1. THE CONCEPT OF THIS COURSE --

In General: “Critical Cultural Concepts” is a series of survey classes for undergraduates offered for the general University student by various departments. Every one of them satisfies 3 units of the "Tier I" requirement in "Traditions and Cultures" within the University-wide General Education Program. Each single version in this series focuses on an idea, theme, or symbolic figure important to Western and other cultures since ancient times. Each version then studies how different presentations (or expressions) of this concept over time reveal the underlying assumptions and social conflicts being played out in each rendering of the idea or image. The objective is for students to understand and to be able to analyze, in the different meanings and uses of an idea down through history, the interacting (and sometimes conflicted) ways of thinking about human existence -- and what seems "other" than human -- that have generated this symbolic construction at different stages in the development of "Western" culture. This approach is thus one way of looking at how "we" have come to seem what "we" are in the "Western" world.

This version: This semester we will explore the widely different cultural meanings and functions attached since ancient times to "MONSTERS": seemingly non-human (though often partly human) prodigies that mix supposedly different levels of being in one figure that therefore seems "abnormal" -- but also strangely familiar (or, as Sigmund Freud would say, "uncanny"). The emphasis, though, will not be simply on the kinds of monsters that appear in the influential forms of expression we study. Instead, we will analyze monsters as indicators of history. Specifically, we will probe how selected Western and non-Anglo uses of monsters make such figures symbolic carriers of "cultural values" at different times and places. These "values" will include systems of religious belief, assumptions about the universe and the nature of human being, the differing views of competing cultural groups, distinctions of gender or race or class, notions of social order and disorder (including the locations of power), and ways in which cultural groups establish "others" or "the other" in order to seem clearly "themselves." Monsters, we will see, often become symbols in which cultural conflicts are played out at different points in history, conflicts that emerge from fundamental tensions in Western societies or between Anglo-European and other cultural groups in the Western world. This class assumes that it is vitally important for students today to understand the history of these conflicts and tensions so that we all know more about our cultural roots.

2. THE INSTRUCTORS --

The principal instructor in this class is Dr. Jerry Hogle, University Distinguished Professor of English, who is also Vice Provost for Instruction University-wide. His scheduled office hours for students are 12 noon to 12:50 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays in Modern Languages 342 (phone 621-1840). Other times are available by appointment, however; you may see Dr. Hogle after class
to arrange a time, or you may leave a message for him, with your name and phone number, in the main English Dept. office (Mod. Lang. 445; 621-1836). You may also contact him by e-mail at hogle@email.arizona.edu. He will always get back to you, particularly to set up a meeting if you would like one. To find this syllabus (and the reading and paper schedule in it) online in case you lose it, you can also consult Professor Hogle’s web site. Go to the UA home page and click on "Teaching/Faculty." Then click successively on "Faculty Personal Homepages", the letter "H," "Jerrold E. Hogle," and finally "Current Course Information" once you reach his highly Gothic home page.

The Graduate Assistants leading the Friday discussion sections in this course are Marlowe Daly-Galeano and Matt Rotando, both outstanding doctoral candidates in the Department of English. Their office locations and scheduled office hours will be given to students during the first and second section meetings of the semester. All of the take-home essay exams and the take-home final (each discussed below) will be handed in to your individual section leader on the due dates specified in the schedule that follows. Your section leader will then return each piece of work to you (except the final, of course) with comments and numerical grades during your section meetings. Problems with the grading of writing may be appealed to Professor Hogle, but only after the student has first discussed the matter with his or her section leader. At the same time, ALL the instructors in the course are available to help you with your writing throughout the semester.

