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ENG 3604-001: The Monstrous in Contemporary American Literature

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THE MONSTROUS IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LITERATURE

ENG 3604D sect. 001, CRN 31620

Dr. Jeannie Ludlow
Spring, 2012
MWF 1:00-1:50 pm
in Coleman 3150

Office: 3139 Coleman Hall
Phone: 581-6970
Email: please send course-related emails to me via WebCT
Mailbox: 3351 Coleman Hall
Office Hours: M 9 – noon; R 2 – 4:30
Other times by appointment.

Course Description: What are we afraid of, and why? In literature, the figure of the monster calls into question our fears, our sense of self and community, our ideas about integrity and purity. In postmodern literature, the monster can be understood as a re/productive figure, simultaneously contesting and reinscribing social norms. In this class, we will read primary and secondary texts that ask us to consider, and to reconsider, who or what is monstrous and why.

ENG 3604 is a Writing Intensive course. From the EIU website: "In such courses several writing assignments and writing activities are required. These assignments and activities, which are to be spread over the course of the semester, serve the dual purpose of strengthening writing skills and deepening understanding of course content. At least one writing assignment is to be revised by the student after it has been read and commented on by the instructor. In writing-intensive courses the quality of students' writing should constitute no less than 35% of the final course grade." (www.eiu.edu/~writcurr/purpose.php)

Course Format: This is a writing-intensive, discussion- and participation-oriented course; assignments function as preparatory work for and the bases of the learning process, not as ends in themselves. Students have primary responsibility for the focus and tone of class discussions. Written work may be revised at the discretion of the professor and within a reasonable time frame.

Course Expectations: It is my educational philosophy that each of us is responsible for her/his own education; the role of the professor is to guide and facilitate learning, not to tell students what (or how) to think. Therefore, it is expected that students will come to class having done all assignments, fully prepared to engage in discussions, activities, etc., that revolve around the assigned materials. All opinions and ideas are encouraged in this class; it is *never*

expected that students will agree with everything they read, see or hear. Students will not be evaluated on their opinions but on their ability to analyze and evaluate texts and concepts and express their own opinions clearly and thoughtfully. Critical thinking and articulation of disagreements and difficulties are encouraged.

Student Learning Objectives—students will:

- a. learn to identify and interpret major themes related to embodiment and monstrosity in contemporary/postmodern American literature.
- b. improve your ability to analyze diverse philosophic and aesthetic points of view, as they are conveyed in literary and critical texts.
- c. produce written and oral texts of your own, demonstrating accomplishment of objectives a and b.

Special circumstances: Any student who needs disability accommodations for this course should speak with me as soon as possible; I am always willing to work with you. Also note that EIU's Office of Disability Services (581-6583) will help with designated learning needs, mobility needs, etc.

Required texts:

You are required to do all assigned reading for this course. Five required texts for this course are available from Textbook Rental (NOTE: we will not be reading the Acker). Some required readings will also be available only on-line via WebCT or on the internet.

TRS TEXTS (in order of use)

Butler, Octavia. *Fledgling*. 2005.

Dunn, Katherine. *Geek Love*. 1990.

Mazza, Cris. *Waterbaby*. 2007.

Yahgulanaas, Michael Nicoll. *Red: A Haida Manga*. 2009.

Misha. *Red Spider White Web*. 1990.

Other Requirements:

You will need regular access to a computer and email and the ability to use WebCT. If you need help with this, let me know immediately.

Literary Studies Podcast: You should subscribe to The Close Reading Cooperative, the free podcast in literary studies produced here at Eastern. Being an English major and/or future teacher requires you to call upon the tools of our field—tools that include particular habits of observing not only what texts "say" but also how they say it—and so this podcast is intended to issue a set of weekly reminders (mini-lessons, really) to keep you in practice and on your feet as a close reader. Keeping up with it will help you to build your own observations about the literariness of the texts we read, which in turn will

help you come to class with comments and observations to share. To subscribe, go to: <http://www.eiu.edu/~english/podcast.php>. From there, follow the brief directions on how to sign up for the podcast. Once you've reached EIU's iTunes page, click "Subscribe."

IN ORDER TO PASS THIS CLASS, YOU MUST COMPLETE FOR GRADING:
ALL THREE EXAMS,
PROPOSAL, FIRST DRAFT, AND REVISED DRAFT OF THE FINAL RESEARCH PAPER,
AND AN IN-CLASS PRESENTATION OF YOUR RESEARCH PAPER/PROJECT.
EXCESSIVE ABSENCE WILL RESULT IN AUTOMATIC FAILURE OF THIS COURSE.

