

HUMA 1301: Exploration of the Humanities **Fall 2016**

Course Information

HUMA 1301.006
JO 4.102 MWF 1:00 PM – 1:50 PM

Professor/TA Contact Information

Dr. Ingrao
Office: JO 4.636
Office Hours: T 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM,
W 2:10 PM - 4:10 PM, and by appointment
Office Phone: 883 - 6089
Email: jingrao@utdallas.edu

TA contact information for this course is as follows:

Kristen Kelso
Office: JO 5.410 D
Office Hours: R 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM, and
by appointment
Email: kxk165030@utdallas.edu



Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

This course requires no pre-requisite.

Course Description

When Beowulf slew Grendel or rode out against the dragon he did so as a hero facing monsters clearly distinct from himself as obstacles to be overcome for his glory. Beginning with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, we see monsters such as Victor's creature, vampires, and zombies, not as obstacles but as the central occupants of our stories, as the focus of our interest, fear, and sometimes envy, and as reflections of society and ourselves. After all, why do zombies flock to the mall? Intended to introduce students to the connections between various fields of studies in the humanities, this section of HUMA 1301 will apply an interdisciplinary approach to viewpoints concerning monsters and monstrosity. During this semester this theme will be discussed by examining the rich dialogue between verse, folklore, fiction, film, and pop culture.

General Education Core Objectives

1. Critical Thinking Skills: Students will be given the potential to engage in creative and/or innovative thinking, and/or inquiry, analysis, evaluation, synthesis of information, organizing concepts and constructing solutions.
 2. Communication Skills: Students will be given the potential to demonstrate effective written, oral, and visual communication.
 3. Social Responsibility: Students will be given the potential to demonstrate intercultural competency and civic knowledge by engaging effectively in local, regional, national, and global communities.
 4. Personal Responsibility: Students will be given the potential to demonstrate the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequence to ethical decision-making.
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Course Objectives

Using the following assignments as assessments, this course seeks to offer students the potential to meet the following objectives:

1. Critical Thinking Skills: Analyze connections between a variety of texts from the humanities (for example: fictional, critical, and cinematic) and draw informed conclusions from said connections. This objective will be assessed via the second and third exams.
 2. Communication Skills: Apply considered analysis and respond to works in the humanities as examples of human expression and aesthetic and ideological principles. This objective will be assessed via the short essay.
 3. Social Responsibility: Analyze and critically evaluate humanistic works in the context of culture and society. This objective will be assessed via quizzes.
 4. Personal Responsibility: Compare and contrast the works with each other in terms of ethics and values. This objective will be assessed via the first exam.
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Required Textbooks and Materials

Textbooks are available at the UTD Bookstore, Off Campus Books, and commercially. Please use only the following editions for more potential for success in the course:

Seamus Heaney, trans., *Beowulf* (Norton, ISBN: 0393320978)
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Penguin, ISBN: 9780141439471)
Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (Penguin, ISBN: 9780141439846, or 014143984X)
Richard Matheson, *I Am Legend* (Orb, ISBN: 9780312865047)

Films, such as *The Wolf Man* (1941), the original 1968 *Night of the Living Dead* and its 1990 remake, and selections from other films such as *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, *Blade Runner*, and *Bram Stoker's Dracula* will be incorporated in the course; in addition, the course will consider excerpts from such television shows as *The Simpsons* and the fifth season of *The Walking Dead*.

eLearning

eLearning offers students a repository for class announcements, media, recommended readings, the short essay assignment, and learning module notes.

Concerning learning modules, note that among other pedagogical methods--such as in-class discussion and group exercises--this course utilizes lecture. Students are, of course, happily encouraged to ask questions concerning lectures during class. Students may also contact the instructor and TA, and are urged to take advantage of office hours. Though neither the TA nor the instructor will re-teach material presented during a specific date in its entirety as was originally presented in class, specific questions concerning material presented in class are welcome in order to promote the potential for student success in the course.

Though learning module notes posted to eLearning are intended to help students review such material as names, dates, and key terms mentioned during a lecture, they will not mention all the specifics of content covered during a given lecture. Learning module notes should not be taken as a substitute for attending class.

Some learning modules will include, or focus upon, discussion questions. Students do not necessarily have to write answers for discussion questions, but have more potential for success in the course by reviewing these questions before class as they provide a rubric for in-class discussion and/or the viewing of films and media excerpts.

