

English Composition: Monster Menagerie

Course Description

This course helps students learn about college-level composition and research through an exploration of monsters and monstrosity in both fiction and non-fiction texts. The course begins with discussion of claims and thesis statements as students articulate their preliminary ideas about what monstrosity is, and as the course continues, students use their analyses of both fiction and nonfiction as means to improve their communication and rhetorical skills across multiple modes and media. While students build a repertoire of rhetorical strategies, they also consider the cultural and historical significance of monstrosity in terms of human identity. As students consider monsters in different cultural contexts, they focus on distinguishing fact from fiction and considering how fiction and fact transform one another.

Required Texts

- Blake, Brandy Ball and L. Andrew Cooper, eds. *Monsters*. Fountainhead Press, 2012.
- A rhetorical handbook of the instructor's choosing
- Films either screened by the instructor or viewed independently
 - *Night of the Living Dead* (1968)
 - *Halloween* (1978)

Assignments

Instructors may choose to have students select and revise completed shorter and longer assignments for a portfolio at the end of the semester.

- *Critical analysis essay* (based on *Monsters*, p. 34, "Explore")
- *Editorial or blog* (*Monsters*, pp. 241–243)
- *Annotated bibliography* (for radio show, below)
- *Radio show* (*Monsters*, pp. 238–240)
- *Shorter assignments* (from *Monsters*, listed in readings and assignments, below)

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

All page numbers refer to *Monsters*

Unit 1: Monstrous Claims

Week 1: MAKING AND SHARING CLAIMS

Reading: "Introduction: Haunting Boundaries"

Assignment: p. 10, Collaborate

Week 2: DEVELOPING THESES ABOUT CULTURE

Reading: "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)"

Assignment: p. 34, Explore and Collaborate

Unit 2: Walking Dead

Week 3: MAKING COMPARISONS

Reading: "Excerpts from *Frankenstein*" (complete text online at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/84>)

Assignments: p. 41, Invent and Compose

Week 4: PREPARING RESEARCH

Reading: “*Frankenstein: A Feminist Critique of Science*”

Assignment: p. 52, Invent and Explore

Major Assignment: short essay based on p. 34, Explore

Week 5: DEFINING TERMS

Reading: “George Romero’s *Zombie Films*”

Film: *Night of the Living Dead* (1968)

Assignment: p. 62, Compose

Week 6: FINDING AND EVALUATING SOURCES

Reading: “Excerpts from *World War Z*”

Assignments: p. 76, Explore and Collaborate

Unit 3: Transforming Beasts

Week 7: INTERPRETING AND ORGANIZING INFORMATION

Reading: “Excerpts from *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*” (complete text online at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/42>)

Assignments: p. 94, Explore and Compose

Week 8: COMBINING MEDIA

Reading: “The Company of Wolves”

Assignment: p. 112, Collaborate

Major Assignment: Major Assignment #5, editorial or blog (pp. 241–243)

Unit 4: Vampires and Combinations

Week 9: VISUAL ANALYSIS

Reading: “Excerpts from *Dracula*” (complete text online at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/345>)

Assignments: p. 121, Explore and Collaborate

Week 10: ANALYZING OTHER KINDS OF EVIDENCE

Reading: “Civilized Vampires Versus Savage Werewolves”

Assignment: p. 171, Explore

Week 11: HANDLING DIFFICULT SOURCES

Reading: “Parasites and Perverts”

Assignments: p. 139, Explore and p. 140, Collaborate

Week 12: COUNTERARGUMENTS AND CONFLICTING SOURCES

Readings: “Excerpt from *Gothic Realities*”

Assignments: p. 153, Invent and p. 154, Compose

Major Assignment: Annotated bibliography of sources for final major assignment (below)

Unit 5: “Real” Monsters

Week 13: WEB RHETORIC

Reading: “Serial Killers”

Assignment: p. 208, Explore

Week 14: SYNTHESIZING RESEARCH

Reading: “Movie Psychos and Slashers”

Film: *Halloween* (1978)

Assignment: p. 218, Invent

Week 15: WORKSHOPS: final assignment or portfolio

Major Assignment: Major Assignment #4, radio show (pp. 238–240)