

Pittsburg State University
English 116: General Literature (Theme)
Monsters
Grubbs Hall 113, Fall 2015

Instructor: Dr. Jamie McDaniel

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Course Description

Exploration of a significant theme through an introduction to two or more literary genres: poetry, fiction, or drama. Not open to students with credit in ENGL 304 Introduction to Writing About Literature.

This face-to-face course introduces students to the study of texts in the English language and is intended to give English majors the skills necessary to succeed in more advanced courses and those students in other disciplines an additional critical consciousness crucial to any major. These skills include familiarity with important terms and concepts; close reading skills; awareness of the sorts of questions raised by texts and addressed by scholars; and practice writing analysis papers that defend an arguable thesis based on a close reading of texts, whether novel, poem, play, or film.

To help us achieve these goals, we will focus our attention on incarnations of the “Monstrous Other” in terms of race / ethnicity, religion, sex / gender, politics, and class. In other words, we will explore how different kinds of monsters in literature and film, such as the vampire, the witch, the werewolf, and (my favorite) the zombie, become metaphors for (usually marginalized) groups of people that mainstream society “fears” (or just does not like). Some questions we might consider include: Why do different cultures “create” the monsters that they do? How do monsters and what they represent change over time and in different genres? How does literature and film both support and dispel stereotypes of different groups through monsters? Can monsters ever be good? Of course, these are only a few examples of possible questions we can ask about the texts we will encounter in the course.

General Education

This course counts toward the requirements in General Education for your degree program. General Education is an important part of your educational program at Pittsburg State University that has been designed to implement the following Philosophy of General Education:

General education is the study of humans in their global setting. The general education curriculum, therefore, acts as the heart of a university education by developing the capacities that typify the educated person and providing a basis for life-long learning and intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic fulfillment. General education examines the world around us and fosters an understanding of our interactions with the world and our place in the universe. General education celebrates the creative capacities of humankind and helps to preserve and transmit to future generations the values, knowledge, wisdom, and sense of history that are our common heritage.

Goals of General Education for this Course

This course will help you accomplish several General Education goals and objectives, including applying the principles of effective writing and other forms of communication (Goal 1.2), demonstrating an understanding of cultural diversity within the United States and in the world at large (Goal 3.ii.3), demonstrating an awareness of the rights of individuals and groups from diverse cultural, national, and ethnic backgrounds (Goal 3.vi.2), and demonstrating an understanding of the relationships of gender, race, and class within and across cultures (Goal 3.vi.3).

ENGL 116 specially emphasizes the following General Education goals in helping you

- distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information in problem solving (Goal 2.1),
- articulate a problem and, using appropriate sources, develop a logical and reasonable response (Goal 2.2),

- apply generalizations, principles, theories, or rules to the real world (Goal 2.3),
- demonstrate the ability to analyze and synthesize information (Goal 2.4),
- recognize the value of diverse cultural, national, and ethnic backgrounds (Goal 3.vi.1),
- demonstrate an understanding of the creative process, both practical and theoretical, and its relationship to an audience or viewers (Goal 3.v.1),
- make informed critical responses when exposed to artistic endeavors (Goal 3.v.2),
- understand the relationship between the arts and society in a multicultural environment (3.v.3).
- demonstrate an appreciation for the range and diversity of humankind's wisdom, values, ideas, beliefs, and reasoning (3.viii.1), and
- demonstrate an understanding of human behavior, the human condition, and human institutions in the context of historical, literary, or philosophical inquiry (3.viii.2).

Course Objectives

This course

1. Helps preserve and transmit literary heritage by reading traditional and contemporary literature that focuses on a significant theme in two or more genres.
2. Promotes a global perspective of literatures and cultures through readings by men and women in English and in translation from other languages.
3. Enriches the readings through the use of other genres, film, or other media.

Learning Objectives

1. Correctly define commonly used literary terms and concepts and use those terms and concepts to discuss and analyze works of literature.
2. Appreciate and understand the ways that representations of monsters may be used in texts across time periods and in different genres.
3. Identify structural elements of works of poetry, fiction, film, and drama, and analyze how those elements help create specific meanings and effects.
4. Compare works in terms of theme, structure, and use of literary devices.
5. Discuss and analyze works based on close reading of the texts.
6. Write effective analyses defending arguable theses based on close reading of texts and incorporating relevant terms and concepts.
7. Identify issues and questions raised by literary texts that might be addressed by literary analysis.
8. Develop a deeper appreciation for the reading and study of literature.