Material from eLearning will be utilized in the instructor's composition of the three semester exams. The instructor and TA expect that students will be able to provide answers on exams specific to material posted on eLearning.

To access learning module notes and discussion questions:

1. Go to the following URL:

<https://elearning.utdallas.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

2. Enter UTD NetID and password.

3. A list of all courses in which a student has enrolled should appear. Click on the course title.

4. Click "Learning Modules" at the left of the screen on the "Course Content" page.

5. Learning modules are dated chronologically.

Please contact the instructor at jingrao@utdallas.edu concerning problems accessing materials placed on eLearning.

Note that a copy of the syllabus is also available through eLearning in the event a printed copy is misplaced. To access the syllabus, click on "Syllabus" at the left of the "Course Content" page.



Daily Academic Calendar

Thematic unit	Week	Date	Assignment to be completed by class meeting	Activity in class	
Course introduction	1	Aug. 22		1. Distribute and discuss course syllabus and goals 2. Introduce and define "Humanities"	
Monster as hero's challenge		Aug. 24		Introduction to <i>Beowulf</i>	
		Aug. 26	<i>Beowulf</i> , pages 2-57 (lines 1-851)		
		2	Aug. 29	<i>Beowulf</i> , pages 57-149 (lines 852-2199)	
			Aug. 31	<i>Beowulf</i> , pages 149-213 (lines 2200-3182)	1. View selection from <i>The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug</i> 2. <u>First quiz</u>
The “Other”	3		Sept. 2	“The Lure of Horror” (recommended reading)	<u>Group exercise and discussion to illustrate the “Other”</u>
		Sept. 5	<u>NO CLASS; LABOR DAY</u>		
The "deformed" monster in science, literature, and philosophy		Sept. 7		1. Introduction to <i>Frankenstein</i> 2. View selection from <i>Young Frankenstein</i>	

Thematic unit	Week	Date	Assignment to be completed by class meeting	Activity in class
The "deformed" monster in <i>Frankenstein</i>	3	Sept. 9	1. <i>Frankenstein</i> , pages 11-50 2. <i>Rime of the Ancyent Mariner</i> (recommended reading)	<u>Second quiz</u>
	4	Sept. 12	<i>Frankenstein</i> , pages 51-90	View selection from <i>The Simpsons</i>
		Sept. 14	1. <i>Frankenstein</i> , pages 93-151 2. Selection from Book Four of <i>Paradise Lost</i> (recommended reading)	<u>Group exercise and discussion using Maslow’s “Hierarchy of Needs”</u>
		Sept. 16	<i>Frankenstein</i> , pages 155-225	First exam review
	5	Sept. 19	Prepare for first exam	<u>First exam</u>
The "deformed" monster in cinema: Replicating the creature		Sept. 21	Look over learning module notes related to the film before class	View selections from <i>Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein</i>
		Sept. 23		View selections from <i>Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein</i>
		6	Sept. 26	Look over learning module notes related to the film before class
Contemporary perspectives on the "deformed" monster		Sept. 28		<u>Group exercise to create a "deformed" monster and discussion</u>
The vampire in folklore and romantic literature		Sept. 30	"The Vampyre: A Tale," pages 246-265 of <i>Frankenstein</i>	1. Introduction to <i>Dracula</i> 2. View selections from <i>Interview with the Vampire</i>
The vampire in <i>Dracula</i> and Victorian culture	7	Oct. 3	1 <i>Dracula</i> , pages 7-84 2. “If” (recommended reading)	
		Oct. 5	<i>Dracula</i> , pages 85-173	
		Oct. 7	1. <i>Dracula</i> , pages 174-277 2. Selection from <i>Thalaba the Destroyer</i> (recommended reading)	
	8	Oct. 10	<i>Dracula</i> , pages 278-402	
The vampire in cinema: Sympathy for the devil and the vampire in love		Oct. 12	Look over learning module notes related to the film before class	View selections from <i>Bram Stoker's Dracula</i>
		Oct. 14		View selections from <i>Bram Stoker's Dracula</i>
Contemporary perspectives on the vampire	9	Oct. 17		<u>Group exercise to create a vampire and discussion</u>

