MONSTERS IN POPULAR CULTURE
MCS 353: Topics in Media Studies
AMS 395: Topics in American Studies
MCS 520: Topics in Media Studies

Intersession 2013
Daley LL 102
Monday & Wednesday 5:30-9:15pm & Thursday 5:45-9:15pm

I will answer every email I receive, usually within 24 hours (weekday). If you do not hear from me within two days, you can assume that I did not get your email. Please make sure that you send email to the correct email address (pbooth@depaul.edu). Please note that Yahoo email accounts tend to get sent to DePaul email spam.

Course Description:
In this course, students will examine the concept of the anthropological “monster” as it manifests across multiple media formats. Through informed viewing of television, film, radio, literature, and graphic novels, we will explore the evolution of some of the most well-known “monsters,” including vampires, zombies, and aliens, as well as less-known varieties, like the Golem, the cyborg, and even the human being. Screenings will be paired with discussion and class activities. The concept of the “monster” itself will be interrogated, and we will explore how the monster reflects humanity’s fears as well as its desires.

Course Rationale:
There has rarely been a time when monsters were not a major focus of popular culture. From the early Grimm Fairy tales to the ancient monsters of Jewish and Christian mythology, our cultural history is peopled by strange, wondrous, fantastic, and dangerous creatures. Today, many of these same monsters have become increasingly viable commodities, from Dracula costumes to Twilight books. The presence of monsters in our culture has never waned, but what changes have occurred in these depictions of monsters? This course utilizes both a historical retrospective of the “monster” and a critical examination of the cultural factors that help us make sense of monsters in our everyday popular culture. As media technology changes, much of the “monstrous” content changes as well. However, the more common a monster, the less scary it may become. Does integrating monsters in our lives help de-saturate our experience with them? It is important not just to understand monsters’ place in our popular culture, but also to see at the level of the individual how monsters are consumed. By posing questions, many of which will not have answers, we shall explore the complex relationship between culture, horror, monsters, and people.

Course Goals:
This course has three main goals. The first is to gain a better understanding of the role monsters play in our culture. The second is to gain the ability to analyze and critique the depictions of monsters in popular culture. The third is to be able to write intelligently about monsters in popular culture.

Course Objectives:
At the end of this course, students will be able to:
1) Identify and review the historical significance of various pop culture monsters
2) Demonstrate an ability to synthesize lessons and readings in written form
3) Synthesize lessons and readings in a practical project

Class Readings
To Buy: (available at DePaul Loop bookstore, or online)


Additional readings will be available via D2L under Content.

**Graduate Students**
This course is cross-listed as a Graduate/Undergraduate course. In order to receive Graduate credit for this course, Graduate students will be required to turn in an additional assignment during the course. The requirements for this assignment, the “class facilitation,” can be found in the assignments listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergrad Grading and Assignments:</th>
<th>Graduate Grading and Assignments:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your grade is based on 500 points.</td>
<td>Your grade is based on 600 points.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Responses – 50 points (5 x 10)</td>
<td>Reading Responses – 40 points (4 x 10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis Paper 1 – 100 points</td>
<td>Analysis Paper 1 – 100 points</td>
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<td>Analysis Paper 2 – 100 points</td>
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<td>Final Project – 100 points</td>
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<td>Final Presentation – 50 points</td>
<td>Final Presentation – 60 points</td>
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<td>Participation – 100 points</td>
<td>Participation – 100 points</td>
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<td>Class Facilitation – 100 points</td>
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**Assignments**

**Reading Response (5 x 10 Undergrad) (4 x 10 Grad)**
By 5:20 pm on the day of each class, you should post to D2L a 1-2 page reading response (not including the first or last day of class or any day you turn in an analysis paper or a facilitation paper). Each response should identify (1) the main thesis or idea from the non-fiction reading due that day; and (2) compare the depiction of the monster in the fiction reading to the analysis in the non-fiction reading. Do you agree or disagree with the author with his/her analysis of the monster? In your response, please address any questions you may have about the readings. Include quotations from the reading in your response, as well as a works cited. Late reading responses will not be accepted.

**Analysis Papers**
You will turn in two analysis papers for this class. Each analysis paper asks you to analyze a depiction (in some form of media) of a monster in popular culture. You should use your readings to analyze it, as well as at least one outside reading. You may choose which classes you want to turn in your analysis paper, although I would advise you to space them out throughout the class. Each Analysis Paper should be turned in at 5:20 pm on the day we cover that monster. The analysis paper should be 1200-1500 words long, include at least three sources (at least one out-of-class source), and be written well. Please post your analysis papers to D2L.