GRADES will be earned through the following components, each of which will be assigned a letter grade:

- 20% Participation (includes attendance, in-class activities, discussion based on successful completion of all reading)
- 10% Daily in-class writing assignments (quizzes, responses, etc., all based on assigned readings)
- 25% Three in-class exams (#1 = 5%; #2 = 10%; #3 = 10%)
- 10% In-class oral presentation of your final research paper/project
- 35% Final research paper (proposal = 5%; first draft = 10%; revised draft = 20%)

NOTE: There will be no makeups for in-class writing assignments. In-class writing will usually be the first activity in every class session; if you are late to class, you may miss it. Makeups for other assignments may be permitted in cases of documented hardship or emergency. If you experience hardship or emergency, please let me know as soon as is reasonable.

LATE POLICY: Late work is strongly discouraged. However, late is better than not at all. Work will depreciate in value one letter grade for each school day it is late, beginning at 1:00 pm on the day it is due, unless otherwise noted. All work is due at the time noted in the schedule.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: You are adults and should make your own choices about attending class; do remember that any choice one makes comes with consequences. In this class, the consequence for absence is lower grade or failure of the course. I take attendance using a student sign-in sheet. If you are late to class, it is your responsibility to remember to sign the sign-in sheet at the end of class that day; if you forget, you will be counted absent. When you are counted absent, you earn an F in participation that day. In-class assignments will be accepted for grading

only on the day they are done and only if you are in attendance (no exceptions); if you miss a reading quiz or in-class writing, you have missed that assignment and will earn an F on it. In addition, please keep in mind that you will be responsible for everything that is said, viewed, assigned, etc., during any class sessions that you miss. If you miss a class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed (from a peer or during my office hours) and for making sure that you get copies of handouts, worksheets, etc. Please do not e-mail me and ask, "did I miss anything?" and please do not interrupt the whole class to ask about something you missed.

Email guidelines: (NOTE: this is good advice for emailing all your instructors) When you communicate with your instructors, whether by email, by phone, or in person, you are engaging in a professional exchange. Please be sure to reflect this professionalism in your communication. All emails must have: an appropriate salutation ("Dear Professor," "Hi, Dr. Ludlow," "Hello, Jeannie," etc.); the course info in the subject line (e.g. ENG3604); and a recognizable signature. Your emails should be written with complete words and in complete sentences ("May I schedule an appointment with you?" not "Can I C U?"). Also, please note that I only check my email two or three times each school day. It often takes me one full school day (24 hours, M – F) to answer any email message—I typically do not check my campus email on weekends. ALL COURSE-RELATED EMAILS SHOULD BE SENT TO ME ON WEBCT.

CLASSROOM BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES—the following constitutes an agreement between the students and professor for this course. Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and guests) has the right to work in a harassment-free, hostility-free environment; harassment of others and explicit or deliberate hostility are not tolerated. Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and guests) has the right to be treated with respect and dignity at all times, even in the midst of heated disagreement. Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and guests) has the responsibility to behave as a competent adult and to be open and polite to one another. Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and academic guests) has the responsibility to come to every class fully prepared to listen, to participate, to learn and to teach. Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and guests) has the responsibility to work together to

create, in this class, an environment in which active learning, including responsible and respectful questioning, is encouraged.

The professor has the responsibility to treat all students fairly and to evaluate students' work accurately, in terms of the skills that any student in this course is expected to gain.

The professor has the responsibility to make assignment requirements and evaluation criteria clear.

Students have the right to feel confident that their work is being evaluated on its own merits, not on the basis of the students' personal opinions.

Students have the responsibility to view their professor as a partner in their education, not as bent on causing students anxiety and frustration.

Students have the responsibility to understand that the professor is not primarily responsible for making students understand; it is students' job to study, ask questions, and learn.

Students have the responsibility to keep an open mind and to try to comprehend what the professor and the texts are trying to get across to them.

Students have the responsibility to read the assignments carefully, noting important ideas and rephrasing information in their own words.

Students have the responsibility to work through examples in the assignments and in class discussions or lectures and to ask questions if they do not understand concepts or examples.

Students have the responsibility to do every bit of assigned homework with proper attention and thought.

Students have the responsibility to ask for help when they need it; help is available from the professor, from other students, from the Writing Center, the Student Success Center, and the Reading Center, and from other resources on campus.

Students have the responsibility to accept that their work will be evaluated in terms of the skills any student in this course is expected to gain.

