Course Description

“The monster is difference made flesh, to dwell among us.” – Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, Monster Culture

“In a deeply tribal sense, we love our monsters.” – Dr. E.O. Wilson (on sharks)

As a First-Year Seminar, this course investigates how we pursue knowledge and cultivate understanding. To achieve this, American Monsters examines the cultural logics of boundaries, anxiety, belonging, and difference. By taking monsters as our object of study, we will interrogate questions about fear, outsiders, the weird, and cultural/social boundaries. Monsters question borders and boundaries by transgressing them and revealing their construction. We will also consider ideas and notions of the supernatural and the mysterious. Monsters reveal the limits of our tolerance, our reservations about others, our fascination with the unexplainable, and our fears about ourselves.
First Year Seminar Course Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to differentiate the ways in which knowledge is constructed across multiple disciplines.
   In American Monsters, students will identify what makes Americans afraid (or not) through the study of monsters. As such, conversations will pull ideas and methodologies from religious studies, history, anthropology, media studies, and sociology.

2. Students will be able to articulate how their own personal and cultural perspectives affect their discovery and generation of knowledge and understanding.
   In American Monsters, students will analyze how American conceptions of “the other” and fear shapes the experiences of all our country's citizens. We’ll consider the ways in which monsters are culturally, socially, and religious shaped.

3. Students will be able to integrate the principles of Gonzaga’s mission with their academic, personal, and spiritual aspirations.
   In American Monsters, students will discuss issues surrounding fear of the unknown in contemporary America. Students will evaluate how monsters reveal social tensions and think about the relationship between fear of others and recognizing the dignity of all human persons.

How to Succeed in this Course

1) Come to class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire meeting. Make-up quizzes will only be offered for documented University approved activities, major illness (doctor’s note), or family emergencies.

2) Regularly check your email. I frequently email about grades, housekeeping issues, and more.

3) Complete assigned readings, in their entirety, on schedule. Engage with your reading. Bring the readings to class.

4) Contribute to class discussions. You should come to class with questions and comments, prepared to participate in a lively discussion.

5) Complete all assignments, in a timely manner. Due dates are firm but I allow requested extensions if requested 12 hours before due date. Otherwise late papers will be deducted a full letter grade for every day it is late.

6) Ask for help when you need it. I am happy to assist you in your attempts to master course materials and successfully complete course assignments (Really, I am). Come to my office hours and I am always available via email.
**Course Policies**

RESPECT FOR MATERIAL, OUR SUBJECTS, AND YOUR PEERS
Students will be expected to communicate in a civil manner at all times, both in and out of the classroom. This means that interactions are to be carried out in a polite, courteous, and dignified way. Treat your peers and the subject material with respect.

**COURSE POLICY ON RACE AND ETHNICITY**
This class and classroom is one that respects and welcomes each other. Many of my classes cover topics related to race, colonialism, religion, and racism. These conversations and readings are difficult for some students, and I encourage you to live in that space of productive discomfort and allow yourself to be challenged. Gonzaga’s [Mission Statement](https://www.gonzaga.edu/Campus-Resources/Offices-and-Services-A-Z/Disability-Resources-Education-and-Access-Management/default.asp) emphasizes a commitment to intercultural competence, diversity, and social justice. Let’s live that mission in the classroom. Through these sometimes-uncomfortable conversations, we will learn and grow together.

**PLAGIARISM POLICY**
I do not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. We are an intellectual and academic community, and all of us are responsible to act with integrity. All violations of the Gonzaga Academic Honesty Policy will result in a zero on the assignment. Plagiarism is the act of passing another’s work off as your own. Whether intentional or not, all plagiarized assignments will receive a zero. If you have questions or concerns about plagiarism, consult the guide on blackboard. [Click here for more on Academic Citizenship at Gonzaga](https://www.gonzaga.edu/Campus-Resources/Offices-and-Services-A-Z/Disability-Resources-Education-and-Access-Management/default.asp).

**SCREEN POLICY**
You are welcome to use your computer or tablet in class to take notes and refer to pdf readings you did not print out. Screens are not to be allowed for other purposes during class. If you have a screen open, you have agreed that I can cold-call on you at any time. The only exceptions to this rule are those with relevant disability accommodations.

