

Freshman Seminar, STSC 023
Tuesday, 1:30-4:30 p.m.
Location: NEGB 121

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Office: Logan Hall, 326

Office Hours: Weds, 2:30- 5 p.m or by appointment

FRANKENSTEIN'S LIBRARY

Victor Frankenstein made the world's most famous monster. He found parts in operation rooms and graves, sewed them together, and charged the body new with life according to scripts laid down by thinkers both ancient and new. Likewise, in creating *Frankenstein*, one of the most enduringly fascinating novels of the English language, Mary Shelley put together elements from gothic fiction, moral and political philosophy, romantic poetry, and contemporary science. What were the books that Victor Frankenstein drew upon for inspiration? What did his monster read to become part of human society? And what ideas animated Shelley's act of creation? In this seminar we will read from the primary texts that made up Frankenstein and Shelley's libraries, along with closely related works from this period, ranging from Renaissance magic, modern electrochemistry and physiology, through to Milton, Rousseau, Poe, Balzac and Marx. These readings bring to life a crucial moment in our history— after the French Revolution and at the start of the industrial age— which gives us a new perspective on today's thinking about technology and science.

Requirements:

- attendance at all class meetings;
- all required readings, completed before class meeting for which they are assigned;
- active participation in class discussions;
- one in-class presentation
- response papers: 1-page reactions to each week's required readings;
- two papers: 4-5 pages each, on topics to be assigned;
- final paper (10-12 pages)

Detailed instructions for the written assignments will be distributed in class and posted on the course's Blackboard site (under "Assignments").

Readings: Except for *Frankenstein* itself, weekly readings will generally be less than 100 pages. Both assigned books (Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Norton; Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*, Hackett) are available for purchase at Penn Book Center (34th and Sansom Sts.). The Critical Writing Program has adopted a universal writing reference text entitled *A Writer's Resource*, which is also available at Penn Book Center. Shorter required readings are available in a coursepack which will be available at Campus Copy Center (3907 Walnut St.).

Attendance and participation: These are not optional. Participation involves active listening and engagement— more than simply showing up, and more than sheer volume of oral output.

Grading: *Note.* Consistent effort and improvement will be weighted heavily in grading.

Class attendance and participation (includes presentation):	30%	
First short paper (2 pp)		10
Second short paper (4 pp)	15	
Final paper		25
1/2 to 1 page weekly reading responses:*	20	

COURSE SCHEDULE

-----PART ONE: MARY'S CREATION-----

1. Sept 11 **Welcome.** Course mechanics, overview, in-class short text.
2. Sept 18 **Frankenstein Day 1**
READINGS: Chronology (p. 333-334)
Preface (vii-xii)
Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus, 1818 ed., pp. 1-101

First short paper assigned (due Sept. 25); Presentations assigned

3. Sept 25 **Frankenstein Day 2**
**** First Paper Due****
READINGS: Finish *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, 1818 ed., Vol III.
Contemporary responses, in Norton, pp. 185-201

-----PART TWO: THE EDUCATION OF VICTOR AND THE MONSTER-----

4. Oct 2 **Training a Mad Scientist**
READINGS: Collins and Pinch, *The Golem*, intro.
Sarah Bakewell, "The Reanimators"
Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books* (skip footnotes)
Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*
Humphry Davy, *Introductory Discourse on Chemistry*

Class will end slightly earlier October 2nd because of:

5. Oct. 4 **THURSDAY, 1:30- 2:30 *** SPECIAL CLASS MEETING******
VICTOR'S LIBRARY: Original works of alchemy, natural magic, chemistry
Meet at VAN PELT LIBRARY: LEA ROOM, 6th FLOOR, 1:30

6. Oct 9 **Training a Monster**
READINGS: Plutarch, *Lives*, "Lycurgus"
Volney, *The Ruins*
"Milton's Satan + Rom. Imagination": esp. MILTON, pp. 271-285

In-Class Presentation 1: Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*

What to look for in your reading:

What would the monster learn about how to be a human from these books?
What are the moral values they put forth? Are they "healthy"? Why or why not? How do they relate to the monster's situation in life? What implications do they have for his relations with others--- both the family he watches and Frankenstein's family?

8. Oct 16 **NO CLASS: FALL BREAK.**

-----PART THREE: MARY'S LIBRARY-----

9. Oct 23 **Nature and Education: Rousseau**

READINGS: From *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* pp.25-28 (till "virtuous patriot"); pp.33-81; from *The Social Contract*: pp. 141-53; pp. 162-165; pp.190-200; pp. 220-227; from *Emile*.

Reading questions: Discourse (DOE): What work does the "Letter to the Republic of Geneva" accomplish? What is the difference between natural and conventional inequality? What stages did humanity pass through on its way to the current state? What is the role of metallurgy and agriculture? How does Rousseau view the current state of civilization? What hope does he have for humanity in the DOE? Now, turning to *The Social Contract*: in what ways is this an answer to the problems we're left with in the Discourse? How are Rousseau's political ideas applied to education in *Emile*? Do you think they would work? Are they similar or different to the models of child-rearing now practiced?

***** SPECIAL IN-CLASS EVENT*****

MOVIE: *FRANKENSTEIN*, 1937.

***** Paper 2 assigned *****

10. Oct 30 **HALLOWEEN: The Romantic Gothic**

READINGS: "Anne Radcliffe and the Gothic"
Coleridge: "Review of Anne Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*"
Coleridge: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (all)
Godwin: *St. Leon*, Chapters 1 and 2.
Moers: "Female Gothic: The Monster's Mother" (Norton, 214-224)

In-Class Presentation 2: Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*

11. Nov 6 **The Romantic and the Sublime**

**** Paper 2 due.*****

READINGS: Selection from Burke, *Sublime and Beautiful*
Coleridge: *Kublai Khan*
Shelley: *Mont Blanc*, *Ozymandias*, *Ode to West Wind*
Byron: A Fragment, *Damaetas*,
Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Preface and start of Canto I

12. Nov 13 **Mary's Parents—The French Revolution in England**

READINGS: from Butler, Burke, Paine, Godwin and the Revolution:
Introduction and original texts:
Price, Burke, Wollstonecraft, Priestley, Godwin
Blake, poems from *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.

Final Paper assigned

13. Nov 20 **Enlightened and Romantic Science**

READINGS: Kant, "What is Enlightenment?"
Erasmus Darwin, "The Temple of Nature", start of Canto I;
Spontaneous Vitality, Theory of Electricity
Lamarck, *Zoological Philosophy*:
Introduction, "Spontaneous generation"
Mesmer, *Propositions*
Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment*, pp. 3-22

Presentation 3: Edgar Allan Poe: Stories and Criticism

----- PART FOUR: MODERNITY AS ARTIFICIAL NATURE -----

14. Nov 27 **Remaking the World: The Machine Age**

READINGS: Mary Shelley, "1830 Introduction."
Mellor, "Choosing a Text of Frankenstein" (Norton, p. 160-164)
Malthus, *An Essay on Population*
Carlyle, *Signs of the Times*
Marx and Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*

15. Dec 4 **Remaking the Human: The Political and the Personal in 1830**

READINGS: Bulk Pack: including Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, Flora Tristan
Barbara Johnson, "My Monster/ My Self" (Norton, 241- 251)
Mary Poovey, "The Lady and the Monster" (Norton, 251-261)
Presentation 4: Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*

Dec 11: *****Final paper due, in my mailbox, 3rd floor of Logan
Hall.*****