

CP7016 Monster and Otherness Studies

Module type Option (approved module: Comparative Literature, Identities and Cultures of Europe)

Term / hours HT / 22

ECTS 10

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Module description

After introductory lectures to the critical concepts of monstrosity/cultural teratology in cultural theory, we will move on to class readings (viewings) and discussions of the most prominent monsters of the western literary and film tradition, accompanied by a brief historical intro. We will cover werewolves, vampires, artificial humans/zombies, alien(God)s, and serial killers. In week 12, students will have to present their personal research project that leads to their term paper.

Module Learning Aims

To give students a compact overview of the most common monsters in the western literary and cultural tradition, their genesis, tradition, cultural meaning, and influx, with a focus on the last 200 years. Through this trajectory, students will be introduced to key works of the literary and cultural canon and modern concepts of Otherness (alterity).

Assessment

The module is assessed through one research paper, i.e. an essay of 4,500 words.

Indicative bibliography

Basic primary sources:

Grimm Bros: Little Red Ridinghood (1812 [1695])

Bram Stoker: Dracula (1897)

Mary Shelley: Frankenstein (1818)

George Romero: The Night of The Living Dead (1968)

H.P.Lovecraft: The Call of Cthulhu (1928)

Ridley Scott: Prometheus (2012)

Steven Spielberg: Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977); E.T. (1982)

Brett Easton Ellis: American Psycho (1991)

Demme: The Silence of the Lambs (1991)

Basic theory and secondary sources:

Weinstock, Jeffrey A. The Monster Theory Reader. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Pr., 2020.

Arnds, Peter: Lycanthropy in German Literature. London: Palgrave, 2015.

Bohn, Thomas. Bohn, T.M. (2019). *The Vampire*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2019.

Kearney, Richard. Strangers, Gods, and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness. London, NY: Routledge, 2003.

Melton, J. Gordon. The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead. Canton MI: Visible Ink Press, 2010.

Miller, Elizabeth: Bram Stoker's Dracula: A Documentary Volume. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2005.

Murray Robin L. and Joseph K. Heumann. *Monstrous Nature: Environment and Horror on the Big Screen*. Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 2016.

Rutherford, Jennifer: *Zombies*. London, NY: Routledge, 2013.

Ruthner, Clemens. *Verzahnte Heimsuchungen [a brief cultural history of the vampire]*. Bremen: Edition Lumière, 2019.

Schultz, David, and S.T. Joshi, eds. *An Epicure in the Terrible. A Centennial Anthology of Essays in Honor of H.P. Lovecraft*. New York: Hoippocampus Press, 2011.

Seltzer, Mark. *Serial Killers: Death & Life in America's Wound Culture*. London, NY: Routledge, 2013.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- LO1 Critically interpret monster narratives in literature, film and popular culture and situate them within the broader context of literary, intellectual, and political history.
- LO2 Conduct personal research on related topics, literary authors or film directors, and their works.
- LO3 Reach a broader understanding of the function of Otherness/othering in culture.

LO4 Identify and explain some literary, historical or philosophical aspects of monstrosity within the western cultural canon and its appeal to audiences.