Thematic unit	Week	Date	Assignment to be completed by class meeting	Activity in class
The "transformation" monster in folklore, science, literature, and popular culture	9	Oct. 19	1. "Lycaon Transformed into a Wolf" from <i>Metamorphoses</i> 2. "Nicerros' Account of the Werewolf" from <i>Satyricon</i> (recommended readings)	1. Introduction to <i>The Wolf Man</i> 2. View selection from <i>Wolf</i> 3. Second exam review
		Oct. 21	Prepare for second exam	<u>Second exam</u>
The "transformation" monster in <i>The Wolf Man</i> Contemporary perspectives on the "transformation" monster	10	Oct. 24	Look over learning module notes related to the film before class	1. View <i>The Wolf Man</i> 2. <u>Short essay assigned</u>
		Oct. 26		View <i>The Wolf Man</i>
		Oct. 28		<u>Group exercise to create a "transformation" monster and discussion</u>
Legendary monstrosity: Matheson reimagines the "Other"	11	Oct. 31	<i>I Am Legend</i> , pages 13-47	
		Nov. 2	<i>I Am Legend</i> , pages 49-117	<u>Short essay rough draft due</u>
		Nov. 4	<i>I Am Legend</i> , pages 119-170	View selections from <i>I Am Legend</i>
The zombie in folklore, cinema, and mass culture Surviving the zombie apocalypse	12	Nov. 7		1. Introduction to the zombie 2. View selection from <i>The Golem</i>
		Nov. 9		1. Introduction to the zombie 2. View selection from <i>Dawn of the Dead</i>
		Nov. 11		1. <u>Group exercise using Maslow's hierarchy to devise a plan to survive the zombie apocalypse</u> 2. <u>Short essay rough draft returned</u>
The zombie on television: Human moments in the zombie apocalypse The zombie in cinema: Two nights of the living dead	13	Nov. 14	Look over learning module notes related to the television episode before class	View "Them" from <i>The Walking Dead</i>
		Nov. 16	Look over learning module notes related to the film before class	View <i>Night of the Living Dead</i> (1968)
		Nov. 18		View <i>Night of the Living Dead</i> (1968)
	14	Nov. 21 – Nov. 25	<u>NO CLASS; FALL BREAK</u>	
The zombie in cinema: Two nights of the living dead	15	Nov. 28	Look over learning module notes related to the film before class	1. View <i>Night of the Living Dead</i> (1990) 2. <u>Short essay final draft due</u>
		Nov. 30		View <i>Night of the Living Dead</i> (1990)

Thematic unit	Week	Date	Assignment to be completed by class meeting	Activity in class
“We ain’t them”: Finding meaning beyond the zombie apocalypse	15	Dec. 2		<u>Revision of group exercise using Maslow’s hierarchy to devise a plan to survive the zombie apocalypse</u>
	16	Dec. 5		1. <u>Discussion of revision of group exercise using Maslow’s hierarchy to devise a plan to survive the zombie apocalypse</u> 2. Third exam review
		Dec. 7	Prepare for third exam	<u>Third exam</u>

Grading Policy

Semester grades will be calculated in accordance with the following percentages:

Quizzes	20%
First exam	15%
Second exam	20%
Short Essay	20%
Third exam	25%

Assignment letter grades correspond to the following numerical GPA values in calculating a student’s semester grade:

A+	4.00	C+	2.33	F	0.00
A	4.00	C	2.00		
A-	3.67	C-	1.67		
B+	3.33	D+	1.33		
B	3.00	D	1.00		
B-	2.67	D-	0.67		

Instructions for calculating the semester grade are as follows: for each of the five major assignments (quizzes, first exam, second exam, third exam, and short essay) the numerical GPA value of the letter grade is multiplied by the percentage designated for the assignment.

For example, if a student receives a grade of A on the first exam, the student would multiply 4.00 by 0.15.

The five resulting numerical values are then added to determine the semester grade. Any applicable extra credit will be added to the lowest exam grade of the semester, or the short essay grade if this grade is lower than any of the three exam grades, **before** the numerical GPA value of the letter grade is multiplied.

For example, a student receives a C on the second exam. This grade is lower than the other two exam grades, as well as the short essay grade. Before the second exam grade is multiplied by 0.20, the extra credit would raise the second exam grade to a B.