Writing to Learn

Philosophy of Writing

The philosophy behind using writing as a way to learn course material is that as students write about concepts, they become active learners, articulating ideas in their own words and thinking about ideas from their own perspectives. Writing about course content is a skill that needs to be practiced; that is why you will be writing often and why the kinds of writing assignments may vary.

Statement of Intent

This is a Writing to Learn class. In this course we will write frequently as a way to learn course material. The writing may range from quizzes and in-class writing assignments to formal journals and essay exams. But expect to write about course content regularly.

Writing to Learn Requirements

- This is a Writing to Learn course, which means that in addition to earning an overall passing grade on other course components, you must also earn an average passing grade on the formal writing assignments to pass this course. If you do not earn an average passing grade on the formal writing assignments, you cannot pass this course.

- You will receive feedback from me on all your writing assignments, usually via the Comment tool in Word returned to you through Canvas. Pay attention to that feedback and use it to help improve your writing.
- If/when you use sources in your essay assignments, give credit for the words or ideas of others by documenting your sources, using the MLA style of documentation.
- In this course, you will write a minimum of 10 pages of formal writing in the form of essays. See the assignment handouts, available on Canvas.
- The due dates for all assignments are indicated in the course schedule.
- All writing assignments will be evaluated according to the rubrics available on Canvas.

Required Texts and Materials

The Bloody Chamber, Angela Carter
Penguin, 1990
ISBN: 978-0140178210

The Walking Dead: Book One, Robert Kirkman
Image Comics, 2006
ISBN: 978-1582406190

A Questionable Shape, Bennett Sims
Two Dollar Radio, 2013
ISBN: 978-1937512095

The Crucible, Arthur Miller
Penguin, 1996
ISBN: 978-0140247725

Don't Look Now: Selected Stories of Daphne Du Maurier, Daphne Du Maurier
NYRB Classics, 2008
ISBN: 978-1590172889

The Haunting of Hill House, Shirley Jackson
Penguin Classics, 2006
ISBN: 978-0143039983

Outside materials available for download from Canvas or on reserve in the library.

Grading Scale

A = 93-100	B = 80-82	D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-92	C+ = 77-79	D = 63-66
B+ = 87-89	C = 73-76	D- = 60-62
B = 83-86	C- = 70-72	F = below 60

Assignments and Evaluations

Participation, FLiPs, and In-Class Assignments/Presentations: 15%

Online Midterm and Final Exams: 20%

Paper One (4 to 5 pages): 15%

Paper Two (4 to 5 pages): 20%

Revision Assignment (a revision of Paper One or Two – 6 to 8 pages): 30%

You must fully complete all assignments for the course in order to receive a passing grade.

Electronics/Technology Policy

Cell phones should be turned off or on silent during class. If I see you using your phone for either phone calls or text messaging or if the ringer is not turned off, you will receive a “0” in participation for the day. If you must keep your phone on for emergencies or another reason, please let me know.

You may use a laptop, e-reader, or other electronic device to take notes or to bring in readings or assignments that are available via Canvas or the Internet. You may not use your electronic device to do anything other than reviewing class-related material or taking notes. If you use your electronic device for any purpose other than these, your privileges will be suspended. I maintain the right to revise this policy at any point during the semester if improper usage becomes a problem.

Presentation

This class depends upon actively engaged speakers, listeners, and writers. Your responsibility is to be an active participant. As a result, this class demands that all reading assignments are completed, **in full**, on the day they are due and that you **bring the assigned text to class**. In addition, all assignments are to be typewritten and done according to directions. I encourage you to think for yourself, challenge each other, and assume pride and ownership in every text you produce.

According to federal guidelines, you should expect to spend two out-of-class hours devoted to coursework for each hour spent in the classroom or in direct faculty instruction. Therefore, for this three-credit class, you should expect to devote at least six hours per week on average to prepare your work. Of course, some weeks may require more time, and some weeks will require less.

