

SWMS: 560

FALL 2015

Prof. Jack Halberstam

**Wild Things – Queer and Feminist Theory at the End of the
World**

“What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.”

Gerald Manley Hopkins

Strange weather, zombie apocalypse, never ending war, ruthless capitalism, organ harvesting, drones, and the list of threats to human existence goes on. While a general air of intensifying crisis hangs heavy around us, there are also signs of new life, new modes of protest, different imaginaries of collectivity and distinctly post-human forms of belonging, being and becoming. In this seminar, we will range across theories and narratives of the end of the world, past and present, to look for feminist and queer insights into endings, beginnings and the wild in between.

Come as often as you can and never come empty handed. Drop in, drop out, drop by, drop everything. Bring something to share – a snack, a poem, an idea, a reading, a passage, a concept, a fantasy, a vision, a new world, an old world through new eyes, a performance, a promise, a story, an encounter.

Books

Monica Allewaert, *Ariel's Ecology: Plantations, Personhood and Colonialism in the American Tropics* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

Hagar Kotef, *Movement and The Ordering of Freedom: On Liberal Governances of Mobility* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993).

Helen MacDonald, *H is for Hawk* (New York, NY: Grove Press, 2015).

Fred Moten, *Feel Trio*. (New York: Letter Machine Editions, 2014).

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; Or, Life in the Woods (1845)* (London, UK: Dover Editions, 1995).

Alexander G. Weheliye, *Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

Readings (on Blackboard or online as indicated):

1. Thomas Hobbes, from *Leviathan*, Part One:

<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/hobbes1651part1.pdf>

2) Hayden White, “The Forms of Wildness: Archaeology of An Idea” in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press): 150-182. Online here:

http://abuss.narod.ru/Biblio/eng/white_tropics.pdf

3) Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: or A Treatise on Education* - Selections. Selections chosen by Catherine Elgin from *Emile: or A Treatise on Education* by Jean Jacques Rousseau:

<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1443192.files/emileselections.pdf>

4) Pete Coviello, “Introduction: The Unspeakable Past” and Ch. 1 “Disappointment of Thoreau in Love” in *Tomorrow's Parties: Sex and the Untimely in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 2013): 1 – 47.

- 5) Jane Bennett, "Preface" (xxi-xxxii) and "Writing a Heteroverse" in *Thoreau's Nature: Ethics, Politics and the Wild* (NY: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002): 47-77.
- 6) Eduardo Kohn, "Runa Puna," and "The Open Whole" from *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013): 1-70.
- 7) Daphne Brooks, "The Escape Artist: Henry Box Brown, Black Abolitionist Performance and Moving Panoramas of Slavery" in *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2006): 66-130.
- 8) Jodi A. Byrd, "Introduction" and "Zombie Imperialism" from *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011): xv-??.
- 9) Karen McCarthy Brown, "Afro-Caribbean Spirituality: A Haitian Case Study" in *Voodoo in Haitian Life and Culture: Invisible Powers* edited by Claudine Michel and Patrick Bellegarde Smith (London, UK: Palgrave, 2006): 1 – 26.
http://www.iupui.edu/~womrel/REL%20300%20Spirit/REL%20300_Spirit/Brown_AfroCaribbeanSSpirituality_Haiti.pdf
- 10) Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, "Animal: New Directions in the Theorization of Race and Posthumanism." *Feminist Studies* 39, no. 3. © 2013 by Feminist Studies, Inc. 669.
https://www.academia.edu/6169668/Animal_New_Directions_in_the_Theorization_of_Race_and_Posthumanism
- 11) Martin Manalansan, "The Stuff of Archives: Mess, Migration and Queer Lives" in *Radical History Review* Issue 120 (Fall 2014): 94-107 -
<http://rhr.dukejournals.org/content/2014/120/94.full.pdf>
- 12) John Law, "Making a Mess with Method," version of 19th January 2006, available at:
<http://www.heterogeneities.net/publications/Law2006MakingaMesswithMethod.pdf>

13) Tim Morton, “A Quake in Being” from *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After The End of the World* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

14) Simon Critchley, “Mystical Anarchism” from *The Faith of Faithlessness: Experiments in Political Theology* (New York and London: Verso Press, 2012): 103-154.

15) George Monbiot, “Sheepwrecked,” “The Hushings” and “The Beast Within” from *Feral: Rewilding the Land, Sea and Human Life* (London, UK: Penguin, 2013): 153 – 208.

16) Sarah Jane Cervenak, “Crooked Ways and Weak Pens: The Enactment of Enlightenment Against Slavery” from *Wandering: Philosophical Performances of Racial and Sexual Freedom* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014): 25 – 58.

17) Jared Sexton, “The Social Life of Social Death” in *InTensions Journal* York University (Toronto, Canada) Issue 5 (Fall/Winter 2011).
<http://www.yorku.ca/intent/issue5/articles/pdfs/jaredsextonarticle.pdf>

18) Lee Edelman, “The Future is Kid Stuff,” in *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005): 1 – 32.

19) Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, (London, UK: Hogarth press, 1955):
http://xenopraxis.net/readings/freud_beyondthepleasureprinciple.pdf

20) Lauren Berlant, “Cruel Optimism” in *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

21) Tavia Nyong’o, “Little Monsters: Race, Sovereignty, and Queer Inhumanism in *Beasts of the Southern Wild* in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* (2015) 21(2-3): 249-272 (online).