Students have the responsibility to try to integrate the information from this course into other courses and into other areas of their lives.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: In this course, we will comply with EIU's academic integrity policy (see your catalog). I have no tolerance for plagiarism or cheating. Please note that "plagiarism or cheating" includes (but is not limited to):

1. **quoting** from a source without fully and correctly citing that source and/or without using quotation marks

2. **paraphrasing** from a source without fully and correctly citing that source
3. turning in a paper with an incorrect or incomplete **works cited list**
4. **falsifying data**
5. turning in **someone else's work** as your own—this includes (but is not limited to)
 - a. **copying** another's work from a quiz or assignment
 - b. turning in work that **someone else wrote** for you
 - c. using on-line or hard copy **paper mills**
6. turning in **your own work that was written for another course**, without prior permission from both professors.

Violations of EIU's academic integrity policy will result in an **automatic failing grade** in this course and notification of the Office of Student Services. For more information, see www.eiu.edu/~judicial.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

All in-class writing for grade (quizzes, exams, daily writings) will be hand-written in ink. All out-of-class writing will be typed, double-spaced, in a standard font, with your name and page numbers on every page. **Please do not submit cover pages to me—they are a ridiculous waste of natural resources.** When you submit papers via WebCT, please be sure that all parts of the paper are in one document; never submit the Works Cited as a separate document. Hard copies must be stapled; paper clips are not acceptable. Any paper that is not stapled will be returned to you and graded "late." No exceptions.

Please note: length requirements for writing assignments are by word count, not page count, and all words count, including citations, the works cited list, and foot/endnotes. If your paper goes over the maximum word count and every single word in your paper is not absolutely crucial to your argument, that paper's grade will depreciate.

PARTICIPATION

participation consists of regular attendance and productive participation in class discussions and in-class activities. Please note that the phrases in **bold** are the most important.

A = almost perfect attendance and almost never late; **active and substantive participation in class discussions, explicitly about the materials assigned for that day or unit, involving obvious critical thought and making connections to other materials or examples; avoidance of "side" conversations in class; leadership role in group activities and discussion; professional interactions with others in class, even when disagreeing**

- strongly, and in all communications with professor; consistent inattention to cell phones and other electronic devices during class
- B** = almost perfect attendance and almost never late; **consistent participation in class discussions and activities, even when confused or struggling with ideas**; professional behavior in class (including not carrying on “side” conversations and not being rude) and in all communication with professor; inattention to cell phones and other electronic devices during class
- C** = consistent attendance with full preparation of course materials but **little to no verbal participation in discussions** unless required; professional behavior in class and in all communications with professor; consistent “follower” role in group activities; **OR** consistent enthusiastic participation in discussions and activities, with no explicit evidence of full preparation of course materials; professional behavior in class and in all communications with professor; inattention to cell phones/electronic devices during class
- D** = frequent lateness or absence; **unprofessional, rude, or inappropriate behavior in class** or on discussion boards (including, but not limited to, doing homework for other classes, reading newspapers, occasionally attending to cell phones, “side” conversations, etc.)
- F** = missing class; **disruptive or hostile behavior in class** or on discussion boards; frequent **attention to cell phones** or other electronic devices during class

THREE IN-CLASS EXAMS

Exams are designed to reward students who keep up with the readings all term and who think critically about the issues raised in class. Exams will cover all assigned materials, all in-class presentations, activities and texts (including videos, class discussions, and group activities). Each exam combines short-answer questions with one essay question.

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER

For this assignment, you will choose any topic related to one of our assigned readings (either literary or critical) about which to write a research paper of about 2000-3500 words (approx. 8-12 pp.). This assignment has three parts, all of which must be completed in order for you to pass the course.

1. the proposal (5% of final grade), due Wed., March 21 (via WebCT), will give me: a tentative title; a short (300 words or less) description of your project; and bibliographic record and short description of at least two sources that you have already read and that you

might use for your paper (these should be legitimate literary sources);

2. the first draft (10% of final grade), due Fri., April 13 (via WebCT), is neither a rough draft nor an incomplete one. Your paper should be as finished as possible at this point, including full and correct citation of all sources, correct standard American grammar and writing conventions, and arguable thesis that is argued throughout the paper (if you need help with any of this, go to the Writing Center or meet with me early in the writing process)—I will mark this draft and conference with you about it before April 20, in order to give you plenty of time for full revisions;

3. the revised draft (20% of final grade), due Mon., May 2 (via WebCT), will reflect your full attention to my feedback to your first draft.

Students in this course are strongly encouraged to submit their research papers for inclusion in the English Department’s spring student research conference and/or in essay contests. More information about these opportunities will be forthcoming.