English 2333.001: Monstrosities  
Fall 2016  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30-1:45PM

What separates human from monster? From Dr. Frankenstein’s nineteenth-century creature to twenty-first century clones, depictions of monsters in literature and film have raised troubling questions about the boundaries between creation and destruction, self and other, life and death, realism and the unreal, humanity and horror. In this course, we will explore these questions in short stories, fiction, film, and television devoted to depicting monstrosity in all of its terror and fascination. We will learn about the history of horror in the Victorian period and consider the ways the period’s early monstrosities have morphed into the monsters of today. In the process, we will also examine how terrible creatures of many kinds—ghosts, vampires, clones—have embodied changing concerns about gender, sexuality, race, and nationality. Above all, we will consider a question that has plagued writers from the publication of Frankenstein onwards: what if there is no difference between monster and human at all?

Required Texts

Mary Shelley, Frankenstein  
Robert Louis Stevenson, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde  
Kazuo Ishiguro, Never Let Me Go

Course Calendar

Note: dates and readings subject to change, with advanced notice.

Thursday, August 25th: Introductions

I. The Literary Monster

Tuesday, August 30th: Margaret Atwood, “Lusus Naturae”  
Thursday, September 1st: Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “Monster Culture: Seven Theses”
Tuesday, September 6th: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
Thursday, September 8th: *Frankenstein*

Tuesday, September 13th: *Frankenstein*
Thursday, September 15th: *Frankenstein*

Tuesday, September 20th: *Frankenstein*
Thursday, September 22nd: *Frankenstein*

**Essay #1 Due**

**II. Life and Death: Ghosts, Vampires, Zombies and Other Tales of Terror**

Tuesday, September 27th: Edgar Allen Poe, “The Masque of the Red Death,” “The Tell-Tale Heart”
Thursday, September 29th: Ghost stories: selections

Tuesday, October 4th: Sheridan LeFanu, *Carmilla*
Thursday, October 6th: *Carmilla*

Tuesday, October 11th: Zombies on film viewing
Thursday, October 13th: Zombies on film discussion

Tuesday, October 18th: Octavia Butler, “Bloodchild”
Thursday, October 20th: **Making a Monster Assignment Due** – Student Presentations

**Seeing Double: Literary Clones and Other Man-Made Horrors**

Tuesday, October 25th: Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*
Thursday, October 27th: *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Tuesday, November 1st: Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*
Thursday, November 3rd: *Never Let Me Go*

Tuesday, November 8th: *Never Let Me Go*
Thursday, November 10th: *Never Let Me Go*

Tuesday, November 15th: *Never Let Me Go*
Thursday, November 17th: *Never Let Me Go*

**Essay #2 Due**

Tuesday, November 22nd: **Reading Day**
Thursday, November 24th: **Thanksgiving**

Tuesday, November 29th: *Orphan Black* (viewing)
Thursday, December 1st: *Orphan Black* (discussion)

Tuesday, December 6th: Conclusions

Final Examination – Tuesday, December 13th, 11:00AM – 1:30PM
Course Requirements

Attendance, Participation, and Quizzes (20%)
  Essay 1 (15%)
  Essay 2 (25%)
  Making a Monster Assignment (20%)
  Final Examination (20%)

Attendance, Participation, and Quizzes:

Attendance: Attendance is required in this course. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class session. You may miss two class sessions without penalty, but after the second absence, your final grade will be lowered for each absence. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, so I strongly encourage you to avoid missing classes except in case of emergencies. If you anticipate missing more than two classes (for example, due to religious observance), you should speak with me directly before the end of the second week of classes to discuss an alternative absence policy.

Participation: Participation can take the form of offering your ideas about the texts we’re reading, asking questions, notetaking, directing us to specific passages, respectfully listening and responding to your colleagues’ questions and ideas, and taking an active part in group work and in-class writing; in all cases, your participation requires you to read carefully and thoughtfully before you come to class. It also includes coming to class on time with a copy of the assigned text, and following along in the text during our sessions.

Quizzes: I will give unannounced quizzes once per week throughout the semester. These quizzes will evaluate how thoroughly you have done the reading for that day’s class meeting. However, you will not need to prepare for these quizzes beyond completing the required reading for that day’s class, unless advanced notice is given.

Writing Assignments:

Essays: You will write two essays in which you critically analyze the texts we have read. Essay 2 will build on the skills you develop in Essay 1. I will provide guidelines and questions to prompt your thinking for each essay.

Making a Monster Assignment: In this assignment, you will explore an example of “monstrosity” you find in the contemporary world by developing a monster (or ghost, vampire, zombie) story of your own. In addition to your story, you will write a brief introduction in which you explain how your monster story grapples with a contemporary problem, issue, or anxiety and its connections to the monstrosities we are reading about in this course. We will spend time in class discussing our monstrous creations.

Final Examination: In this exam, you will be asked to reflect on and synthesize major concepts, key terms, and themes from the course. We will discuss the format of the final examination further in class.
Course Policies

Writing

Assignments

All written assignments must be turned in at the start of class. Late assignments will receive a penalty for every class session that passes after the original deadline. Assignments will not be accepted one week (7 days) after the original deadline.

For written assignments, please use a standard 12-point font (such as Times New Roman), 1-inch margins, double spacing, and page numbers. You should include a single-spaced heading with your name, the assignment number (e.g. Essay 1), and the date at the top of the page. Please staple all hard copies; double-sided printing is fine.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unacceptable. Here are some examples of plagiarism: plagiarism can include copying writing that is not your own verbatim, copying phrases without citing the original text they were taken from, or paraphrasing a text without citing it. Other forms of unacceptable plagiarism can include presenting others’ ideas as your own without credit, submitting a paper you wrote for another class for this one, or submitting work written by someone else as your own work. Plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment and, in some cases, the course, and will be turned over to the appropriate disciplinary bodies.

To avoid plagiarism, you should cite any sources you consult when completing assignments for this course, including outside websites, articles, or books. If you have any questions about proper documentation and citation of sources, I recommend consulting the Purdue Online Writing Lab (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/). You can contact me at any time with questions about citation, acknowledgment, or academic integrity.

Academic Advising

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information, please call 361-825-3466.

Disability Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Grade Appeals Process
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean's Office.