Dear Section Members,

I am really excited to serve as Chair of this Section. It's been a few years since I woke to the reality of animal exploitation and the roles non-human animals play in the social world and our personal lives. It was then that I came to this Section and was so happy to have found a progressive group of thinkers committed to social justice for all. I'm honored to be able to give back a little.

My goal as Chair this year is to enhance the Section's visibility and reputation within the ASA. We have so much to offer but it seems that few people know about us (or take the area seriously). We need to get our message out there. In this issue you'll read about some of the exciting research, courses and activism you or your colleagues are doing. Featured in this issue is Laura Carpenter and Elizabeth Barna's research entitled "Fillies and Feminism: Representations of Female Racehorses in Popular and Sports Media, 1974-2015." Also our three award-winners' scholarship and course are featured. Caleb Scoville (UC Berkley) is the year's recipient of the Jane Goodall Award for Graduate Student Scholarship. Betsie Garner and David Grazian won the 2017 Animals & Society Award for Distinguished Scholarship, and you can read about their research here. Finally, Jenny Vermilya talks about her course that was selected for the 2017 Clifton Bryant Animals & Society Course Award.

I'm in the process of forming committees. Elizabeth Barna has graciously agreed to chair the membership committee. If you are interested in serving on membership or other committees, including Awards and Social Media/Website, please let me know.

Be sure to check out our webpage at http://www.asanet.org/communities/sections/sites/animals-and-society and our blog: http://www.asanet.org/asa-communities/sites/animals-and-society/blog to learn more about the section and what our members are doing.

Looking forward to a great year,

Liz
Our relationships with animals are mediated by scientific categories. Consider taxonomic knowledge. It tells us which animals make up a particular "kind," based on criteria of inclusion and exclusion. Yet, this form of knowledge, I contend, should not be the purview of biologists alone. Some of the most intense environmental political conflicts hang on such distinctions, which help us identify which species face the threat of extinction. Further, my research shows that taxonomy isn't merely scientific knowledge with political effects. On the contrary, we should connect this insight to an analysis of how knowledge of "nature" is produced in the first place. Precisely, I show that the relationship between human-nonhuman relations and the production of politically potent environmental knowledge calls for a reorientation of the study of environmental politics to include a "historical ontology of the nonhuman."

Through an in-depth case study of the delta smelt, an endangered species of fish caught in the center of California's "water wars," I show how shifting ways of instrumentalizing the nonhuman environment facilitate new environmental knowledge that allows actors to make claims and form coalitions that would be otherwise inconceivable. Because its sole habitat is the hub of California's hydraulic infrastructure, efforts to save the species have fomented ongoing high profile conflict between environmentalists and water users. Charting the historical dynamics of fisheries management and ichthyology, I demonstrate that the classification of the delta smelt as a species arose directly from the shift from treating fish as an object of commerce and natural resource conservation to an object of engineering and systematic science that was coeval with the reengineering of California's hydrology. The very project of transforming its habitat for extractive ends allowed the delta smelt to emerge as a scientific object of inquiry and an entity considered worth of environmental concern.
As a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania, I never intended to spend time studying nonhuman animals and society. I was interested in culture, gender, and parenting and expected to study Homo sapiens exclusively. But when the opportunity came along to work as a research assistant to David Grazian, I eagerly agreed to spend my free afternoons and weekends conducting ethnographic fieldwork in urban zoos. Before too long, I noticed parents articulating their cultural understandings of nature and gender as they made comments about zoo animals to their children. Together, Dave and I carefully analyzed these interactions and identified several patterns: (1) adults projected human characteristics associated with masculine and feminine stereotypes onto zoo animals; (2) adults used zoo exhibits as props as they performed normative displays of femininity and masculinity; and (3) adults disciplined boys and girls differently in the context of the zoo’s built environment. We identified these patterns as instances in which parents and other adults quite literally naturalize hegemonic cultures of human gender difference by associating them with the biological determinism of the natural living world. Our study helps to explain the stubborn appeal of natural explanations for cultural differences by illuminating processes through which adults suggest to children that gender is a natural, rather than cultural, phenomenon. Moreover, our work demonstrates how research on nonhuman animals and society can have important implications for theories in other subfields as well. Indeed, otters, apes, snakes, giraffes, and polar bears have each contributed to my own understanding of the culture of gender among humans.