3. THE WRITTEN WORK -

Other than doing the reading by the time it is discussed in class (see the schedule below) and participating actively in class sessions, the main "requirement" for students is the writing of short essays on each of the works about monsters that we discuss. The development of your critical reading, analytical, and writing skills together, by University policy, is a very important part of all General Education courses at the U of A. Nine times this semester, you will be given two take-home questions during your Friday section meetings. The questions will always deal with the work(s) to be discussed the next week in the course, and you will choose one of the questions to answer in a short essay response that will usually be due to your section leader at the next week's Friday meeting. Each essay should be about three pages (typewritten) and double-spaced whether you write or type. Each question for these essays will ask you to think about an important aspect (a passage, theme, issue, or problem) in the text(s) or work(s) that are being treated in class. You are asked in your responses to interpret, analyze, or critique that aspect of the text(s) in light of the wider concerns in the work(s) you have just studied and in relation to the larger cultural issues discussed throughout the course.

The only other requirement is a two-part take-home final exam to be done as a pair of essays. There you will respond in the first essay to one of the questions you will receive near the end of the course about the FILMS studied in the last full week of the class (this will be your last short essay, again up to 3 typewritten pages, double spaced). You will then write a second essay (this one up to 5 pages typewritten, double spaced) in response to a broader "final" question, handed out before the last day of class, that will ask you to deal comparatively with the functions and meanings of monsters in several different works and cultural circumstances. Your section leader will tell you where to hand in both parts of your take-home final together, which will be due at or before 11 a.m. on Wednesday, May 9. There will be no in-class final. But even on the final essays you will be asked to interpret, analyze, and critique -- and never just to summarize -- what you have studied this semester.
What does it mean in this course to interpret, analyze, or critique in the short essays and on the final? What we seek are intelligent interpretive responses to the questions you choose to answer. We expect students, in responding to each question, to take a position that interprets and explains an aspect of a work or works and to argue persuasively in favor of this position using evidence (particular moments, behaviors, or passages) from the work(s) being analyzed. You should consider your audience as a fellow reader already familiar with the work. This reader is interested, not in hearing a plot summary of what he or she already knows, but in the underlying meanings or assumptions or conflicts that you find in the work(s) and that you demonstrate, by analysis, as being basic to the work(s) and visible in particular aspects of the work(s).

Try to make sure you have answered these questions of composition in the way you put each essay together:

a. Does your essay have a limited focus that really addresses the question you have chosen to answer? Is it clear, early in your essay, what aspect of a work you are interpreting? Is it also clear what main point or points you want to make about that focus? One way of answering such questions is to begin with a clear statement of your argument (a "thesis statement") in the first few sentences. Another is to begin with a focussing question (though not just a copying down of the instructor's question to you) or with a quotation or short scene-summary that you go on to explain in a way that makes a main point.

b. Is your interpretation sufficiently developed? Have you made plain to the reader the most important insights and in your argument? Have you defined crucial and "loaded" notions in terms that illuminate the work(s) for your reader? Have you dealt with the issues of cultural values and conflict that each question will ask you to address?

c. Where necessary, have you supported your arguments and interpretations with evidence in the work(s)? Granted, in short essays, you should not take up too much time quoting. But evidence can be pointed out briefly and sharply. Certainly whatever you quote should not be left to stand on its own, but should be explicitly interpreted by you as support in the work for your present argument.

d. Does your essay have smooth transitions between ideas? Is it clear how your ideas are related, especially around a main focus and overall point? Avoid mere lists of discrete observations or diffuse ramblings that don't spell out the ideas which connect all the sentences.

e. Is your prose effective? Is the language of your essay precise and engaging? Does it invite the interest of the reader? Is it free of puffy vagueness? Has it avoided errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation?

f. Does your essay have an informative and provocative title? Yes, each essay should be titled (and not just with the title of the work being analyzed). A good title should begin pointing to the main focus and thesis of the essay and should be creative enough, within the needs of clarity, to interest the reader in what you have to say.

g. Have you remembered to put your name, the course and section numbers (such as "TRAD 104, section 34"), your section leader's name, the essay number, and the date of submission in the upper right-hand corner of each essay?
Late essays -- those handed in after class time on the due dates or after 11 a.m. on May 9 (in the case of the final) -- may be given a "0" (see "GRADES" below) and returned unread unless there has been prior contact with your section leader or the course professor and some other arrangement has been made. Dire emergencies will of course be considered carefully by the section leaders and Professor Hogle, when necessary. But late essays when there are no emergencies, given the continuous writing assigned in this class, will make student success very difficult.

