Our subtitle here is “Monsters, Humans, God.” Our literary form is prose fiction in three sub-genres. We’ll read two nineteenth century pop horror novels, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, then two mid-twentieth century novels with “epic” ambitions, John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* and Ayn Rand’s *The Fountainhead*, and finally two shorter reflective philosophical novels, each of which won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction within the past ten years – Marilyne Robinson’s *Gilead* and Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*. The reading raises thematic questions about individuality and community, about erotic, social, and religious passion, about the will to discover and create, to redress injustice, to survive at all. We’ll also consider literary questions about plot/suspense, identifying (and identifying with) character, and the novelist’s special problem of designing “beginnings” and “ endings.” Cultural questions too: why do we still find vampire novels and films all around us, and what literary forms of “Frankenstein” still survive? How do Rand’s libertarian individualism and Steinbeck’s communitarianism still fuel debate? What DOES winning a Pulitzer Prize mean?

As both a beginning exercise and a continuing change-of-pace along the way we’ll also read some poetry, given to you in class, most of it directly connected, by reference or theme, to the novels we study. I’ll ask you to write four short graded papers, which will count for 50% of the course grade, and a take-home final exam, which will count for 30%. Participation in class discussion and in assigned discussion-facilitation activities will make up the final 20% of the grade.

I also look forward to meeting with each of you during office hours in the first few weeks of the class, to talk about your relationship to “reading” and to “writing,” and to continue discussing the readings. I take “office hours” seriously, and hope you will visit me frequently after you first find your way to my new office in our new building.

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS, WRITINGS, AND DISCUSSIONS**

1) “Monsters”: “genre fiction”

Jan. 14-16-18: Introduction to the LitCore, to “Form,” to our themes, and some poetry “calisthenics”; “Prometheus,” “Paradise Lost,” and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, or, *The Modern Prometheus* (1818/31) – for Wed. read “Author’s Introduction” and text through p. 23 (end of ch. 2); for Fri, through p. 54 (end of ch. 7). First paper assigned, with topic choice.

(MLK holiday) Jan. 23-25: read *Frankenstein* through p. 76 (end of ch. 11); *Frankenstein* through p. 114 (end ch. 18) **first paper due Jan. 25.**

Jan. 28-30-Feb. 1: *Frankenstein* through p. 149 (end ch. 23); finish *Frankenstein* (discussion groups); begin Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) reading up through p. 53 (end of ch. 5).

Feb. 4-6-8: *Dracula*, through p. 124 (end ch. 11); through p. 186 (end ch. 16); through p. 247 (end ch. 21), second paper assigned, with topic choices.
Feb. 11-13-15: Dracula through p. 310; finish Dracula and second paper due Feb. 13; “Battle Hymn of the Republic” and begin John Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath (1939) reading up through ch. 5.

2) “Humans”: political/philosophical novels of community
Feb. 18-20-22 The Grapes of Wrath, through p. 117; through p. 192; through p. 267 (page and a half reflection on single scenes or passages due Feb. 18 and 22)

Feb. 25-27-Mar. 1: The Grapes of Wrath, through p. 324; through p. 405; to the end. (page and a half reflection on a single scene or passage due Feb. 27, final revised journal/paper with conclusion due Mar. 1).

SPRING BREAK

Mar. 11-13-15: read Ayn Rand’s The Fountainhead (1943) up through p. 94 (Part One ch. 7); through p. 170 (Part One ch. 13); through p. 250 (Part Two ch. 5).

Mar. 18-20-22: The Fountainhead through p. 338 (Part Two ch. 11); through p. 418 (Part Three ch. 1); through p. 495 (Part Three ch. 8)

Mar. 25-27- (Good Friday): The Fountainhead through p. 573 (Part Four ch. 7); through p. 630 (Part Four ch. 13) (one page reflection on possible paper topics due Mar. 27)


3) “God”: reflective fictions (that won Pulitzer Prizes)
Apr. 8-10-12: read Gilead up through p. 53; up through p. 104; up through p. 153.

(Patriot’s Day)-Apr. 17-19: read Gilead up through p. 215; through to the end.


Apr. 29-May 1: read The Road up through p. 246; finish The Road...last discussions and final exam handed out, due back in my office, Stokes S465, between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on Wed. May 8 (earlier hand-in times will be scheduled for those who wish).

Please note that the Academic Integrity “contract” which is part of your citizenship in the Boston College university community (see www.bc.edu/integrity) requires that all written work submitted for academic credit be entirely your own. I’ll suggest the proper citation form when you write about a text. Using someone else’s work without citation is entirely unacceptable and subject at the discretion of the teacher to penalties ranging from re-doing the assignment to failure of the assignment to failure in the course. The primary responsibility for maintaining standards of personal integrity and honor in academic and intellectual activities rests with the individual student. I’m available by email and am in my offices for a portion of just about every day during the semester for conferences or inquiries about this, or any other matter. If you know you will need to be absent from a class, or wake up sick and can’t come, let me know: we will need to figure out ways of compensating for this.