**DISABILITY ACCESS POLICY**
Students with disabilities who need academic accommodations should:
1. Register with and provide documentation to the Disability Access.
2. Bring a letter to me from the Disability Access Office indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done within the first two weeks of class. The sooner I know, the sooner we can work together.
For more information about services available to GU students with disabilities, contact: [disability@gonzaga.edu](mailto:disability@gonzaga.edu); 313-4134. Or visit their office in Foley 209 [www.gonzaga.edu/Campus-Resources/Offices-and-Services-A-Z/Disability-Resources-Education-and-Access-Management/default.asp](http://www.gonzaga.edu/Campus-Resources/Offices-and-Services-A-Z/Disability-Resources-Education-and-Access-Management/default.asp).
A NOTE ON HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT
Consistent with its mission, Gonzaga seeks to assure all community members learn and work in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Title VII, Title IX and Gonzaga's policy prohibit harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct. Gonzaga encourages anyone experiencing harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct to talk to someone from the Campus and Local Resources list found in the Student Handbook: www.gonzaga.edu/studenthandbook about what happened so they can get the support they need and Gonzaga can respond appropriately. There are both confidential and non-confidential resources and reporting options available to you. Gonzaga is legally obligated to respond to reports of sexual misconduct, and therefore we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of a report, unless made to a confidential resource. Responses may vary from support services to formal investigations. As a faculty member, I am required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. I must provide our Title IX coordinator with relevant details such as the names of those involved in the incident. For more information about policies and resources or reporting options, please visit the following website: www.gonzaga.edu/titleix. My office is a safe space, but I am legally required to report sexual misconduct.

For more on Title IX, see: Stephanie N. Whaley
Title IX Director
509-313-6910
whaleys@gonzaga.edu
Business Services Building 018
Or by filling out an online Sexual Misconduct Report Form

ATTENDANCE POLICY
According to the Gonzaga attendance policy, if you miss more than 6 class meetings, you will receive a “V,” which is the same as a “F.”

Assignments and Grading
1) 3Qs Reading Journals. These show critical engagement with texts. Every class period that has an assigned reading, you'll submit a reading journal entry on blackboard that includes: a rich quote, a discussion question for the class, and a quandary that the reading left with you. For more on the grading, see the Reading Journals Rubric on blackboard. We'll be using the journal feature in blackboard, and your journal is due an hour before class begins. Worth 280 points (for 28 reading journals).
2) Personal Monster Reflection: An informal 1-page reflection on your monster here at Gonzaga University. This could be something social or academic that prompts fear or anxiety for you. Describe it and explain why it is your monster. Worth 25 points
2) Monster Analysis. You will select a monster of their choice from American popular culture (film, novel, comic book, television show) and provide an analysis of that monster will attention to religion,
culture, gender, sexuality, politics, and/or fear. Worth 175 points.
3) Creating Monsters. You will present a draft of your monsters while in development with the class. This will be in the form of critical conversation, with feedback. You will also be assigned a partner for a more formal peer review. Worth 70 points.
4) Final Monsters. You will create an American monster. Your monster will include: a name, a developed backstory, and a prototype (material, digital, or literary) of the monster. Part of your monster’s backstory will include a scenario in which the monster would manifest in the everyday world and a means of defeating it (if it’s bad) or harnessing its power (if it’s good). Worth 250 points.
5) Preparation and Participation: The least boring and most effective way to learn is to participate fully in the process. You are expected to contribute to the success of this course by: reading the assigned materials, attending every class, taking notes, listening respectfully, and contributing to class discussions. There will be 3-5 Harkness Discussions during the semester (See the In-Class Participation Rubric for more) which will be worth some of this grade. Worth 200 points.

3Qs Reading Journals: 280 points 1000-895 points: A range
Personal Monster Reflection: 25 points A/A- cutoff at 925
Monster Analysis: 175 points 894-795 points: B range
Creating Monsters: 70 points B+/B cutoff at 855
Final Monsters: 250 points B/B- cutoff at 825
Preparation and Participation: 200 points 794-695 points: C range
Total: 1000 points C+/C cutoff at 755

Course Schedule

Important: You need to come to class having already read the assigned reading for that day; in other words, readings are due the date listed. We will have some heavy reading weeks, but we’ll also have breaks via in-class film screenings.

Week 1: The Monsters at College
Wednesday, Jan 17: Course Introduction
Friday, Jan 19: Success in the First Year at Gonzaga
Reading: “What the Best College Students Do” on blackboard

Week 2: Building the Monster Toolbox
Monday, Jan 22: How do you identify a monster?
Reading: “Monster Culture” on blackboard
Spring 2018

MWF 2:10-3:00 AM; College Hall 128

Wednesday, Jan 24: Can you explain the unexplained?
Reading: “The Uncanny” on blackboard

Friday, Jan 26: What is weird? Are monsters weird?
Reading: “Body Ritual Among the Nacerima” on blackboard

Personal Monster Reflection Due before class begins

Week 3: Building the Monster Toolbox

Monday, Jan 29: What is weird? Take 2.
Reading: “Habitus” on blackboard

Wednesday, Jan 31: What is Culture?
Reading: “Culture” on blackboard

Friday, Feb 2: What do monsters show us?
Reading: “Introduction: The Bloody Chords of Memory” in Monsters in America