In this course, we will view a number of films and read a number of works that portray content and themes that may be disturbing to some students. **This is not an excuse to skip readings or viewings.** We will be analyzing and discussing, in a scholarly manner, the meaning and significance behind these representations. Students with questions or concerns about course content are encouraged to see me immediately for a short meeting.

I also suggest that you consult the following links about interacting with faculty:

6 Things You Should Say to Your Professor

<http://college.usatoday.com/2013/02/19/6-things-you-should-say-to-your-professor/>

5 Things You Should Never Say to Your Professor

<http://college.usatoday.com/2013/01/10/5-things-you-should-never-say-to-your-professor/>

No, It's Not Your Opinion. You're Just Wrong

<http://www.houstonpress.com/arts/no-it-s-not-your-opinion-you-re-just-wrong-updated-7611752>

Late Work and Attendance Policy

I reserve the right to decrease the grade of late work by ONE FULL LETTER GRADE for every day it is late including the first. For example, if an essay is two days late and the original grade is a B+, the final penalized grade would be a D+. If you have a problem with an assignment, please see me or call me BEFORE the due date. Any student who accrues excessive absences (three or more) will most likely fail the course. If you do miss class for any reason, you are still accountable for the work given and due that day unless prior arrangements have been made. Finally, I also expect you to be on-time to class. Any student who is tardy more than three times will be marked absent according to my discretion. If you have a problem getting to class on time (i.e., you have class on the other side of campus), please let me know as soon as possible.

Required Film Screenings

During several weeks in the semester, there are scheduled film screenings for this course. **The showings will occur on Mondays at 5:00 p.m. in Yates Hall Room 102.** All students are required to attend the screening unless you have a legitimate schedule conflict. In such cases, you need to make alternative arrangements with me in the first week of school.

All films are on reserve in Axe Library, and many should be available through the public library, an online provider (Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, etc.), Redbox, or Family Video.

If absent for a screening, you will need to view the film on your own prior to the first day of scheduled discussion each week. Additionally, in exchange for not being able to attend the required screenings, you will post to Canvas a 100- to 200-word response to one specific scene in the film. You should post your response no later than 12:30 p.m. on the Tuesday following the screening. Failure to post an adequate response will result in a recorded absence. Students who attend the viewing may complete a post for extra credit.

Your response should

- Refer to one specific scene in the film
- Discuss why you chose this scene
- Discuss the scene's importance to the film as a whole

Note: Make sure to pay active attention to the films. You will likely want to take notes during the screening. Computers and other digital devices not used for taking notes should be stored out of sight.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism includes the presentation, without proper attribution, of another's words or ideas from printed or electronic sources. It is also plagiarism to submit, without the instructor's consent, an assignment in one class previously submitted in another. I reward plagiarism with a zero. Further action by the university may also be taken. Please familiarize yourselves with the university policy on plagiarism. If you feel that you need extra help with your assignments, tutors are available in the Writing Center in Axe Library (235-4694). If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or how to cite sources properly, do not hesitate to ask me for help. Please also consult PSU's Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy available online at

<http://www.pittstate.edu/audiences/current-students/policies/rights-and-responsibilities/academic-misconduct.dot>

Also, make sure to consult the Syllabus Supplement, which can be thought of as a "one-stop" place for students to access up-to-date information about campus resources, notifications, and expectations. It is available at

<http://www.pittstate.edu/dotAsset/951abb38-06ee-4727-9356-fcdbf1bf497f.pdf>

Accessibility and a Word of Advice

All students are more than welcome to drop by during office hours or schedule an appointment to ask questions, continue discussion of issues from class, or to offer comments. This is especially true during the first week of class and especially true for students with disabilities who are registered with the Center for Student Accommodations (235-4309) and who may need individual arrangements. Your well being and success in this course are important to me. I recognize that there are *multiple* ways to learn and that this multiplicity should be acknowledged in the design and structure of university courses and the evaluation of their participants. Thus, I encourage students registered in the course to discuss their learning styles and comprehension requirements with me during my office hours or, if necessary, at another arranged time. Every student is entitled to a meaningful and stimulating learning experience.

The Center for Student Accommodations is located in Russ Hall 218, or visit their website at: <http://www.pittstate.edu/office/center-for-student-accommodations/> for more information.

