



MONSTERS



ENGL 1102: MONSTROUS BODIES

COURSE DESCRIPTION: We're drawn to and fascinated by horror because the genre reminds us, more than any other, that we have both outsides and insides, skin and guts, eyes and gray matter, ideas and appetites. The genre depicts bodies torn apart and monstrously reconfigured, but horror also reminds us that there are bodies in the audience, bodies in our living rooms, bodies seeing, bodies reading, bodies screaming.

Our course begins by considering the nature of monstrosity, what monsters are, what they do, and what they mean. Monsters are the quintessential Other w/ a capital "O," persons or creatures defined as different from (and viewed as functioning outside) the dominant social group. They are the forgotten, the repressed, the underbelly of culture. As we survey a wide variety of monstrous bodies and texts, we will consider the following sorts of questions: Why is culture so quick to turn away in the face of the unnameable? What sorts of identity groups are deemed monstrous and ostracized by culture? What happens to bodies transformed (by technology, death, evolution, etc.)? What is the relationship between humans and animals? And, perhaps most importantly, why do we create monsters? What cultural function do they serve? Finally, we'll spend a good deal of time considering our own relationship to the works of the course (and our own potential for monstrosity), thinking about the real (psychological and physical) impact media has on us. While working on a multimodal research-intensive project, students will engage in activities/assignments that explore the sometimes monstrous (and sometimes violent) nature of composition itself.

**FALL
2011**

Instructor

Jesse Stommel

**J1 (MWF 10-11)
B (MWF 11-12)
P2 (MWF 1-2)**

Note: The subject will lead us through difficult terrain (vampires, slashers, cannibals, the walking dead, etc.), and we will have to sludge through some gore along the way. If you are squeamish you would likely prefer another section.