	Read before class
Th 8/20	Intro-general, explain Research project, mascots, Miss Sully, write, walk Powerpoint on Predators in Literature	
T 8/25	Legends, wolf & trapper, Explain legend assignment, McBride/Seton,	<i>Lobo</i> 228-235 <i>Lobo</i> 89-105
Th 8/27	Today class meets from 2:00-2:50 (Freshman Convocation + Fall on Mall)- reading sign, government trapping, crisis for funding (Caywood)	
T 9/1	Trapper DVD	
Th 9/3	Christian symbols: lamb/wolf, St. Francis, Corbett & Tiger, ecocriticism	<i>Lobo</i> 77-83
T 9/8	Poison as symbol: Merlin/Faust/Hamlet, 1080, McCarthy's Echols)	
Th 9/10	Thief/Marxist crit on wolf and coyote in cowboy poetry, Legend due*	
T 9/15	Test 1 Due: History, Legends & Symbols	
Th 9/17	Multicultural myth (Scandinavia, Korea, Russia, Africa, S. America) Trophy (Hemingway, Roosevelt, Capstick, Corbett, Masai)	Read London's <i>Call of the Wild</i>
T 9/22	Coyote god/warrior/trickster, anthropomorphism, explain coyote assign.	Read London's <i>Call of the Wild</i>
Th 9/24	Guest speaker: Diana Crider on bears	Read London's <i>Call of the Wild</i>
T 9/29	Wolf star myth in Planetarium?	Read London's <i>Call of the Wild</i>
Th 10/1	Dances with Wolves DVD 62	
T 10/6	Romanticism, Noble Savage, discuss London, Leopold, Coyote Story due* Godly wolf, bad trappers (Stegner, Mattheissen, Evans, McCarthy)	<i>Lobo</i> 84-86
Th 10/8	Test 2 Due: Myth, Romanticism & Fable	
T 10/13	Insanity (werewolves, child killers, sexual molesters, deviants, wolf children, Estés, TTW bear), (LRR) Explain LRR gender assign, adult fables, story cycles (priest/nun), Seducer/whore (London)	<i>Lobo</i> 74-76 <i>Lobo</i> 41-46
Th 10/15	Satire and children's lit, 3 Little Pigs +, Objectified (wilderness, art, pet, entertainment, tourism, ads)	Read <i>Julie & Wolves</i>
T 10/20	Wild/domestic (sheep/wolf, wilderness) (Austin-coyote, griz, man) Female hunters (Silko, Stillwell, Stange), McCarthy's female wolf	Read <i>Julie & Wolves</i>
Th 10/22	Parent figures (Rom & Rem, Mowlgi), babysitter, Julie & Wolves Good father, mate for life, ecofeminism, Tuan, Orientalism	Read <i>Julie & Wolves</i>
T 10/27	Nature Faking Play (Roosevelt, Muir, Seton, Knowles, etc.)	
Th 10/29	Scientist as character (Rabinowitz & video, Mech), advocacy vs. truth (conference call to Will Graves), New Little Red Riding Hood gender story due*	<i>Lobo</i> 169 - 175 <i>Lobo</i> 197-202 <i>Lobo</i> 215-19
T 11/3	Test 3 Due: Fables, Satire, Gender, & Children	
Th 11/5	Use and abuse of science, lynx affair, academic honesty, plagiarism, (McBride/Brown/McCarthy, Mowat/Murie, Leopold?)	<i>Lobo</i> 183-196
T 11/10	Never Cry Wolf video (VRT 3199)	
Th 11/12	Modernism, gothic (spider), wolf as people eater	
T 11/17	Tracks/sign vs. imagination, Guest speaker Roy McBride	<i>Lobo</i> 207-214
Th 11/19	Meet in Library to begin Posters & research	Read <i>Beast in the Garden</i>

	THANKSGIVING	Read <i>Beast in the Garden</i>
T 12/1	Posters due* /Share with class, discuss <i>Beast in Garden</i>	Read <i>Beast in the Garden</i>
Th 12/3	Natural History, Review for final Exam	Read <i>Beast in the Garden</i>
Th 12/10	Final Exam = Test 4 Due: Modernism, Science, & Natural History	

***These assignments will be creative assignments and will be explained in class.**