Week 4: The Unexplainable and the Unseen

Monday, Feb 5: Ye’ Olde American Monsters
Reading: “Monstrous Beginnings” (Chapter 1) in Monsters in America

Wednesday, Feb 7: Colonial Monsters (and Puritans!), Take 2
Reading: “The American Satan in the Colonial and Revolutionary Worlds” on blackboard

Friday, Feb 9: Expanding the Monster Toolbox, Gender
Reading: “Social Construction of Gender” and “When the Woman Looks” on blackboard (focus your reading journal on the first reading)

Week 5: The Unexplainable and the Unseen

Monday, Feb 12: So Why Puritan Women?
Reading: “The Devil, the Body, and the Feminine Soul in Puritan New England” on blackboard

Wednesday, Feb 14: The Witch
Friday, Feb 16: The Witch

Monster Analysis Due at 11:59 pm, Friday February 16

Week 6: The Unexplainable and the Unseen

Monday, Feb 19: No Class. President’s Day Holiday.

Wednesday, Feb 21: Nineteenth-Century American Monsters
Reading: “Goth Americana” (Chapter 2) in Monsters in America

Friday, Feb 23: Monsters and Science
Reading: “Weird Science” (Chapter 3) in Monsters in America
Week 7: The Monsters from Beyond and in Our Midst
Monday, Feb 26: Monsters and Freaks
Reading: “In Search of Freaks” on blackboard
Wednesday, Feb 28: Are Aliens like other Monsters?
Reading: “Alien Invasions” (Chapter 4) in Monsters in America
Friday, March 2: Heaven’s Gate: Monsters in our Midst?
Reading: “Heaven’s Gate” and “Last Chance to Evacuate Earth” (in that order) on blackboard (focus your reading journal on the second reading)

Week 8: The Monsters from Beyond
Monday, March 5: Close Encounters of the Third Kind
Wednesday, March 7: Close Encounters of the Third Kind
Friday, March 9: Close Encounters of the Third Kind

March 12-16: Spring Break!

Week 9: Monsters and Their Modern Prey
Monday, March 19: Murderous Monsters
Reading: “Deviant Bodies” (Chapter 5) in Monsters in America
Wednesday, March 21: Serial Killers
Reading: “Men Who Like To Kill - The Zodiac, the Son of Sam, Charles Manson and Ted Bundy” via Kanopy (accessible via Foley Library)
Friday, March 23: Hell in a House
Reading: “Haunted Houses” (Chapter 6) in Monsters in America

Week 10: Undead Monsters
Monday, March 26: The Undead
Reading: “Undead Americans” (Chapter 7) in Monsters in America
Wednesday, March 28: Zombies
Reading: “The Race and Religion of Zombies” on blackboard
Friday, March 30: No Class. Good Friday

Week 11: The Undead
Monday, April 2: No Class. Easter Monday.
Wednesday, April 4: Night of the Living Dead
Friday, April 6: Night of the Living Dead

Week 12: Monsters and Ourselves
Monday, April 9: Night of the Living Dead, redux
Reading: “Staking Monsters” on blackboard
Wednesday, April 11: Monsters Among Us Now
Reading: “Worse Things Waiting” (Epilogue) in Monsters in America

Friday, April 13: Monsters in a Post-Human World
Reading: Clones! Watch the video and read the article here: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/14/booming/the-clone-named-dolly.html

Week 13: Modern Monsters
Monday, April 16: Cloning, redux
Reading: “The Literary Foundations of the Cloning Debate”

Wednesday, April 18: Monsters and Play
Reading: “I’m a Motherf—— ‘Monster!’” on blackboard

Friday, April 20: What’s the difference between monster and superhero?
Reading: “Our Serial Killers, Our Superheroes, and Ourselves” on blackboard

Week 14: Our Monsters
Monday, April 23: Monster Workshop
Wednesday, April 25: Monster Workshop
Friday, April 27: Monster Workshop

Week 15: Our Monsters
Monday, April 30: Monster Peer Review
Wednesday, May 2: Presentations (Creating Monsters)
Friday, May 4: Presentations (Creating Monsters)

Final Exam Week
Tuesday, May 8th, 6:00-8:00 pm
Final Monsters due at our exam period. Before our exam period, you will upload the text portion of your monster to a Turnitin link. You’ll bring your physical prototype (if applicable) to the exam period to turn in. We’ll get together during the exam period and, wait for it, watch a monster movie of your choice (from Monsters, Inc. to Carrie or The Exorcist).