Betsie Garner, Ph.D.
Tennessee Technical University

David Grazian, Ph.D.
University of Pennsylvania

Betsie Garner is an instructor of Sociology at Tennessee Technical University where she teaches Introductory Sociology. She received a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania in 2017, and a BA in Sociology from Emory University in 2011. She uses qualitative research methods to study family, culture, and place. Her work has been published in Qualitative Sociology, Social Psychology Quarterly, and The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.
Jenny R. Vermilya is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of North Georgia on the Dahlonega campus in the Department of Sociology & Human Services. She earned her Ph.D. from the Department of Sociology at the University of Colorado at Boulder. She has a B.A. in Sociology and a B.S. in Psychology from the University of Georgia where she graduated Cum Laude. Her specialties lie in the sociological areas of gender, human-animal studies, social psychology, and qualitative methodology. She is a former fellow of the Animals & Society Institute's Human-Animal Studies Fellowship. Dr. Vermilya was one of the recipients of The Best Should Teach Silver Award from the Graduate Teacher Program at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Overview

This course serves as a study into the category of “animal” as a social construct and the relationship between humans and non-human animals, which produces consequences of difference and subsequent inequality. The prerequisite for this class is SOCI 1101 as this material is meant to build upon foundational sociological knowledge learned in that course. We will be utilizing different sociological perspectives to examine the social patterns, processes, and institutions that establish our lived experiences with non-human animals.

My goal as an instructor is to relate how these social forces shape our individual lives, as animals are embedded in nearly all aspects of social life, hopefully answering the question “why am I taking this class?”

Some Evaluations

Film Viewing Guides (20% total): There will be two films that I will show in class. You must watch each film and complete a film viewing guide which will consist of questions relating the film to class concepts.

“A Day in the Life” Project (30%): This is a service learning project that gets you involved in our community, specifically in the parts of our community that deal with non-human animals. You are responsible for connecting with an organization, or an individual, that works with non-human animals and ask them if you can come observe, and participate in (if allowed), their work. This does not have to be for a full day, nor does it have to be limited to just a day. Just be sure to have spent enough time observing so that you can write a short reflection paper on your experience and present the highlights to the class. You will be evaluated on how well you connect your observations to class concepts.

The primary questions driving their research are: How do news stories present and construct maleness and femaleness (i.e., sex) and masculinity and femininity (i.e., gender)? How have depictions of female racehorses changed (or not) over time? How has news coverage of female Thoroughbreds been influenced by, and how in turn has it influenced, the broader social-historical context - including periods of feminist activism and responses to it? and, How are depictions of female equine athletes related to representations of human women athletes? In addressing these questions, they seek to contribute to four literatures: gender and sexuality studies, media studies, sociology of sport, and human-animal studies.

Carpenter and Barna find that journalists and their sources routinely anthropomorphized the horses and used highly gendered language when discussing them: they were presented as masculine-yet-feminine, heterosexual, and maybe (not) able to compete with males. This closely parallels dominant media representations of female human athletes. Yet, depictions of female racehorses also changed in theme and tone over time, in ways that correspond broadly to waves of feminist activism. Discussions of female racehorses provided proxies for debates about human gender relations, especially gender relations in the workplace and efforts to combine paid work and family/children.