Note with care those dates on the “Daily Academic Calendar” where we will have a group exercise and/or discussion of the same. Though regular attendance greatly increases the potential for success in the course, attendance on those dates where we will have a group exercise and/or discussion of the same will be particularly important.

At the end of the semester, students with a borderline grade, for example a grade that falls between an A- (3.67) and a B+ (3.33), who have been present for and participated in the majority of group exercises and discussions will be rounded up. Students who have not been present for, or who have been present but not participated in, the majority of group exercises and discussions will be rounded down. **“Majority” is here defined as at least a 90% participation rate.**

The previous criterion is applied to the semester grade only in those cases that a semester grade is borderline. A student who earns a B at 3.00 exactly will neither be rounded up to a B+ nor down to a B-.

Even in this scenario, group exercises remain important in their potential to refine a student's ability to harness class concepts and engage specific examples in an analytical manner. The ability to analyze class concepts, use specific examples, and connect these to ideas will potentially be important on quizzes, all three exams, and the short essay; in this way, group exercises offer the potential to help students be better prepared for quizzes, exams, and the short essay.

Exams, Quizzes, and Short Essay

In-class exams will not be cumulative. All three will consist of a series of short answer questions and one analytical question that require specific responses concerning course content. To this end, exams will consist of two sections. Both sections are to be completed during the same class period: one section for short answer questions, and one section for analysis.

Students should not bring notes or books for use during exams. Students are expected to take responsibility for bringing blue books to all examination periods. Blue books are available through the UTD Bookstore, Off Campus Books, the SGA, and select vending machines.

In the case of the third exam only, a student's grade will be posted on eLearning. This grade will be posted between the exam date of December 7th and December 14th. An announcement will be made in class and posted to eLearning concerning pick up of graded exams at the end of the semester.

Students can expect at least six total quizzes during the semester. Two quizzes have been announced on the "Daily Academic Calendar" prior to the first exam; these quizzes seek to provide the potential for preparedness for the first exam. Additional quizzes following these two announced quizzes may be either announced or unannounced at the instructor's discretion.

Quizzes will be graded on a check + (exceeds expectations), check (meets expectations), check - (does not meet expectations) basis. **The lowest quiz grade of the semester will be dropped.** At the end of the semester, the remaining combined total of check plus and check quiz grades will be counted and applied to a letter grade as follows:

- Five or more combined check plus and check grades = A
- Four combined check plus and check grades = B
- Three combined check plus and check grades = C
- Two combined check plus and check grades = D
- One or no combined check plus and check grades = F

With the exception of a grade of F, plus credit will be applied to the semester quiz grade in those cases that a student has earned more check pluses than checks.

In addition to the exams and quizzes, students will be assigned a short essay of approximately three to four pages. This essay affords students the potential to develop ideas and discuss examples in a non-timed environment. Building upon the style of analytical questions that have the potential to appear on exams and quizzes, the essay will be graded in a similar manner but calls for sustained analysis; specifically, students will need to select a work (for example, a short story, poem, film, comic book, painting, sculpture, video game, and so on) **not assigned in class**, and apply class concepts to the work with the goal of analyzing how a reading of monstrosity in the work is significant to us as engaged students of the humanities, and active agents of culture. A detailed assignment sheet for the essay will be distributed in class and posted to eLearning on October 24th.

Though students should focus upon **one source not assigned in class** for the short essay, students should also plan to include **at least two sources assigned in class** to provide context for their analysis.

All sources in the short essay should be cited both in-text and on a Works Cited page according to 7th or 8th edition MLA format. Students who elect to use additional sources from outside of class must cite these sources as well.

Moreover, students will submit a rough and final draft of the short essay. Students who fail to turn in a final draft of the essay will receive a grade of F; please note that is will also be true for students who fail to submit a rough draft.

Be sure to check dates for the first two quizzes, all exams, and the short essay in the "Daily Academic Calendar."

This course will be conducted according to strict codes of academic honesty. All cases of cheating will be fully investigated. Penalties for cheating may include failing an exam, failing the course or suspension and expulsion from the University. Students are expected to know the University's policies and procedures on such matters, as well as those governing student services, conduct, and obligations.

