Course Description:
This class investigates some of the abiding aspects of human experience through an examination of literary work, as well as other modes of creative expression. We will concern ourselves with the following questions: What is art, and why do people produce it? What makes art a distinctive cultural form and practice? How do the definitions and functions of making and using art change across time and place? What does art allow us to do? How does art allow us to know about the world, at both our contemporary moment and the moment of artistic production?

We will examine work from the past two hundred years as a way to consider the profound transformations that have occurred during this tumultuous period. Some of the issues we will consider have to do with very basic questions: What does it mean to be human—and who do we include in our definitions of “human?” What is the relationship of people to their landscape and environment? What is the relationship of technology to cultural production? How do gender and sexuality define or liberate us? And, ultimately, does the writer have an obligation to address any of these issues in her work? As a guide to our explorations, we will look at the ways in which monsters and the monstrous illuminate particular cultural moments and reflect on whether the monsters of two centuries ago shed light on our own cultural preoccupations.

Course Goals/Learning Outcomes:
Students in the course will:
• Develop critical thinking and reading skills that are foundational for success in all college courses
• Produce competent, analytical literary essays that have gone through a process of drafting and revision
• Investigate major literary and artistic movements of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries and be able to identify and define the hallmarks of these movements
• Draw connections between texts from different cultures and different eras
• Identify and analyze key passages and themes from individual works

Required Texts
These texts are on order at the NYUAD Bookstore.
Bronte, Jane Eyre
Rhys, Wide Sargasso Sea
Shelley, Frankenstein
Stoker, Dracula
Kafka, “The Metamorphosis” (available online; link on class site)
Spiegelman, Maus
Okada, No No Boy
Salih, Seasons of Migration to the North
Wilson, Alif the Unseen
Various essays and other readings will be posted on the class site, known as NYU Classes. You can find a link to NYU Classes on the student portal. It is expected that you will print out these items and bring them to class as indicated on the syllabus.

Several films are required texts for the course. You can watch these movies at any point, but you must have completed your viewing by the date listed on the syllabus. We will be discussing the films in class, and using the films as the subjects of writing and online discussion. The films are in the NYUAD library and there will be links on the class website for those movies available online.

Course Requirements: All these assignments will be explained in more detail in class. What follows here is just an overview.

Participation: This course will be run as a seminar, which means that your success in the class—and the success of the class as a whole—depends on your participation. Participation means: being in class on time; doing (and thinking about) the reading; engaging with the materials and ideas during class meetings; silencing (and putting away) all electronica; and bringing your ideas and questions to class.

Writing: There will be many different types of writing required for this course. Writing assignments will include short response writings (graded on a 1-3 basis), in-class and online assignments, and formal essays (graded A-F). All writing unless otherwise specified should be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. After the first page, the pages should be numbered; you should also staple/paper-clip the pages together.

Presentations: Each student will make one brief (8-12 minutes) presentation about a contemporary representation of “monster” (song, music video, film, theater, movie, novel, poem), drawing on ideas, issues, and texts from the course.

Exams: There will be a cumulative final exam, based on the class notes and readings.

Attendance: You cannot do well in this class if you do not come to class. Please note that being late to class three times will be counted as one absence (six lates = two absences, etc). If you do miss a class, you are responsible for getting class notes and assignments from another student. If you plan to miss any classes for religious observance this semester, please let me know the dates of these absences in advance. You will not in any way be penalized for such absences, but you may be asked to submit work that is due for these class sessions in advance.

Grading: Grading percentages are approximately as follows:

- Participation: 15%
- Response writing: 15%
- Presentation: 20%
- Exam: 20%
- Essays: 30%

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the written presentation of others’ words, images, or ideas as if they were your own. I include within the definition of plagiarism handing in papers for this course that you’ve written for other courses. You will receive an F on any plagiarized assignment and will risk failure in the course and expulsion from the university. If you have any uncertainties about whether a particular instance
constitutes plagiarism, please ask me. Learning how to cite the work of others is a legitimate part of our course, but deceptive concealment of sources is not.

Disabilities

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Office of Student Life.
FALL 2014 SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Please note that this syllabus is subject to change. An updated copy will always be available on the class site, but it is your responsibility to stay current with these changes.

The “discussion questions” listed on the syllabus are offered as ways for you to focus your reading. You do not need to write full answers to these questions, but you should make notes about these issues as you read.