22) Benjamin Noys, “Introduction” to *Malign Velocities: Accelerationism and Capitalism* (New York, NY: Zero Books, 2014).

<http://sfbay-anarchists.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/benjamin-noys-excerpt.pdf>

23) Alex Galloway, “Does the Whatever Speak?” in *Race After the Internet*, edited by Lisa Nakamura and Peter Chow-White (New York: Routledge, 2012): 111 – 127.

<http://www.rasaneh.org/Images/News/AttachFile/29-5-1392/FILE635125840531259371.pdf>

24) Kara Keeling, “I = Another: Digital Identity Politics” in *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization*, eds. Grace Kyungwon Hong and Roderick Ferguson (Durham, NC: Duke

University Press, 2011): 53 – 75.

http://www.academia.edu/866767/I_Another_Digital_Identity_Politics

25) Paul Beatriz Preciado, “Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs and Biopolitics” in *E-Flux 04* (2013), Special Issue Edited by Carlos Motta.

<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/testo-junkie-sex-drugs-and-biopolitics/>

26) Laboria Cuboniks, “XF: Xenofeminism: A Politics for Alienation.”

<http://www.laboriacuboniks.net/>

SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTIONS: WHY THE WILD

August 24

Read: Thomas Hobbes, from *Leviathan*, Part One:
<http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/pdfs/hobbes1651part1.pdf>
Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, Sections 1 and 2.

Bring: A meditation on wildness to share – by you, by another, anonymous. All contributions appreciated.

Themes: The state of nature; wilderness and the state; modernity.

WEEK TWO:
August 31

WILD MEN AND NOBLE SAVAGES

Read: Hayden White, “The Forms of Wildness: Archaeology of An Idea” (**BB**); Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: or A Treatise on Education* Selections by. Selections chosen by Catherine Elgin.
Online at:
<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1443192.files/emileselections.pdf>

Watch: *L’Enfant Sauvage*, Dir. Francois Truffaut, 1970.

Themes: Education; the wild child; language and civilization.

WEEK THREE:
September 7

LABOR DAY
NO CLASS –

Read: SELECTIONS FROM *PRIMATE VISIONS*

WEEK FOUR:
September 14

INTO THE WILD
“Primates are a way into thinking about the world as a whole.” Donna Haraway

Read: Selections from *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989) by Donna Haraway: Chapters 1, 2, 3: pp. 1-58; Chapters 6, 7, 10: pp. 115-185; 244-278.

Watch: *Gorillas in the Mist* (1988)

Do: Go to a Natural History Museum somewhere, online even...

WEEK FIVE:
September 21

FURTHER INTO THE WILD
“Dogs inhabit the borderland between the civilized and the wildness that lies just beyond” Haraway**

Read: *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989) by Donna Haraway, Part 3; Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto*:

https://nihilsentimentalgia09.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/haraway_companion_species_manifesto.pdf

Themes: Animal companions; science and nature.

**Donna Haraway and Jonah Raskin (Interviewer). "Donna Haraway: Interview with a Dog Lover on a Dog Day Afternoon" in: *Docstoc*. Originally appeared in: *Santa Rosa Press Democrat, Santa Rosa, California*. September 14, 2003.

WEEK SIX: INTO THE WOODS
September 28

Read: Thoreau, *Walden, Or, Life in the Woods*; Jane Bennett, "Preface" (xxi-xxxii) and "Writing a Heteroverse" in *Thoreau's Nature (BB)*; Pete Coviello, from *Tomorrow's Parties (BB)*.

Themes: Nature; pre-linguistic excess; wildness.

WEEK SEVEN: FURTHER INTO THE WOODS
October 5

Read: Eduardo Kohn, "Runa Puna," and "The Open Whole" from *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human (BB)*; Fred Moten, *Feel Trio*.

Themes: Escape/Fugitivity; language; capture; release.

WEEK EIGHT OBJECTS AND HYPEROBJECTS OR W IS FOR WILD
October 12

Read: Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, section 3: "Revolution,"; Tim Morton from *Hyperobjects (BB)*; Simon Critchley from *Faith and Faithlessness (BB)*; George Monbiot, from *Feral (BB)*; Helen MacDonald, *H is for Hawk*.

Themes: Faith and faithlessness; wonder; rewilding.

Themes: Freedom of movement; checkpoints; lost.

WEEK THIRTEEN INTO THE VOID

November 16

Read: Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*; Jared Sexton, “The Social Life of Social Death”; Lee Edelman, “The Future is Kid Stuff” (**BB**); Lauren Berlant, from *Cruel Optimism* (**BB**).

Themes: Death and dying; social and anti-social; optimism and pessimism, cruel or otherwise.

WEEK FOURTEEN BEYOND THE HUMAN

November 23

Read: Alexander G. Weheliye, *Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*; Tavia Nyong'o, “Little Monsters” (online).

Watch: *Beasts of the Southern Wild* dir. Benh Zeitlen (2012).

WEEK FIFTEEN FAST, FASTER, WHATEVER...X

November 30

Read: Benjamin Noys, from *Malign Velocities*; Kara Keeling, “I = Other”; Alex Galloway, “Does The Whatever Speak?”; Paul Preciado, “Testo Junkie”; Laboria Cuboniks, “XF: Xenofeminism Manifesto.”

Themes: Accelerationism; Speculation; Whatever; X is for Wild.