

**Instructor: Laura Chilcoat**  
[laurac86@ufl.edu](mailto:laurac86@ufl.edu)  
Office: TUR 4361  
Office hours: Fridays, period 8

**Studies in American Literature and Culture:  
Evil, Villains, and the Monstrous Body**  
AML 4453; section 192E  
MWF 7 (1:55- 2:45); Pugh 120

### **Course Description:**

This course examines the representation of monsters, villains, and other conceptions of evil in American literature and culture. We'll analyze how ideas of monstrosity and evilness are constructed, and how this construction has changed over time. Through texts by authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, H.P. Lovecraft, Octavia Butler, Stephen King, Shirley Jackson, Joss Whedon and Louisa May Alcott we'll examine how images of "evilness" are constructed in relation to human and non-human bodies. By drawing on works like Judith (Jack) Halberstam's *Skin Shows* and Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror* we'll analyze how bodies function as sites of Otherness, and thus often become metonyms for larger cultural fears. Throughout the semester we will focus on the difference between "monsters" and "villains," and analyze how sex, race, and gender factor into creating these separate (but often overlapping) categories.

### **Required Texts:**

#### **Books:**

- Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*  
ISBN: 0020252706
  
- Ray Bradbury's *ah̄renheil 451*  
ISBN: 0345342968
  
- Karel Capek's *R UR*  
ISBN: 0141182083
  
- Clive Barker's *Rooks of Riood Vol. I*  
0425165582
  
- H.P. Lovecraft's *The Call of Cthulu*  
ISBN: 1495255344
  
- Octavia Butler's *Dawn*  
ISBN: 0446603775
  
- Florence Marryat's *The Blood of the Vampire*  
ISBN: 9781934555651
  
- Charles Williams' *A Touch of Death*  
ISBN: 0857683055

## **Graphic Novels:**

- Alan Moore's *Saga of the Swamp Thing, Book 1*  
ISBN: 1401220835
  
- Noelle Stevenson's *Nimona*  
ISBN: 0062278231

## **Films:**

- *Serenity*
- *Cabin in the Woods*
- *Tucker & Dale vs. Evil*
- *The Little Mermaid*

And short readings available via Canvas

## **Course Policies**

### **Attendance**

Attendance is required. If a student misses more than **six** periods during a summer or spring semester, he or she will fail the entire course. Missing class on a double period counts as **two** absences. I will exempt from this policy **only** those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays, as well as military service and court-mandated appearances. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed. **More than two missed classes or conferences will lower your final course grade by a full step; and each additional absence will count as another step (a step is from A- to B+; B+ to B, etc.).**

Please Note: If students are absent, it is their responsibility to make themselves aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

Tardiness: If students enter class after roll has been called, they are late, which disrupts the entire class. **Two instances of tardiness count as one absence.**

### **Mode of Submission**

All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc, .docx) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) documents to E-learning/Canvas. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

a.) Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.

b.) Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

(University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 Aug. 2007

<<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>>)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code.

Important Tip: You should never copy and paste something from the Internet without also providing the exact location from which it came.

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student—honor—code.aspx>

### **Classroom Behavior**

Please keep in mind that UF students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding sexual harassment, see: <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>

### **In-Class Work**

Papers and drafts are due by start of class on the day assigned (unless otherwise noted). Late papers will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse.

Participation is a crucial part of success in this class. Students will be expected to work in small groups and participate in group discussions, writing workshops, peer reviews, and other in-class activities. Be prepared for unannounced quizzes or activities on the readings or classroom discussion. Students must be present for all in-class activities to receive credit for them. In-class

work cannot be made up. Writing workshops require that students provide constructive feedback about their peers' writing.

In general, students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session.

### **Paper Maintenance Responsibilities**

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and to make available this material.

