ENGL 302 B: CRITICAL PRACTICE

MONSTERS R US

- Autumn 2016

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Meeting Time: TTh 1:30pm - 3:20pm

Location: SIG 226

SLN: 14406

Instructor:
Katherine Cummings
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ADDITIONAL DETAILS:

English 302
Fall 2016

Course Description: “Monsters R Us”

The course title is intended to signal two strands of inquiry that we will pursue this quarter, each of which pays particular attention to how monsters are defined, the historical conditions in which these figurations or definitions of monstrousity emerge and their legacies. We will begin our investigation in the 19th century focusing on Mary Shelly’s *Frankenstein* and Stephen Crane’s “The Monster” as symptomatic of texts that in defining the monster as unnatural and inhuman figure what counts as personhood and, by extension, citizenship, along with the rights and value that attend it. On the other hand, the same texts promulgate then hegemonic understandings about race, gender, class, and sexuality which orchestrate what Michel Foucault defines as “state racism”: namely a biopolitical regime that subdivides humanity into “we, the people” whose well being the state is pledged to foster and the less than human whose lives are marketable, disposable, or menacing. On the other hand, the same texts offer a counter vision, that upends this binary and the values that it assigns. A second, late 20th century strain heralds what Donna Haraway calls “the promise of monsters”; we’ll examine what that promise might signal for better and worse in a critically contextualized analyses of contemporary fiction and film. These are likely to include Octavia Butler’s *Fledgling*; Katherine Dunn’s *Geek Love*; Patty Jenkin’s (dir.), *Monster* and Ridley Scott’s (dir.) *Bladerunner*.

Catalog Description:

Intensive study of, and exercise in, applying important or influential interpretive practices for studying language, literature, and culture, along with consideration of their powers/limits. Focuses on developing critical writing abilities. Topics vary and may include critical and interpretive practice from scripture and myth to more contemporary approaches, including newer interdisciplinary practices. Prerequisite: minimum 2.0 in ENGL 202.

GE Requirements:

Visual, Literary, and Performing Arts (VLPA)
Writing (W)

Status: Active

Last updated: October 5, 2016 - 9:04pm