We are grateful to the late Regents Professor Douglas Canfield for inventing, in general, this system of essay exams, as well as this type of course, and to Dr. Chad Allen, former UA graduate student and Writing Center tutor, for helping us to articulate "what we are looking for" in take-home essays by students.

4. GRADES --

As you have seen above, there will be 9 "exam" essays in this class (see the "Essay due" dates in the schedule below), plus the take-home final (consisting of two essays, described above) graded as a whole. Each of these will be given a score of 1 to 15, 15 being the highest. In letter grade equivalents, 15 = A+, 14 = A, 13 = A-, 12 = B+, 11 = B, 10 = B-, 9 = C+, 8 = C, 7 = C-, 6 = D+, 5 = D, 4 = D-, and 3, 2, and 1 are equivalent to an E. A "0" (zero) will be awarded to papers that are late without prearrangement (see above) or not turned in at all. Your section leaders will tell you the qualities of composition, analysis, and insight separating A's from B's and those grades from C's, D's, and E's on your essays.

When Professor Hogle determines your final grade for the whole course, based on section leader recommendations, the standard weighting of grades will be as follows:

65% -- the average of your 8 best scores on the 9 short essays
   (with the lowest grade being dropped*)
25% -- the score on the two-part take-home final exam
10%  -- class participation
   (which will be particularly telling in borderline cases)
100%                        [* A "0" score cannot be dropped]

HOWEVER, hard work on your part can change this standard system somewhat -- and entirely to your advantage. If there is a clear pattern of IMPROVEMENT (including the final exam essays) such that your later scores are at consistently higher levels than your earlier ones -- provided the early pieces showed your best effort at the time -- your scores will not simply be averaged across the whole semester, as in the standard method. Instead, your scores at the higher, improved level will determine your final grade. For example, an "A-" for the semester would be the result of the following sequence of essay scores, with all the early ones being dropped (in effect) from final consideration: 5, 6, 5, 9, 7, 10, 13, 14, 13, and 13 on the take-home final essays. Excellent class participation can also help you by pulling you up to a higher grade once improvement on exams has gotten you close or placed you in a borderline situation. If the final double-essay score were 12 in the case I just proposed (a B+), an outstanding effort at class participation by the student involved would also lead to a final grade of A-. Always working hard to improve can only help raise your final grade. Especially damaging, though, could be violations
(if they occur) of the University Policy against plagiarism in the Student Code of Conduct that can be found in the UA Catalog online and that every student is responsible for reading and knowing.

5. ATTENDANCE POLICY --

You are responsible, not only for all the assigned readings and turning in all the essays when they are due, but for all that is covered in lectures and section meetings throughout the semester. Roll will not be called at lectures, but there will be ungraded, short writing responses requested of you at most lectures - to get you more involved in your own learning -- which you will hand in, with yours and your section leader's name on each sheet, as you leave the lecture room. A student missing three class meetings without an excuse satisfactory to the section leader or the professor may be administratively dropped from the section and the course as soon as the third such absence has occurred. Absence on the first two days of the class (January 10 and 12) may also be sufficient reason for an administrative drop under the rules of the current University Catalog. The last day for a student to be dropped with a Withdrawal grade of "W" (which indicates the student is doing at least "D" work at the time of the drop) is March 6. All drops after that date are with a grade of "E," unless the student is doing failing work when he or she is dropped before that, in which case an "E" will also be awarded. The last day to drop without any record of the course on your transcript is February 6, so, if you find this course too monstrous, you can use the RSVP system to make your exit up through the end of that day.