### **Writing Center**

The Writing Center is located in Tigert 302 and is available to all UF students,  
<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

### **Students with Disabilities**

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting accommodation should contact the Students with Disabilities Office, Peabody 202. That office will provide documentation to the student whom must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see:  
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

### **Statement of Goals and Expectations:**

This course places a heavy emphasis on the writing process. Frequent short writing assignments in the first half of the semester will assist students in establishing and developing a clear topic and scope in their writing, as well as in honing the critical skill of analytical close reading. An extended paper later in the semester provides students with the opportunity to add depth to their writing, with research and more extensive analyses of a text. Conferencing, peer workshops, multiple drafts will support the writing process in this assignment.

There are no University-sanctioned pre-requisites for this course; however, as with any writing course, students should have a basic command of grammar and mechanics. This course will satisfy the Gordon Rule requirement only if all written and evaluated assignments are completed well and in full.

This course can satisfy the General Education requirement for Composition of Humanities. For more information, see:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general—education—requirements.aspx>

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-and-math-requirement.aspx>

Misc. Policies:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>

Grading Scale:

A Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100%	C	2.0	73-76%
A-	3.67	90-92%	C-	1.67	70-72%
B+	3.33	87-89%	D+	1.33	67-69%
B	3.0	83-86%	D	1.0	63-66%
B-	2.67	80-82%	D-	0.67	60-62%
C+	2.33	77-79%	E	0.00	0-59%

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant.

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Points</b>
<p><b>Discussion Post (4; 300 words)</b>            You will be required to write a 300 word response to the readings. This should be a close reading - so choose something from the text, and analyze it, question it, place it historically (this means there should be <i>at least</i> one quote). If you are responding to Monday’s reading, it must be posted by 4 pm on the preceding Sunday (so your peers have time to respond). If you are responding to Wednesday’s reading, it must be posted by 4 pm the preceding Tuesday. And, if you are responding to Friday’s reading it must be posted by 4 pm of the preceding Thursday.</p>	<b>120</b>
<p><b>Social Media Summary</b>            For this summary, you will choose a social media platform (Tumblr is encouraged, but feel free to choose twitter/facebook/etc.), and then summarize a text using that platform.</p>	<b>30</b>
<p><b>Mid-term Essay (1000 words)</b>            This essay will be a close reading and analysis of anything on our syllabus from before Week 8. Do not bring in <i>any</i> outside information - only analyze the text and rely on your own interpretations, not someone else’s.</p>	<b>200</b>
<p><b>Rough Draft for Mid-term</b>            You must turn in a <b>complete</b> draft of the paper by the due date.</p>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>Final Paper Proposal</b>            Imagine a conference with the topic of “Evil, Villains, and Monstrous Bodies in Literature and Culture.” This will be a short (300) word assignment in which you will propose an argument for this conference. You will need to have a primary text, a thoughtful argument, and at least two secondary sources.</p>	<b>30</b>
<p><b>Final Essay (-2500 words)</b>            This essay will be a formal researched paper. It will be styled as a conference paper. This is the full version of the paper that you pitched in your proposal. It will need to be timely (evidenced by recent sources), engage in the current scholarly conversation, and take it a step further. You will make a new argument where you see a gap or flaw in the current scholarly discourse.</p>	<b>500</b>
<p><b>Rough Draft for Final</b>            You must turn in a <b>complete</b> draft of the paper by the due date.</p>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>Quizzes/Participation</b>            We will have occasional quizzes which will be extremely easy if you have completed the reading. Students will need to regularly speak in class discussions, participate during in-class activities and small-group work, and peer review/workshopping sessions.</p>	<b>110</b>
<b>Total Points: 1000</b>	

Schedule:

