

MYTHS & MONSTERS

English 118W: Introduction to Literary & Cultural Analysis

"People inscribe their histories, beliefs, attitudes, desires and dreams in the images they make." –Robert Hughes

"Fairy tales do not tell children that dragons exist. Children already know that dragons exist. Fairy tales tell children that dragons can be killed." –G. K. Chesterton

Professor Information

Dr. Nancy Chick (nancy.chick@vanderbilt.edu, 322-3072)
Office: 306 Center for Teaching (1114 19th Ave. South, corner of 19th & Edgehill)
Office Hours: MW 2:30-3:15, location TBA, and by appointment



Class Meeting Times & Place

MW 1:10-2:25 in West Hall 102

Required Materials

There is no textbook for you to purchase; instead, selected readings will be available in OAK for you to download, print, and annotate. You will view three films at specific times outside of our class meetings, and you will view others within a flexible time frame to supplement assigned materials.

Course Description & Goals

The Vanderbilt English Department describes ENGL 118W generically as an “analysis of a range of texts in social, political, and aesthetic contexts. Interdisciplinary study of cultural forms as diverse as poetry, advertisement and film.” This specific section of ENGL 118W will examine the figure of the monster in literature, popular culture, and film, focusing on some key questions to help us understand and theorize our monsters. Why do we seek out the monstrous and horrifying? What do our monsters reveal about us? What’s the relationship between our monsters and our times? How (and why) do we pass on stories of things that terrify us? Students will explore these questions in class discussion and in a variety of writing genres, including informal writing activities, formal essays, article summaries to share, et al. Students in this course should be prepared to analyze and write about course texts with a critical and open mind.

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: **NOTE:** The themes and some
: of the texts in this course may be
: disturbing. Some of the films are
: rated R, primarily for scenes of
: violence. Objections or
: sensitivities to any of these issues
: do not excuse you from doing
: required work (including our
: readings and viewings), so if you
: foresee a problem, you probably
: shouldn't take this course.
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Learning Environment & Related Policies

Our class environment will be characterized by preparedness, hard work, concentration, collaboration, and the democratic construction of knowledge. I ask for your courtesy, respect, and cooperation in our time together and for your full attention, an open mind, and your best work as I push hard toward academic excellence. I also expect that you will be mindful of the learning and dignity of your peers and willing to contribute meaningfully and respectfully to class activities. In return, I promise my best as a teacher. My teaching style is a mixture of informality and formality, and my expectations are high. Be prepared to hear few lectures and to help create a learning environment marked by active, respectful support for and challenges to learning.



My classes require prepared and thinking students. This means that you should bring the relevant materials (including your course notebook and assigned readings) and complete any assignments due for each class period. It's your responsibility to make sure you've completed assigned readings before class. Failure to do so means you're unprepared to learn, to demonstrate your learning, and to contribute to your classmates' learning. Your preparations and contributions are highly valued in this course.



Please do not disrupt class by arriving late or leaving early, and be sure to turn off cell phones and other devices that interfere with being fully present and engaged in the class activities.

By attending class consistently and participating in active and substantive ways, you become eligible for the highest grades in the class. Your presence in this class announces that you are here to learn, to read, to view, to listen, to interpret, to empathize, to try to understand, to consider, to reflect upon, to discuss, and to contribute—regardless of how you personally feel about the issues under consideration. Dismissing course texts, concepts, or activities without reflecting upon them or antagonizing discussions to prevent full consideration of them is contrary to the spirit of learning, inhibits the learning of your classmates, and will not be tolerated. That said, be prepared for an interesting, provocative, challenging, and, yes, occasionally even fun semester that you'll remember for a long time.



Given the above, I expect you to be fully present in all of our class meetings. Unless you have an excuse from the Dean of Students' Office for missing a class, please do not ask me if I will excuse your absence from class.

Assessment & Related Policies

20%	Regular Preparedness Activities (quizzes, in-class writings, etc)
15%	Class Participation
10%	Midterm Exam
10%	Final Exam (not cumulative)
45%	Required Writings
10%	Secondary Reading Summary for Class
10%	Essay One
10%	Essay Two
15%	Essay Three

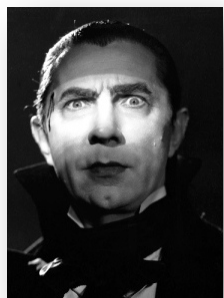


A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
94-100	90-93	87-89	84-86	80-83	77-79	74-76	70-73	60-69	0-59

You are responsible for *all* assignments whether you attend class or not. If you do miss a class or part of a class, you should get missed assignments, notes, announcements, and handouts from your study partner *before you return to class*. Our activities, exercises, and workshops are cumulative learning moments that build on each other. By the end of each, you will have added some writing, reading, viewing, and/or researching skills to your repertoire. If you miss an activity, exercise, or workshop, you should make sure your study partner fills you in, *and* you should do the exercise on your own, with me, or with the writing tutors in The Writing Studio.