Laura M. Carpenter, Ph.D.
Vanderbilt University

Elizabeth K. Barna
Ph.D. Student
Vanderbilt University

Laura M. Carpenter is Associate Professor of Sociology at Vanderbilt University. A scholar of gender, sexuality, health, embodiment, and the life course, she is author of *Virginity Lost: An Intimate Portrait of First Sexual Experiences* (NYU Press, 2005) and coeditor of *Sex for Life: From Virginity to Viagra, How Sexuality Changes Throughout our Lives* (NYU Press, 2012). She grew up in Maryland horse country.

Elizabeth K. Barna is a sociology Ph.D. student at Vanderbilt University. She works at the intersection of the Sociology of Culture, Social Movements, Work, and Human-Animal Studies, where her research examines the relationship between systems of meaning and systems of oppression. She serves as a graduate student representative for ASA's Animals and Society Section, and as an associate editor for the journal *Work and Occupations.*
**BOOKS**

Corey Lee Wrenn  
*A Rational Approach to Animal Rights: Extensions in Abolitionist Theory*  
Palgrave (Nov, 2016)  
Applying critical sociological theory, this book explores the shortcomings of popular tactics in animal liberation efforts. Building a case for a scientifically grounded grassroots approach, it is argued that professionalized advocacy that works in the service of theistic, capitalist, patriarchal institutions will find difficulty achieving success.

Dan Moorehead (Editor)  
*Animals In Human Society: Amazing Creatures Who Share Our Planet*  
Including the work of 12 authors from institutions such as Colorado State University, Frostburg State University, Michigan State University, Salisbury University, Texas Women’s University, University of Birmingham, University of California; Irvine, University of California; Merced, and William Jessup University, Rocklin; California, the collection of essays explores the broad range of animals who share our planet and attempts to recognize our responsibility as humans to take their interests seriously.

**ARTICLES**


**LINKS**

London Review of Books - *The Sucker, the Sucker!* By Amia Srinivasan (Sep 7, 2017)  
[https://www.lrb.co.uk/v39/n17/amia-srinivasan/the-sucker-the-sucker](https://www.lrb.co.uk/v39/n17/amia-srinivasan/the-sucker-the-sucker)

National Geographic - *Dogs Show 'Sad Puppy Face' More Often When Being Watched* (Sep 21, 2017)  


**FESTIVAL**

Lantern Books is proud to be one of the sponsors of the *Compassion Arts & Culture and Animals Festival*. This Festival is a collaboration between *Compassion Arts* and the *Culture & Animals Foundation* (CAF), that will bring together many artists, musicians, scholars, and more! Tickets are available [here](http://mailchi.mp/lanternbooks/lantern-authors-take-part-in-vegan-arts-festival-in-nyc?e=9fd508957b).

This is a two day festival taking place at *Symphony Space* in New York City this weekend, October the 21st & 22nd. In addition, there will be an opening reception of a pop-up art exhibit titled *Beasts of Burden*, on Friday, the 20th, which will last the whole weekend at the *TUF Gallery*.

Not in New York City? Be sure to share with anyone who might be interested!
The 2017 ASA Annual Meeting was held August 12-15 in Montreal, Canada. You may view the 2017 Annual Meeting Online Program.

ASA Animals and Society Section past Chair, Michelle Proctor (left), and current Chair, Elizabeth Grauerholz.

Animals and Society Section members enjoying vegan treats during the section reception.

In the company of Animals and Society Section members!
Call for Papers

For a Book of Essays on
Our Animals/Ourselves: The Blurred Line Between Human and Animal in Popular Culture

Anthropomorphization permeates modern popular culture in examples as familiar as Disney’s depiction of animals to moral lessons from children’s literature to our cultural preoccupations with internet cats. Increasingly, however, forms and adaptations of anthropomorphization are extending how this concept is expressed and blurring the lines between animal and human in significant ways. A multi-billion dollar pet product industry is driven by the growing view of pets as full family members. Cosmetic surgery, once reserved for humans, is now being done on dogs. Futuristic science fiction scenarios are becoming bioengineered reality. And where does the “furry” trend fit in?

