

Dear Colleague,

The Wolfe Institute Interdisciplinary Study Group this semester will read Donna Haraway's new book *When Species Meet* (New York: Columbia UP, 2008).

Karl Steel, assistant professor of English, will be chairing the study group. Steel's areas of expertise are Medieval literature, intellectual history, and social practice; posthumanism; medieval discourses and practices about the boundaries between humans and animals. He has written the following introduction to this semester's discussion:

Haraway writes, "I am not a posthumanist; I am who I become with companion species, who and which make a mess out of categories in the making of kin and kind." "The coming into being of something unexpected, something new and free, something outside the rules of function and calculation, something not ruled by the logic of the reproduction of the same, is what training with each other is about." Such positions give a sense of how the study of animals has changed our sense of what is human - what its boundaries are, where its responsibilities take it.

Animals are the new frontier in ethics and posthuman philosophy. The last decade has seen an outpouring of critical work: the anthologies *Animal Others: On Ethics, Ontology, and Animal Life* (ed. H. Peter Steeves, 1999), *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics* (ed. Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan., 1996, rev. and expanded, 2006), *Killing Animals* (ed. Animal Studies Group, 2006), and *Zoontologies* (ed. Cary Wolfe, 2006), and synthetic monographs like Matthew Calarco's *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*. Chief among these works are Jacques Derrida's *The Animal that Therefore I Am* (a set of 1997 lectures) and, most recently, Donna Haraway's *When Species Meet*.

Like the other philosophers and literary critics of the animal question, Haraway critiques and sharpens continental philosophy (chiefly that of Deleuze and Guattari), but she distinguishes herself for her feminism and especially for her consideration of actual, rather than philosophical, animals: she engages with both current, ongoing work of biologists, ethologists, and geneticists and, at length, her own experience as an animal trainer. For these and other reasons-notably for her proposals on animal experimentation-Haraway is the best possible entrance to critical animal theory.

The Interdisciplinary Faculty Study Group will meet one Wednesday a month: September 9th, October 7th, November 11th, and December 9th, from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. at the Wolfe Institute, 2231 Boylan Hall.

The Institute has purchased a limited number of copies of When Species Meet, which are available to those who intend to join the study group. If you would like to join the group, please send an email to Magdelibia Garcia at Magdelib@brooklyn.cuny.edu.