CN = Canvas

	Reading due by start of class:	Assignments:
<b>Unit 1:</b>	<b>Introduction to “evil”</b>	
<b>Week 1:</b> Wed 1/6	Intro	
Fri 1/8	Asma - introduction from <i>On Monsters</i> CN Cole - “The Character of Evil” CN	
<b>Week 2:</b> Mon 1/11	Eagleton - introduction from <i>On Evil</i> CN Morton - introduction from <i>On Evil</i> CN	
Wed 1/13	Kristeva - “Approaching Abjection” (1-31) - CN Creed - “Kristeva, Femininity, Abjection” CN	
Fri 1/15	Hawthorne - “Young Goodman Browne” CN	
<b>Week 3:</b> Mon 1/18	No class - <b>MLK, Jr. Day</b>	
Wed 1/20	Alcott - “A Modem Mephistopheles” CN	
Fri 1/22	Beaumont - “The Howling Man” CN	
<b>Unit 2:</b>	<b>Evils of Humanity; Human causes of evil</b>	
<b>Week 4:</b> Mon 1/25	<i>Serenity</i> ; Halberstam - from <i>Skin Shows</i> CN	
Wed 1/27	Stevenson - “The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” CN Showalter - “Dr. Jekyll’s Closet” CN	
Fri 1/29	Shelley - <i>Frankenstein</i> Asma- “Medicalization Of Monsters” CN	
<b>Week 5:</b> Mon 2/1	Shelley - <i>Frankenstein</i>	
Wed 2/3	Clarke, “Beyond ‘The Banality of Evil’” CN Calder, “The Apparent Banality of Evil” CN	
Fri 2/5	<i>Cabin in the Woods</i>	
<b>Week 6:</b> Mon 2/8	<b>Peer Review</b>	<b>Midterm Rough Draft Due</b>
Wed 2/10	Bradbury - <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	
Fri 2/12	Bradbury - <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	
<b>Week 7:</b> Mon 2/15	Philip K. Dick “Second Variety” CN Asma, “Future Monsters” CN	
Wed 2/17	Capek, <i>RUR</i>	
Fri 2/19	Poe	
<b>Week 8:</b> Mon 2/22	<b>No Class - Turn in paper by 11:59 pm on Canvas</b>	<b>Midterm Final Draft</b>
Wed 2/24	Le Guin - “The Ones Who Walk Away From Ornelas” CN	
Fri 2/26	Jackson - “The Lottery” CN	
<b>Week 9:</b> Mon 2/29	No class - <b>Spring Break</b>	

Wed 3/2	<b>No class - Spring Break</b>	
Fri 3/4	<b>No class - Spring Break</b>	
<b>Unit 3:</b>	<b>Evil Bodies/disembodied evil</b>	
<b>Week 10:</b> Mon 3/7	Barker - <i>Books of Blood</i> vol. 1	
Wed 3/9	<i>Tucker &amp; Dale Vs. Evil</i> Murphy - from <i>The Rural Gothic</i> CN	
Fri 3/11	Bierce - "The Damned Thing" CN	
<b>Week 11:</b> Mon 3/14	Lovecraft - "Call of Cthulu"	
Wed 3/16	Lovecraft - poems CN	
Fri 3/18	Moore, <i>Swamp Thing</i>	
<b>Week 12:</b> Mon 3/21	Butler - <i>Dawn</i>	<b>Proposal Due</b>
Wed 3/23	Butler - <i>Dawn</i>	
Fri 3/25	Kafka - <i>Metamorphosis</i>	
<b>Week 13:</b> Mon 3/28	Stevenson - <i>Nimona</i>	
Wed 3/30	Stevenson - <i>Nimona</i>	
<b>Unit 4</b>	<b>Evil/Monstrous Women</b>	
Fri 4/1	Alcott - "Behind A Mask" CN	
<b>Week 14:</b> Mon 4/4	Hawthorne - "Rappaccini's Daughter" CN	
Wed 4/6	Marryat - <i>Blood Of The Vampire</i> ch. 1-5	
Fri 4/8	Marryat - <i>Blood Of The Vampire</i> ch. 6-13	
<b>Week 15:</b> Mon 4/11	<b>Peer Review</b>	<b>Rough Draft Due</b>
Wed 4/13	Marryat - <i>Blood Of The Vampire</i> ch. 14-end Creed - From <i>Monstrous Feminine</i>	
Fri 4/15	Williams - <i>A Touch of Death</i>	
<b>Week 16:</b> Mon 4/18	Williams - <i>A Touch of Death</i>	
Wed 4/20	<i>The Little Mermaid</i>	