**Final Project**
Your final project, which you will present to the class as part of the assignment, is to create your own monster. You should have a full description, illustration, and detailed history and backstory. Your monster can be based on another monster in class, but should not copy it (that is, you can have a monster that drinks blood, but it should be significantly different from a “vampire”). In addition to the project and the presentation, you will need to turn in a 1200-1500 word critical analysis (Graduate Student: 2000 words) of your monster that uses at least three of our readings as support. This paper should be like your analysis paper. The final project is due on the last day of class. The final paper portion of the project is due by
Graduate students need to integrate at least one out-of-class reading.

**Class Facilitation (Graduate Student Only)**

Each student will sign up for a class topic that is of interest to them. You will lead the class for 30 minutes. During this time you will lead the class in a discussion of a media clip (chosen by you) and its representation of the monster for that day. This is your chance to teach the class something that is of interest to you, or something that you are an expert on. Please note: YOU SHOULD NOT BE LECTURING IN THIS CLASS, but using this time to lead the class in an active and powerful learning activity. You should plan on including at least one piece of media in your facilitation.

In addition to facilitating the class, you will be required to turn in (the day before) a 1000 word lesson plan. Your plan should detail everything you’re planning on doing in class, your rationale for why you’re doing it (please use resources/citations to support this rationale), any materials you may need in this facilitation, and any activities you plan to lead the class in. The lesson plan is due to D2L by 5:20pm the day before your facilitation. You should also turn in (two days after your facilitation) a short (1000 word) reflection on what you learned about facilitating class.

You may not do your facilitation and your analysis papers about the same monster. You do not have to do a reading response on the day you facilitate.
| Class 01  
Monday Dec 02  
Topic: Introduction to Monsters |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No facilitations</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Screenings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levina and Bui: “Toward a Comprehensive Monster Theory” (pp. 1-8)</td>
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<td>X-Files: “War of the Coprophages”</td>
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| Class 02  
Wednesday Dec 04  
Topic: Golems, Animals, and Natural Evil |
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<tr>
<td>No Faciliations</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Screenings</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Poole: pp 5-18; 22-25; 33-37 |  | Deer Woman  
Moore: “Shambleau” |
| Clips from The Fly |

| Class 03  
Thursday Dec 05  
Topic: Bogeymen and Devils |
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<tr>
<td>Facilitation</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Screenings</td>
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</table>
| Poole: pp. 156-161; 181-186 |  | Buffy the Vampire Slayer: “Hush”  
Gaiman: “Other People”  
Smith: “Hunters from Beyond” |
| Clips from Friday the 13th |

| Class 04  
Monday Dec 09  
Guest Lecturer: Dr. Brendan Riley, Columbia College  
Topic: Zombies |
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<tbody>
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<td>Facilitation</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Screenings</td>
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| Matheson: “Dance of the Dead”  
Thompson: “She’s Not Your Mother”  
Poole: pp. 193-197  
Kirkman: The Walking Dead |  | New Year’s Day  
Clips: Invasion of the Body Snatchers  
Clips: Walking Dead  
Game: House of the Dead |

| Class 05  
Wednesday Dec 11  
Guest Lecturer: Cary Elza, DePaul University  
Topic: Vampires |
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<tr>
<td>Facilitation</td>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Screenings</td>
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</table>
| Daubeny: “The Sumach”  
Hallab: “Vampire Gods” (pp 39-48)  
Poole: pp. 102-104, 208-217 |  | Supernatural: “Fresh Blood”  
Clips from Nosferatu, Twilight, Dracula |
### Class 06
**Thursday Dec 12** *(ROOM CHANGE – LL105)*

*Topic: Aliens*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitation</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Screenings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poole: pp 60-61; 96-98; 111-113; 119-125</td>
<td>Clips from <em>A Trip to the Moon, Alien, Attack the Block</em></td>
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### Class 07
**Monday Dec 16**

*Topic: Cyborgs*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitation</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Screenings</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shelly: <em>Frankenstein</em> (Chapter 4 &amp; 5)</td>
<td><em>Fringe</em>: “White Tulip”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gibson: “Johnny Mnemonic”</td>
<td>Clips from <em>Metropolis, Frankenstein, Star Trek: First Contact, Terminator 2</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poole: pp. 219-228</td>
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### Class 08
**Wednesday Dec 18**

*Special Guest: Skype with author W. Scott Poole*

*Topic: Mad(?) Humans*

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<tr>
<th>Facilitation</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Screenings</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poole: 81-84; 104-109</td>
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*Optional: You may want to watch *Jekyll* episode 1 on Netflix Streaming*

### Class 09
**Thursday Dec 19**

*Topic: Monster Presentations*

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<tr>
<th>Facilitation</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Screenings</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>No Readings due; No screenings; Presentations</strong></td>
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*Final Project Due*

### No Class
**Friday Dec 20**

*Must have final project paper turned in by 9:00 pm today*
Bibliography