Freaks, Geeks, and Monsters: Exploring the ‘Other’ in Fiction

Instructor: Dr Anum Tariq Dada ([atariq@iba.edu.pk](mailto:atariq@iba.edu.pk))

Office Hours: Location: Room 302, Fauji Foundation Building

Mondays: 11:00-12:00 am

Tuesdays: 12:00 am – 2:00 pm

Wednesdays: 11:00 - 12:00 am

Lectures: Mondays and Wednesdays

Time: 2:30 - 3:45 pm

Location: MTC-25

**Course Description and General Guidance:**

This course will explore hybridity, otherness, and outsiders on the margins of society, starting with a brief reference to classical literature and then exploring the theme through literary works of fiction from the medieval to the modern period. Although the course primarily deals with literature, a week will be dedicated to the discussion of monsters in medieval maps, as the visual along with the textual was an important component of medieval manuscripts. There will also be references to film and tv adaptations of texts discussed. The course will further explore how otherness is used in fiction and the way otherness, especially monstrosity, and attitudes towards it change over time. Finally, the course will also utilise some theory to complement discussions of the texts.

The lectures will be a hybrid between a traditional lecture and a seminar with interactive discussions during the lecture. In addition to reading the compulsory primary literature, students will be encouraged to read focused secondary scholarship to gain a better understanding of the text and the criticism surrounding it. Students will be notified of any additional reading well in advance.

Some of the core reading is quite short while others are longer and may require some time to read; therefore, I would recommend students to begin reading texts as soon as possible once the semester begins.

**Course Aims:**

* Examine what it means to be the ‘other’ in society and its implications.
* Determine different kinds of otherness, both visual and textual.
* Examine how attitudes towards ‘otherness’ vary over time.
* Explore the role of the ‘other’ and ways in which it is used to criticise society and its values.

**Learning Outcomes:**

* Develop critical and analytical skills through the discussion of the various literary texts.
* Develop research skills and critically engage with literary scholarship.
* The course will encourage creative thinking, especially through the character defense assignment.
* Presentations and the two essays will assess students’ comprehension and critical awareness of the subject and test students’ grasp of relevant contexts. It will also test students’ ability to research relevant information and construct and effectively structure an argument. Presentations in particular will aid students to develop demonstration skills, as well as expression.

**Rules and Ethics for this Course:**

* All lectures will begin at 2:35 pm. Any students who is later than 10 minutes without a legitimate excuse will be marked absent.
* Students must request an extension and gain permission if an assignment will be submitted late.
* All assignments must be submitted on time. Any assignments which are submitted more than 15 minutes late without an extension will not be accepted.
* If a student faces issues accessing LMS to submit an assignment, the assignment should be emailed to me before the deadline.
* The use of AI tools to generate ideas or content, or edit assignments is strictly prohibited.
* Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated.

**Primary Material:**

*Beowulf* (Uploaded on LMS)

Medieval Maps (Links included on online resources document.)

Marie de Frances, *Bisclavret* (Uploaded on LMS)

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Uploaded on LMS)

Jean D’Arras, *Melusine* (Uploaded on LMS)

Edgar Allan Poe, *The Tell-Tale Heart* (Available online: https://poemuseum.org/the-tell-tale-heart/)

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Available online: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/84/84-h/84-h.htm)

Franz Kafka, *Metamorphosis* (Uploaded on LMS)

John Gardner, *Grendel* (Uploaded on LMS)

Alasdair Gray, *Poor Things* (Uploaded on LMS)

Secondary reading will be added to LMS under ‘resources’ in a folder titled ‘Secondary Reading’.

**Course Schedule:**

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| Lecture 1 | Introduction to the Course |
| Lectures 2 and 3 | Hybridity and Otherness in the Classical Tradition |
| Lectures 4 and 5 | Monsters, Hybrids, and Otherness in Theory |
| Lectures 6 and 7 | Monsters and Hybrids in Medieval Maps |
| Lectures 7, 8, and 9 | *Beowulf* (In Modern English Translation) |
| Lectures 9 and 10 | *Bisclavret* (In Modern English Translation) |
| Lectures 11 and 12 | *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (In Modern English Translation) |
| Lectures 13, 14, and 15 | *Melusine* (In Modern English Translation) |
| Lectures 16 and 17 | *The Tell-Tale Heart* |
| Lectures 18, 19, 20 | *Frankenstein* |
| Lectures 20 and 21 | *Metamorphosis* |
| Lectures 22 and 23 | Group Presentations |
| Lectures 24 and 25 | *Grendel* |
| Lectures 26 and 27 | *Poor Things* |

**Assessment:**

Character Defense Assignment 25%

Group Presentation 20%

1 Essay 25 %

2 Quizzes 5 % each

Class Participation 15%

Attendance 5%