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## *Monsters across Cultures*

### **Writing 230K**



昆山杜克大学  
DUKE KUNSHAN  
UNIVERSITY



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Dates / contact hours: 300 minutes each week

Academic Credit: 1; Modes of Inquiry: W, CCI; Course format: Seminar

Professor Alison Klein – [alison.klein@duke.edu](mailto:alison.klein@duke.edu)

#### **Prerequisite(s), if applicable**

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For Duke Undergraduates, completion of Writing 101

#### **Course Description**

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This course provides writing experience and training through theme based seminars on a topic selected by the instructor. The course component includes cross-cultural inquiry within writing, as well as an emphasis on making texts public.

#### **Monsters across Cultures**

\*What do images of monsters in literature, film, and visual art demonstrate about different societal fears?

\*Which aspects of monstrosity stay the same from culture to culture, and which aspects change?

\*What do these similarities and differences teach us about how we, as writers, communicate with people of different backgrounds, and how we can explore and celebrate our differences and commonalities?

Images of monstrosity shift over time and across geographic locations. The zombie can be traced back to 17<sup>th</sup> century Haiti, when slaves imagined the horror of being trapped in their bodies forever, while the vampire myth is believed to have emerged from pre-industrial societies who did

not understand the process of decomposition. This class will explore the development of monster myths, as well as literature, film, and visual art depicting these monsters.

### Course Goals / Objectives

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The central goal of this course is to provide native English students as well as English language learners guided practice in rigorous reading and writing both within and beyond the university, whether in China or elsewhere.

- Developing the power of close reading, deep listening, and keen observation of everyday life.
- Question assumptions and traditions. Consider multiple cultural perspectives on complex issues.
- Develop original ideas and consider actual evidence to support your ideas.
- Explore your experience and perspectives in the context of other cultures, writers and thinkers.
- Express your ideas through writing and multi-media performance. Increase your confidence speaking publically.
- Learn to negotiate creative collaboration.

### Required Text(s)/Resources

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#### Readings:

- Articles, book excerpts, and other texts linked in Sakai Resources.
  - Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. New York: W. W. Norton, P. 2013. Print.
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### Additional Materials (optional)

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Access to a computer, our course website, and Duke Library resources.

### Course Requirements / Key Evidences

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We will begin by considering the cultural and historical factors that play into the creation of monster stories. Next, we will turn to fiction and films that depict famous monsters, such as Godzilla and Frankenstein's monster, and discuss what these images reveal about the culture that created them. Students will then pick a specific depiction of a monster and perform a close reading of it. To deepen our understanding on the issues of monstrosity, students will

perform research and create an annotated bibliography, focusing on the time and location that their monster was created. The final research paper will pull together the close reading and the annotated bibliography in order to make an argument about the meaning or significance of a monster. Each major assignment will be written in drafts and workshopped by peers. Additionally, students will complete weekly blog posts that will reflect on the course content and also develop writing skills such as textual analysis and awareness of audience.

## Assessment Information / Grading Procedures

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- 10% - Participation
- 10% - Blogs
- 20% - Close Reading
- 20% - Annotated Bibliography
- 40% - Research Project

If an assignment is submitted after the deadline, it will lose 5% for each day late.

## Diversity and Intercultural Learning (see Principles of DKU Liberal Arts Education)

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Monsters across Cultures is structured around analyzing, appreciating, understanding, and celebrating cultural diversity around the globe. The course asks students to explore images of monsters from their own culture, challenging students to think about these texts beyond their surface entertainment and instead consider what they reveal about societal values and culture. Using writing as a vehicle, the course then asks students to explore the values of other cultures through that culture's images of monstrosity, identifying both difference and commonality.

## Course Policies and Guidelines

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### **Attendance and Participation**

This course is structured as a workshop seminar; therefore your attendance and active participation are *crucial* to the functioning of our learning community. It is required that you print out Sakai texts before class and bring them to class with you. Not bringing hard copies of the text we will be discussing will lower your participation grade. Also, please bring a notebook or journal for short in-class writing exercises.

Plan to attend every class meeting. Situations may arise that necessitate missing class. You are permitted to miss a total of two class meetings – due to illness or other emergencies – without incurring penalties. It will be your responsibility to catch up, including getting notes and

assignments from a classmate. Any absences beyond the two class limit will result in your grade being lowered a full letter grade for each day missed.

### **Assignments**

All work is due on the specified deadlines. It is important for you to complete and submit your work punctually so the course moves forward as intended. Writing projects and blogs, excepting emergencies, are subject to late penalties of 5% of the total grade per day late. Any work more than 5 days late will not be accepted. In addition to **conferences** that I will hold during the semester I encourage you to come by my office to discuss particular writing projects, your writing in general, and/or your progress in the course. Feel free to email me any time to set up an appointment.

### **The Duke Community Standard and Plagiarism**

Just as you will trust me to structure an intellectually exciting course and supportive creative environment, I also place my trust in you to be honest and uphold what is referred to as **The Duke Community Standard**: “I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors; I will conduct myself honorably in all my endeavors; and I will act if the Standard is compromised.” **Avoid Plagiarism**: To knowingly present someone else’s work as your own is to plagiarize. When you draw on, quote, or respond to the work of others in your writing—as you will surely do in this course—you need to acknowledge that you are doing so. This is the case whether your sources are published authors, fellow students, teachers, parents, or friends. The penalty for plagiarism is failure of the course in addition to whatever sanctions are determined by the Undergraduate Judicial Board. We will devote an entire class to discussing citation, but since the rules of citation can often be tricky, play it safe and **be sure to ask me** if you have any questions about how or if to document a certain source, phrase, excerpt, or idea. Here are some websites that may be helpful: <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/>&<http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/>