Almost a hundred years after his untimely death in 1924 Kafka's literary, cultural, and political significance has only ever increased, for his uncanny imaginary—often populated by animals—continues to speak with renewed urgency to readers across the globe. This seminar is divided into three parts. In the first, we will be reading a series of Kafka's shorter writings, ranging from “The Transformation [Metamorphosis]” to some fragments about a man who, though dead, sails on the rivers of the earth. In the second part, we will read three writers who absorbed the exactness of Kafka's imaginary into their own work: Jorge Luis Borges, Ingeborg Bachmann, and J. M. Coetzee. In the final part, we will return to Kafka, and ask ourselves how we see his writing now that we've encountered some of his most transformative readers. No knowledge of German or Spanish is required.