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Akbar Broke My Heart: Brazilian Zooliterature in a Relational Frame

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- 12:30 – 1:50 p.m.
- Online webinar via Zoom: <https://uvic.zoom.us/j/98595818823>

An abandoned mongrel named Akbar led me at once to Critical Animal Studies as well as to a more personal, relational way of thinking and writing. Tending to him during his final months frames my presentation. In a series of Brazilian “zooliterary” texts, what is the connection between the domination, incarceration, torture and killability of so-called animals, so-called criminals and so-called non-whites? Akbar’s decline and COVID-19 loom in the foreground of my meditations. In the U.S., the pandemic shines a light on the entanglement of anti-blackness, nonhuman animal slaughter and hypercapitalism. In my patio, Akbar takes his final breaths as Derek Chauvin asphyxiates George Floyd, pigs and chickens are gassed to death *en masse*, and a zoonotic disease threatens to suffocate us all.

Alexandra Isfahani-Hammond is Associate Professor Emerita of Comparative Literature and Luso-Brazilian Studies at the University of California, San Diego. Her publications include “Haunting Pigs, Swimming Jaguars: Mourning, Animals and Ayahuasca” (2019), “[Akbar Stole My Heart: Coming Out as an Animalist](#)” (2013), and *White Negritude: Race, Writing and Brazilian Cultural Identity* (2008). Her current book project, “Home Sick,” blends theory with creative nonfiction to meditate on grief, end of life and the commodification of (human and nonhuman) animals.



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