

## RELI 073H

# From Dragons to Pokémon: Animals in Japanese Myth, Folklore, and Religion



This course examines the cultural construction of animals in Japanese myth, folklore, and religion. The goals of this course are to familiarize students with important theories of animal studies as well as with Japanese religious history. We will analyze various kinds of animals: those that occur in the natural world, those that are found in myths and folklore, and those that have appeared in popular media such as science fiction and animation. We will discuss how images of animals were culturally constructed as tricksters, gods, monsters, or anthropomorphic companions, how animals were ritualized as divine, demonic, or sentient beings in Buddhism, Shinto, and folk religion, how animals could serve as metaphors that embodied collective ideals or nightmares, and how animals help forge human identities. Prior coursework on Japanese history, Japanese culture, or Asian religions is not required.

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**Tuesdays and Thursdays**  
2:00PM-3:15PM

**General Education Requirements: BN, LA, CI**