Make use of your teachers!! We are here to help you learn, and we do not expect you to be perfect (who is?). We regard intelligent questions in and out of class and an eagerness to improve one's abilities as evidence of an A student more than written work alone. There is no such thing as a stupid question!

Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments (ALL DATES AND ASSIGNMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE!):

Week One

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| Aug. 18: | Introduction to the Course; Film Clips |
| Aug. 20: | Cohen, "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)" (Canvas) |

Week Two: Movie Week – *It Follows* (2015)

- Aug. 25: Mitchell, *It Follows*
Aug. 27: Mitchell, *It Follows*; Freud, “The Uncanny” (Canvas)

Week Three

- Sept. 1: Sims, *A Questionable Shape* (1 – 143)
Sept. 3: Sims, *A Questionable Shape* (144 – 218)

Week Four

- Sept. 8: Kirkman, *The Walking Dead* (Chapter 1)
Sept. 10: Kirkman, *The Walking Dead* (Chapter 2)

Week Five: Movie Week – *Night of the Living Dead* (1968)

- Sept. 15: Romero, *Night of the Living Dead*
Sept. 17: Romero, *Night of the Living Dead*; “Tips for Watching Films” Handout (Canvas)

Week Six

- Sept. 22: Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House* (1 – 131)
First Set of FLiPs Due
Sept. 24: Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House* (132 – 182)

Week Seven

- Sept. 29: Du Maurier, “Don’t Look Now”; Todorov, “Definition of the Fantastic” (Canvas)
Oct. 1: Du Maurier, “The Birds”

Week Eight

- Oct. 6: Du Maurier, “Blue Lenses” and “Kiss Me Again, Stranger”
Oct. 7: **Paper One Due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.**
Oct. 8: Fall Break – No Class

Week Nine

- Oct. 13: Miller, *The Crucible* (Read the whole play.)
Oct. 15: Miller, *The Crucible*; “Records of Salem Witchcraft” and McCarthy, “Communists in the State Department” (Available in book or on Canvas)
Oct. 16: **Online Midterm Exam Due by 11:59 p.m.**

Week Ten: Movie Week – *Phenomena* (1985)

- Oct. 20: Argento, *Phenomena*
Oct. 22: Argento, *Phenomena*; Hunt, “A (Sadistic) Night at the *Opera*: Notes on the Italian Horror Film” (Canvas)

Week Eleven: Movie Week – *Videodrome* (1983)

- Oct. 27: Cronenberg, *Videodrome*
Second Set of FLiPs Due
Oct. 29: Cronenberg, *Videodrome*; Eggert, “The Definitives: *Videodrome*” (Canvas or here: <http://www.deepfocusreview.com/reviews/videodrome.asp>)

Week Twelve: Movie Week – *The Thing* (1982)

- Nov. 3: Carpenter, *The Thing*
Nov. 5: Carpenter, *The Thing*; Eggert, “The Definitives: *The Thing*” (Canvas or here: <http://www.deepfocusreview.com/reviews/thing.asp>)

Week Thirteen: Movie Week – *Cabin in the Woods* (2012)

- Nov. 10: Goddard and Whedon, *Cabin in the Woods*
Nov. 11: **Paper Two Due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.**
Nov. 12: Goddard and Whedon, *Cabin in the Woods*; GoodBadFlicks, “Every Reference in *The Cabin in the Woods*” (Canvas or here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=17&v=yGz2xdQa1ho>)

Week Fourteen

- Nov. 17: Carter, “The Company of Wolves,” “Wolf-Alice,” and “The Werewolf”
Nov. 19: Carter, “The Bloody Chamber”

Week Fifteen

- Nov. 24: Carter, “The Courtship of Mr. Lyon” and “The Tiger’s Bride”
Nov. 26: Thanksgiving – No Class

Week Sixteen: Movie Week – *House* (1977)

- Dec. 1: Ôbayashi, *House*
Dec. 3: Ôbayashi, *House*
Third Set of FLiPs Due

Finals Week

Online Final Exam Due Friday, December 11, by 11:59 p.m.

Revision Assignment Due Saturday, December 12, by 11:59 p.m.