Using the lens of popular culture, this book examines the significance of these social constructs surrounding the complexities of the human-animal relationship. Contributions will address how and why the traits and characteristics we ascribe to animals have significant consequences by shaping our relationships with animals and other humans, our understandings of ourselves and what it means to be human, and the consequences of these representations for the nonhuman animals who share this world. As behaviors, roles, and expectations that used to be reserved for humans now apply to animals, are lines between human and animal being obfuscated? How are animals becoming, and being treated, more like humans, and to a lesser degree, how are humans becoming more like animals? How are animals becoming extensions of people’s identities? How are media facilitating this? Simply put, in many ways, this is not so much a book about animals but a book about us--and the ways we regard animals.

Our Animals/Ourselves: The Blurred Line Between Human and Animal in Popular Culture will be published by McFarland & Co. It will include approximately twenty chapters. In general, papers should be ten to twenty-five, double-spaced pages and follow the current MLA Style Manual with in-text citations. Notes and works cited should appear at the end. Interdisciplinary work is welcomed. Chapters may include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

Advertising To, About, and Using Animals
Animals as Extensions of Human Identity (e.g., as personal or political statement, as fashion, etc.)
Animals and the Family (e.g., we increasingly treat them like human family members)
Animals as Persons/Personhood (includes ties to animal rights movements)
Animals, variously as Images in Art, in Children’s Literature, in Film and TV
Body modifications: of animal bodies that treat them like humans such as cosmetic surgery, and of human bodies to make them more like animals, and the “furry” trend
Case Studies of Real-life Anthropomorphized Animals and Animal-Human Intersections – examples: Pedals the bear; Toast and Finn’s dog wedding; Nano, the human woman who identifies as a cat
Disneyfication
Hero Animals and Criminal Animals
The Internet and Animals
Meanings and Consequences of Popular Perceptions of Specific Animals – examples: horses, dinosaurs, spiders
Pet Product Industry (the more we anthropomorphize animals, the more we buy them human stuff)
Science Fiction and Anthropomorphized Animals (including uplift, human-animal boundaries and ethics, and futuring)

Inquiries and submissions should be sent to any of the following editors:

Kathy Merlock Jackson, Ph.D.
Professor of Communication
Virginia Wesleyan University
1584 Wesleyan Drive
Norfolk, VA 23502
Phone: (757) 455-3308
kmjackson@vwu.edu

Kathy Shepherd Stolley
Professor of Sociology
Virginia Wesleyan University
1584 Wesleyan Drive
Norfolk, VA 23502
Phone: (757) 233-8768
kstolley@vwu.edu

Lisa Lyon Payne, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Communication
Virginia Wesleyan University
1584 Wesleyan Drive
Norfolk, VA 23502
Phone: (757) 455-3109
lpayne@vwu.edu

ACCEPTING PROPOSALS NOW. COMPLETED ARTICLES DUE AUGUST 1, 2018
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Fall 2017 Newsletter
Editors
Erin Nicole Kidder, University of Central Florida
erin.kdder@knights.ucf.edu

Elizabeth Grauerholz, University of Central Florida
elizabeth.grauerholz@ucf.edu

Michelle Proctor, Madonna University

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

You must be a member of the ASA to join the section. You can join the ASA or renew your membership online. Whether you renew electronically or through the mail, please remember to renew your membership in the section on Animals & Society at the same time. Remember that sections members are eligible for a 25% discount on subscriptions to the journal "Society & Animals."

Dues are only $10.00 for regular and low income and $5.00 for student members. Please encourage a friend, student, or associate to join us, too! Our younger and future members of the discipline seem especially aware of the many issues and concerns that arise within this subject area, and so we hope that their mentors will make them aware that this forum exists - and perhaps even sponsor a student's membership.

For more information, contact the section's Chair: Elizabeth Grauerholz, University of Central Florida, elizabeth.grauerholz@ucf.edu