

A close-up photograph of an elephant's head, focusing on its eye and the deeply wrinkled texture of its skin. The eye is partially visible, showing a dark iris and a reddish-brown sclera. The skin is a mix of grey and brown tones, with deep creases and ridges. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

CHID 250B

EXPLORING HUMAN AND NONHUMAN ANIMAL BODIES IN LITERATURE AND FILM

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The interests of human and nonhuman animals are sometimes at odds with one another and with the planet. Some animals are viewed (by humans) as sympathetic, others as valuable, and still others are viewed as pests. From resource allocation to food production to public policy, decisions are made based on human preferences and carried out by those in power. While sovereignty of humans is often exerted over nonhuman animals, this course will also question the boundaries of the human body and its place at “the top of the food chain.” Exploring “Animal Bodies” will interrogate the role of bodies (human and nonhuman) in society by examining literary and filmic works in which they feature prominently. Some questions we will investigate are: Whose bodies are subjugated and who are elevated? Why do we prefer certain bodies to others and what kinds of choices do we make based on those preferences? Where do our bodies end and where do others begin? Who exerts power over human and nonhuman bodies and to what end?