Aug 31 Introductions and Explanations

Sept 1 King, from “On Writing,” Lamott “Bird by Bird”
  * Due:
    * One page (three paragraphs) in response to King’s essay
    * Give voice to your “anti-writing voices” (Read Lamott first), 1-2 pages

Sept 3 Jane Eyre to CH 14 – read the “Author’s Preface,” as well
  To discuss: how is anger treated? is Jane an “insider” or an “outsider” and does her position say the same throughout these chapters? What role does religion play in these chapters?

Sept 7 Jane Eyre to Ch 29
  To discuss: what is the novel’s attitude towards Rochester? what are Jane’s ideas about “femininity?” how are marriage and economics linked? Do the novel’s attitudes (towards women, marriage, men, religion, etc) seem to be consistent? If you notice inconsistencies, when/where/how do you see these inconsistencies emerging?

Sept 8 Graff, Ch 1-2 & do Ex #1, pages 28 & 40; read Chapter 4 (“Interpretation”) from Writing Analytically and mark the passages in the chapter that seem to you to be the most important/helpful/confusing; discuss “Lexicon” (to be handed out in class)

Sept 10 Jane Eyre to conclusion
  Discussion questions: does the novel end up valuing “mobility” or “constraint” or some combination of the two?

Sept 14 Wide Sargasso Sea Part I
  Discussion: who is speaking and why is the narrative so fragmented? How are the English viewed in this section? The “natives?” What sort(s) of violence do you see in this section?

Sept 15 Thesis statements and focus questions

Sept 17 WSS Part II // Response writing #1 DUE (bring in 1 extra copy)
  Discussion: who narrates this section? what does the marriage illustrate about the position of women in this society? how are the English viewed in this section?
Sept 21 WSS to conclusion

Sept 22 Graff Ch 3; in-class writing

Sept 24 *Frankenstein*
Discussion: attitude towards education and innovation; attitude towards nature; implications of frame narrative

Sept 28 *Frankenstein*

Sept 29 Graff Ch 8-9; do ex 2 p 120, using response #1 as your example

Oct 1 *Frankenstein*

Oct 5 – 9 Eid Holiday – No Class
Finish *Frankenstein* and write response writing #2 about the novel’s conclusion. Make sure your response includes a discussion of where you think the novel’s sympathies rest. Read “Monster Theory” (PDF, classes site) and write a one-page response in which you choose one quality of “monster” and connect it to one reading in the course

Oct 12 *Frankenstein* //thesis and topic sentence due for essay #1 //Response #2 DUE

Oct 13: Watch “Frankenstein” (1931 original) and answer discussion questions on class site. You should also respond fully to three other students’ comments (and more, if you’d like).

Oct 15 In-class workshop, essay #1: bring in three copies of your draft (3-4 pages)

Oct 19 *Dracula*
Discussion: What surprised you about the novel’s opening chapters? What do you notice about the characters in terms of race, class, ethnicity; what do you notice about the novel’s format and what might be possible reasons for this format? What seems to be the novel’s attitude towards women, religion, class, culture?

Oct 20 Graff (tba) & templates; revision strategies
*Writing Analytically*, Ch 8 (“Evidence”); bring in draft of essay #1

Oct 22 *Dracula*

Oct 26 **NO CLASS: EXAMS FOR FALL I**

Oct 27 “Nosferatu” (link available via Classes site) // *Dracula*
Final draft of essay #1 DUE

Oct 29 *The Metamorphosis*
Nov 2 *The Metamorphosis* (link available on Classes site)

Nov 3 *Maus I* // In-class writing: topic sentences/paragraphs//presentations

Nov 5 *Maus I*
**Bring in two ideas for presentation topics, each w/paragraph of explanation and working thesis**

Nov 9 *Maus I & II*

Nov 10 *Maus II*
Response #3 DUE

Nov 12 *Maus I&II & “Pan’s Labyrinth”*
**Declaration of presentation topic**

November 16 *No-No Boy*
Response #4 due: “Pan’s Labryinth”

Nov 17 *No-No Boy*
Thesis discussion//presentation discussion

Nov 19 *No No Boy*

Nov 23 *Seasons of Migration to the North*

Nov 24 *Seasons of Migration to the North*

Nov 26 *Seasons of Migration to the North*

Nov 30 “Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind” // question & discussion on Classes site

Dec 1 Draft of essay #2 DUE: in-class workshop

Dec 7 *Alif the Unseen* // Presentations

Dec 8 *Alif the Unseen* //Presentations

Dec 10 *Alif the Unseen* //Presentations

Dec 14 *Alif the Unseen* //Presentations
**Final draft of essay #2 DUE**

Final exam date TBA