Attendance

To facilitate the accuracy of the attendance record, the course will observe assigned seating. The instructor and TA expect that students will be present, seated, and ready to participate in class at the beginning of each scheduled class day. **Remember that all exams will ask questions that require specific answers to specific material presented during class time and on eLearning. Moreover, the short essay will require thoughtful response to course concepts and discussion.**

Students who arrive to class after the TA takes attendance will be counted absent for the day. Students who disrupt the classroom will be counted as absent for the day of the disruption. Students who leave before the end of class will also be counted as absent.

Students who miss class must provide documentation of one of the following legitimate excuses to earn an excused absence:

- Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their instructor in writing within the first two weeks of the semester (by September 7th) and should discuss with him, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.
- Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity will be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. Said participation must be documented with a note from a University official involved in the event. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed assignment for making up the work. Students who must travel in association with a University athletic function should plan on completing any work prior to travel.
- A documented illness. Documentation should clearly state that the student was instructed by a physician not to attend class on a specific date(s) for his or her health and/or for the health of others. The date(s) missed should be specifically stated in the note, as should physician contact information. Non-documented illness will not constitute a valid excuse for missing class.

Students must first present documentation of a legitimate excuse to both the TA (copy) and instructor (original) before a make-up assignment can be scheduled.

Students will have a maximum of one week (seven days; this does include weekends) from the original assignment date to complete the make-up assignment. Students should be aware that a make-up exam has the potential to differ from the in-class exam in content. Though the format of the exam will be the same, students seeking to make up the first exam, for example, might be asked different short answer questions than those presented on the in-class exam.

Though missed quizzes can be made up with a valid excuse, students should remember that any individual quiz grade is less important than an overall pattern of participation at a level that exceeds (check +) or meets (check) course expectations. **Students might also recall that the lowest quiz grade of the semester will be dropped.**

In the majority of cases, the course TA will proctor make-up exams and quizzes.

At the conclusion of the semester, students who have three or fewer unexcused absences will receive ten points of extra credit towards their lowest semester grade earned on one of the following assignments: one of the three exams, or the short essay.

Computers in the Classroom

Students are welcome to use computers during class either to take notes, or check notes or discussion questions posted by the instructor to eLearning.

Any student discovered to be using a computer for any purpose not related to taking notes or accessing course materials will be banned from using a computer in class for the remainder of the semester. This ban also applies to students whose computer use is distracting other students, and may be imposed by either the instructor or TA.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, the professor cannot drop or withdraw any student. Students must do the proper paperwork to ensure that they will not receive a final grade of F in a course if they choose not to attend the class once they are enrolled.

Note: September 7th is the last day to drop this course without incurring a W.

Tips to Help Avoid a Monstrously Bad Semester

- As previously noted, students who attend class regularly tend to perform better than students who do not.
- Students who read and are familiar with the syllabus tend to perform better.
- Students who sit at the front of the class tend to perform well above students who sit in at the back.
- Students who come to each class prepared and avoid packing up early tend to perform better.



- Students who review previous assignments to prepare for future assignments tend to show improvement during the semester. For example, identifying areas of improvement on the first exam in preparation for the second exam.
- In line with the previous tip, students who regularly visit office hours to discuss material with the instructor, TA, or both, tend to perform better than students who do not. This might be especially important regarding the short essay.
- Students who keep in mind the “big picture” for the semester rather than allowing a single undesirable grade to defeat them tend to perform well.
- Consider trading contact information with a few other students in class in case you miss material; as stated above, students are happily encouraged to ask questions about course materials, but neither the instructor nor TA will re-teach a missed class. Studying together for exams is also often a potentially effective strategy.
- Though the use of laptops is allowed in this course to facilitate access to media and note-taking, they can be distracting. Students using laptops should stay focused on class lecture and discussion and resist the urge to multi-task. Concomitantly, students who silence and put away their smartphones tend to perform better than students who do not. Dr. Brewer offers the following website concerning the potentially damaging effects of attempting to multi-task in class:
<http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-professor-blog/multitasking-confronting-students-with-the-facts/>

Additional Important Policies

It is the student's responsibility to review additional University policies concerning services available through the Office of AccessAbility, sharing confidential information, avoiding plagiarism, resources to aid in the potential for success, incomplete grades, student conduct and discipline, academic integrity, technical support, email use, copyright notice, grievance procedures, and religious holy days at <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/>

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor. Brains not used in class have the potential to be eaten.

