Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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MA (University of Montana)
BA (University of Colorado)

“The Rhetoric of Wolves”

Department of English

Monday, August 20, 2018
10:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B017

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Stephen Ross, Department of English, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Iain Higgins, Department of English, UVic (Member)
Dr. James Rowe, School of Environmental Studies, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Stephanie Rutherford, School of Environment, Trent University

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Douglas Brant, Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract
This interdisciplinary dissertation, *The Rhetoric of Wolves*, attempts to answer a simple, yet broad question: What do we talk about when we talk about wolves? While even the “we” here is contentious, as there are many perspectives and positions through which the wolf is figured, there are also many kinds of wolves, but no “real” wolf. That is, this dissertation takes seriously the contention that has recently arisen in the environmental humanities and animal studies through the late work of Jacques Derrida and others that figurations of “the animal” matter, not only for multi-species relations and coexistence, but for how the subject and polity are constructed and normalized. As these discourses put “the animal” into question, that is, how the animal functions as a discursive resource in socio-political issues, so too does this dissertation question how “the wolf” functions discursively in contemporary socio-political issues in North America. To address these questions, this dissertation utilizes a Foucaultian-inspired genealogical analysis of the discourse around “the wolf” to understand how rhetoric about wolves coalesces into what I call “rhetorical assemblages” that vie to become regimes of truth that are used to attempt to settle the identity of the wolf and human-“animal” relations through the productive capacity of various power/knowledges that are historically and materially grounded. To do so, this dissertation examines and analyzes the rhetoric of a series of case studies in North America where figurations of wolves produce “the wolf” variously as man-hunting machines, outlaws that disrupt the natural order, illegal immigrants threatening family and tradition, and always already potential terrorists who must be productively managed through a biopolitics that attempts to make good the expectations of the dominant neoliberal frame of contemporary social and political life.