Deadlines: Deadlines for submitting assignments are firm. Regular Preparedness Activities are time-sensitive, so late work will earn a zero. If you need to schedule an exam on an alternative day, let me know *at least* one week ahead of time and expect the exam to be significantly different from the one given to the class. Sometimes, however, life interferes, so late submissions of required writings (listed above) *will* be accepted—with a penalty. Namely, in the spirit of fairness to the rest of the class, the purpose of deadlines, and the high expectations of Vanderbilt University, your assignment grade will be reduced 1/3 of a letter grade per day.

Academic Integrity: The Vanderbilt Honor Code governs all work in this course (e.g., homework assignments, article summaries, essays, and exams). Please familiarize yourself with Vanderbilt's undergraduate honor policy: studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/HonorCouncil/information-for-students/. Although I encourage collaboration and conversation with your peers when discussing our course ideas (including brainstorming essay topics and exam study groups), all of your written work should be your own (including properly citing others' ideas and words). Please be careful not to plagiarize. The library has information on plagiarism and policies (www.library.vanderbilt.edu/research/Plagiarism.shtml), and the Writing Studio has a great set of resources on working with sources in academic writing at www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/resources/incorporating.php. We'll spend some class time exploring plagiarism and academic integrity more generally.



The Writing Studio: In addition to meeting with me during office hours to discuss coursework, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of the services at the Writing Studio; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Studio consultants can offer a

fresh perspective on any of your writing projects. For more information and to schedule an appointment, visit vanderbilt.edu/writing.

Special Needs: If you need disability-related accommodations for this course; if you have emergency medical information to share with me; or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment to speak with me, as well as the Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services/EAD (322-4705) as soon as possible.

Fantastic Opportunities from The Writing Studio

On Writing: Journal Article Writing Faculty Panel: Sept 20, 4:15, Black Cultural Center
(Details: www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/events/onwriting.php)

Dinner & A Draft with Paul Kramer: Sept 27, 6-7:30pm, Dean of the Commons Residence
Jonathan Metz: Nov 8, 6-7:30pm, Dean of the Commons Residence
(Details & signup: www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/events/dinnerandadraftFall.php)

Tentative Course Schedule

MONSTERS, MYTHOLOGY, & STORYTELLING

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| W Aug 22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the course, key course concepts and approaches • What is a monster? • What are the elements of monster stories, myths, legends? |
| M Aug 27 | <p>Writing Studio “Active Reading Strategies, or Reading for Writing”; Maasik & Solomon “The Semiotic Method,” “Of Myths & Men”; Seger “Creating the Myth”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss reading • Syllabus quiz • The Writing Studio • Sign up for secondary reading assignments. (If you’re absent, I’ll sign up for you.) |
| W Aug 29 | <p>Phillips <i>Film: An Introduction</i> excerpts (jigsaw)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss reading • Workshop: Transitioning to College Writing, Part I |
| M Sept 3 | <p>Worland “Undying Monsters”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss reading • Workshop: Transitioning to College Writing, Part II • <i>Beowulf</i> background • Viewing as Reading |
| W Sept 5 | <p><i>Beowulf</i> excerpts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss <i>Beowulf</i> (excerpts and film) |
| M Sept 10 | Tudor “Events, Characters, Settings” |
| W Sept 12 | Tudor “Narratives” |

Film: *Beowulf*

THE TERRIBLE TRIO ... & THEIR DESCENDANTS

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| M Sept 17 | <p>Essay One due
Reading TBA</p> |
| W Sept 19 | Hawthorne “Rappacini’s Daughter” |
| M Sept 24 | Poe “Ligeia” |

W Sept 26	Reading TBA
M Oct 1	Reading TBA
W Oct 3	Midterm Exam
M Oct 8	Oler "Bloodletting" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss reading and film
W Oct 10	Watch <i>King Kong</i> clips online
M Oct 15	Watch <i>Godzilla</i> clips online
W Oct 17	Watch clips online Reading TBA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss reading
M Oct 22	Harper "Zombies, Malls, and the Consumerism Debate"

Film: *Ginger Snaps*

CONTEMPORARY MONSTERS

W Oct 24	Essay Two due Halttunen "The Birth of Horror"
M Oct 29	Reading/clips TBA
W Oct 31	Modleski "The Terror of Pleasure"
M Nov 5	Zheng "Encountering the Other"
W Nov 7	Discuss <i>District 9</i>
M Nov 12	Melville <i>Moby-Dick</i> excerpts
W Nov 14	Continued

Film: *District 9*

M Nov 19-Wed Nov 21 Thanksgiving holidays

YOUR MONSTERS

M Nov 26	Essay Three due (M Nov 26)
W Nov 28	The readings and discussions during these final two weeks will be guided by the monsters you bring
M Dec 3	
W Dec 5	

Thurs, Dec 13, 3pm **Final Exam**