6. THE REQUIRED READING --

The following texts (all paperbacks) are required for this class and are on sale at the UA bookstores for sections 33-35 of TRAD 104:


Also required are the readings grouped under additional texts, each of which will be handed out in class well in advance of when it is scheduled for discussion. These include two essays by Jean-Pierre Vernant from Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece, pp. 23-47; H.L. Malchow's essay "Frankenstein's Monster and Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain"; Stephen Crane's novella The Monster (1897); and three Native American/Indian "monster" stories. Students will be responsible for reading all the assigned portions of all the required texts (see the schedule of assignments below). You will also be required, before the end of the semester, to see two popular "monster" films -- Godzilla, King of the Monsters (1956) and Alien (the first in the series, 1979) -- both of which are widely available on tape or DVD (especially at "Blockbuster Video" at the corner of Campbell and Speedway to the northeast of campus or at "Casa Video" further to the East on Speedway). Both will be shown for TRAD 104 students at optional evening sessions held on campus before the final full week of classes (when those films will be discussed). If you are not able to rent the films yourselves -- which I urge you to do -- you can come to these
showings. Screenings of films besides these two (such as adaptations of Frankenstein or Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde) may also take place if there is enough student interest, but such sessions are entirely optional.

7. THE SCHEDULE OF CLASS TOPICS, READINGS, AND DUE DATES --

Week 1 – January 10 to 12 (first week of classes):
Topic: Analyzing "monsters" to get at their causes in "culture"
Reading: The course syllabus and handouts (watch for these in each lecture)
Wednesday (1st class): Introducing class requirements & defining "monsters"
Friday discussion: Writing for this course (including questions for Essay # 1)

Week 2 – January 15 to 19:
Topic: The social need for monsters in ancient Greek culture
Reading: Sophocles' Oedipus the King (400's BC), pp. 47-99, & the Vernant essays (handed out during the first class as additional texts)
Monday: HOLIDAY for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. NO CLASS.
Wednesday: The cultural role of tragedy in ancient Athens
Friday Discussion: Oedipus the King

Week 3 – January 22 to 26:
Topic: The scapegoating of social conflict in ancient Greek tragedy
Reading: Sophocles' Antigone, pp. 1-45
Monday: What accounts for the ultimate "monstrosity" of Oedipus?
Wednesday: Why is a woman ultimately the "monster" in Antigone?
Friday Discussion: Antigone (Essay #1 due; Questions for Essay # 2)

Week 4 – January 29 to February 2:
Topic: The monsters of Christianity, monarchy, and colonialism
Reading: Shakespeare's The Tempest (1611), all five acts
Monday: The many-faceted cultural history that The Tempest reenacts
Wednesday: The Western cultural quandaries in Caliban's monstrosity
Friday Discussion: The Tempest

Week 5 – February 5 to 9:
Topic: The process of identifying and containing "the other"
Reading: Finish The Tempest; start Foucault's Madness with pp. 38-84
Monday: The Tempest, "othering," and colonization
Wednesday: Culture & "madness" after Shakespeare's time
(introducing Foucault's Madness and Civilization)
Friday Discussion: The construction of "insanity" in the 17th-18th centuries
(from The Tempest to later times; Essay # 2 due; Questions for # 3)

Week 6 – February 12 to 16:
Topic: The changing "nature" of "monstrous" madness in the Western world
Reading: Foucault's Madness and Civilization, pp. 136-58 and 199-278
Monday: The "spectacle" of madness, especially of female "hysteria"
Wednesday: The development of asylums from the 18th into the 19th century
Friday Discussion: Foucault's Madness (Essay # 3 due; Questions for Essay # 4)
Week 7 – February 19 to 23:

Topic: The "monster" of science and its creation of "other races"
Reading: Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818), pp. 3-229
Monday: The many cultural fears that fed into Frankenstein.
Wednesday: What is "othered" onto Frankenstein's creature
Friday Discussion: Frankenstein and why it still fascinates us

Week 8 – February 26 to March 2:

Topic: The monster as the "other" of and in the self
Reading: Malchow (additional text); start Jekyll & Hyde (1886), pp. 37-124
Monday: Frankenstein and the responsibility for racism and slavery
Wednesday: The Victorian "primitive within" in Jekyll & Hyde
Friday Discussion: Comparing Frankenstein with Jekyll & Hyde (Essay # 4 due; Questions for Essay # 5)

Week 9 – March 5 to 9:

Topic: The many implications of the late nineteenth-century "monster within"
Reading: Stevenson's Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, pp. 37-124.
Monday: All the levels of being that are "hidden" in "Hyde"
Wednesday: The rise of detective fiction and the Freudian "unconscious"
Friday Discussion: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Essay # 5 due; Questions for # 6)

[SPRING BREAK, March 12-16. NO CLASSES.]

Week 10 – March 19 to 23:

Topic: Racism and middle-class life in turn-of-the-century America
Reading: Stephen Crane's The Monster (1897), the whole tale (additional text)
Monday: The several American histories that appear in Crane's Monster
Wednesday: Why racism lasts and haunts us long after slavery
Friday Discussion: Crane's The Monster (Essay # 6 due; Questions for Essay #7)

Week 11 – March 26 to 30:

Topic: The monstrousness of twentieth-century urban alienation
Reading: Kafka's The Metamorphosis (1915), pp. xi-xxii, 3-58, and 115-132
Monday: Urbanization and corporatization in the twentieth century
Wednesday: What the "monstrous vermin" embodies in Kafka
Friday Discussion: Kafka's Metamorphosis

Week 12 – April 2 to 6:

Topic: What it means to be an "outsider" (especially a Jewish one) who is very much on the "inside" of modern society
Reading: The Metamorphosis, pp. 147-68 and 192-94
Monday: The implications of Kafka's Jewishness, including "assimilation"
Wednesday: How different lenses of interpretation produce different readings
Friday Discussion: The Metamorphosis (Essay # 7 due; Questions for essay # 8)
Week 13 - April 9 to 13:

Topic: What "monsters" are for Native Americans of the Southwest
Reading: All 3 Native American monster tales (additional texts)
Monday: How Native American "monstrosity" differs from European kinds
Wednesday: The importance of such oral traditions in Native American culture
Friday discussion: "Values" in the Indian tales (Essay #8 due; Questions for #9)

Week 14 - April 16 to 20:

Topic: The "monstrousness" of being "on the border" between cultural groups and creating a cross-cultural identity
Reading: Anzaldua's Borderlands (1987), pp. 1-15 and 17-120
Monday: What it means to be female and "between cultures"
Wednesday: Is the "New Mestiza" a monster -- or what?
Friday Discussion: Borderlands/La Frontera (Final Exam questions issued)
[FILM SHOWINGS WILL ALSO BE SCHEDULED AT NIGHT THIS WEEK. LISTEN FOR CLASS ANNOUNCEMENTS EARLIER IN THE SEMESTER.]

Week 15 - April 23 to 27:

Topic: The assumptions behind two popular "monster" films
"Reading": See the two films in advance (The 1956 Godzilla and the 1979 Alien)
Monday: The historically-based phobias in Godzilla (Essay # 9 due in lecture)
Wednesday: The current cultural fears played out in Alien and its series
Friday Discussion: Monster movies. Last section.

Week 16 - April 30 to May 2 (last week of classes):

Topic: Review -- What monsters mean in Western and non-Anglo cultures
Monday: The lasting revelations in the history we have seen
Wednesday: Review for the Final essays.  LAST CLASS (no Friday section).

Week 16 plus -- Friday, May 4 (the starting day of the finals period):

Take-home Final due (both parts together) by 1:00 at the Department of English main office (Modern Languages 445).  The Final, of course, can be handed in earlier. Please submit it at the English Dept.’s “paper window” under the name of your section leader. There will be no in-class final exam, but this due date and time for the take-home final coincides with the time scheduled by the Registrar for this class’s taking of its final examination.

Thereafter: Have an enjoyable Summer of 2007. You will have earned it.