

EGL 121: Monsters in Global Cinema

Fall 2018



Mondays and Wednesdays, 5:30-7:20 pm: Humanities 2030

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EGL 121 Instructor

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Please use your SBU email when contacting me. For Office Hours visits, sending me an email that includes your name, time of visit, and discussion topic will help me prepare for your office hours appointment. Early drafts of papers and assignments are welcome, but none will be reviewed via email – you must visit my office hours. I also encourage you to visit the writing center.

Course Information

Course Description

After winning the 2018 Golden Globe for best director of a motion picture, Guillermo del Toro explained his lifelong faith in monsters: “I have been saved and absolved by them because monsters, I believe, are patron saints of our blissful imperfection and they allow and embody the possibility of failing.” This is an introductory film course with a focus on the cross-cultural study of films. In particular, the class will attend to the use and representation of monsters within global film traditions. How do directors and screenwriters use monsters to address and/or critique their own socio-political context? We will use these films to explore larger issues addressed in the humanities, including (but not limited to) identity, war, technology, dehumanizing poverty, and environmental crisis. Students will also learn the basics of film analysis and terminology. Much of our time will be spent viewing and discussing films in class. Two short formal papers, various smaller writing assignments, and participation in class discussion are required. A reliable internet connection and familiarity with online interfaces (such as Blackboard, youtube, media streaming) are also required.



Required

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TEXTS

01

The EGL 121
Digital
Reader

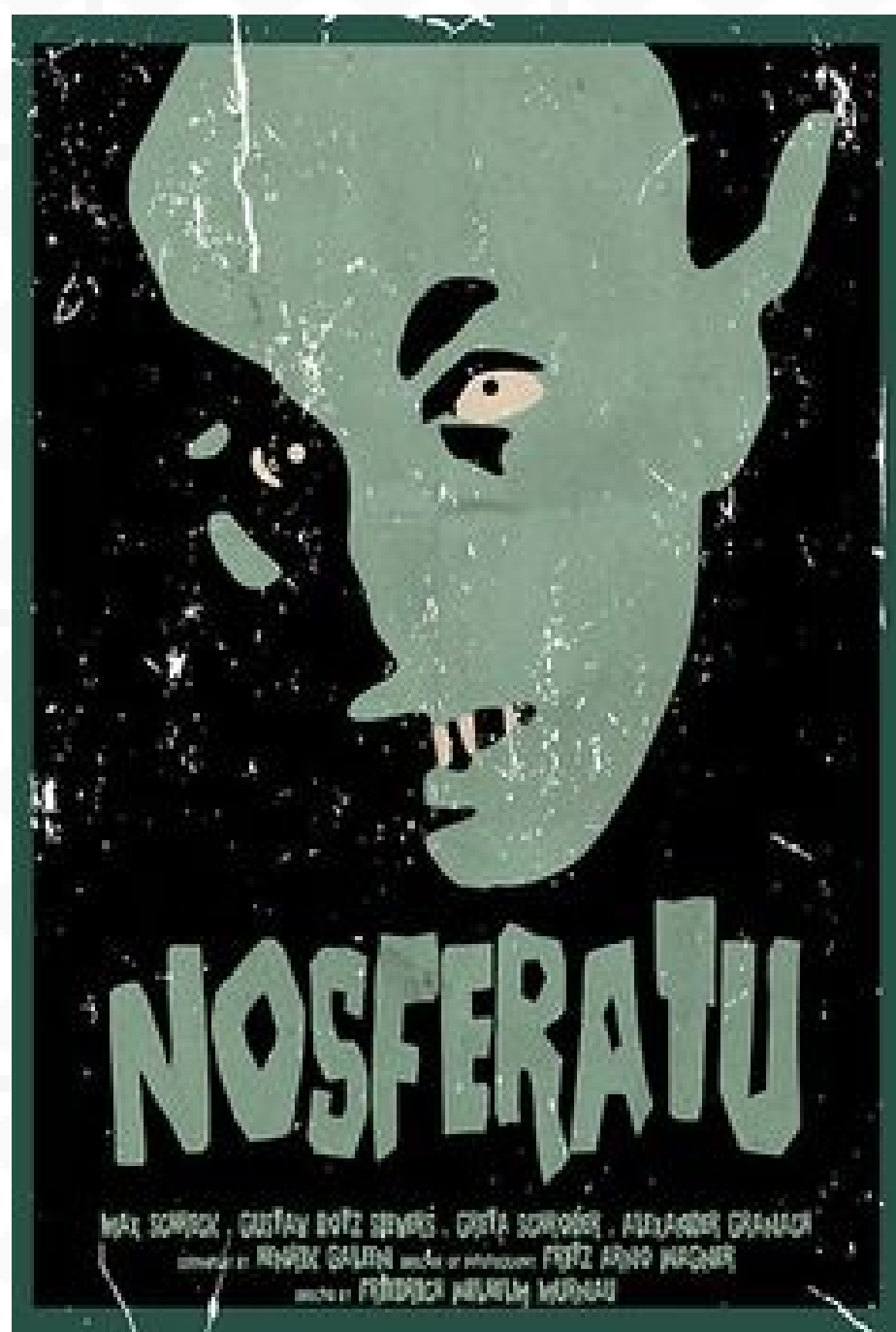
02

Course
Films*

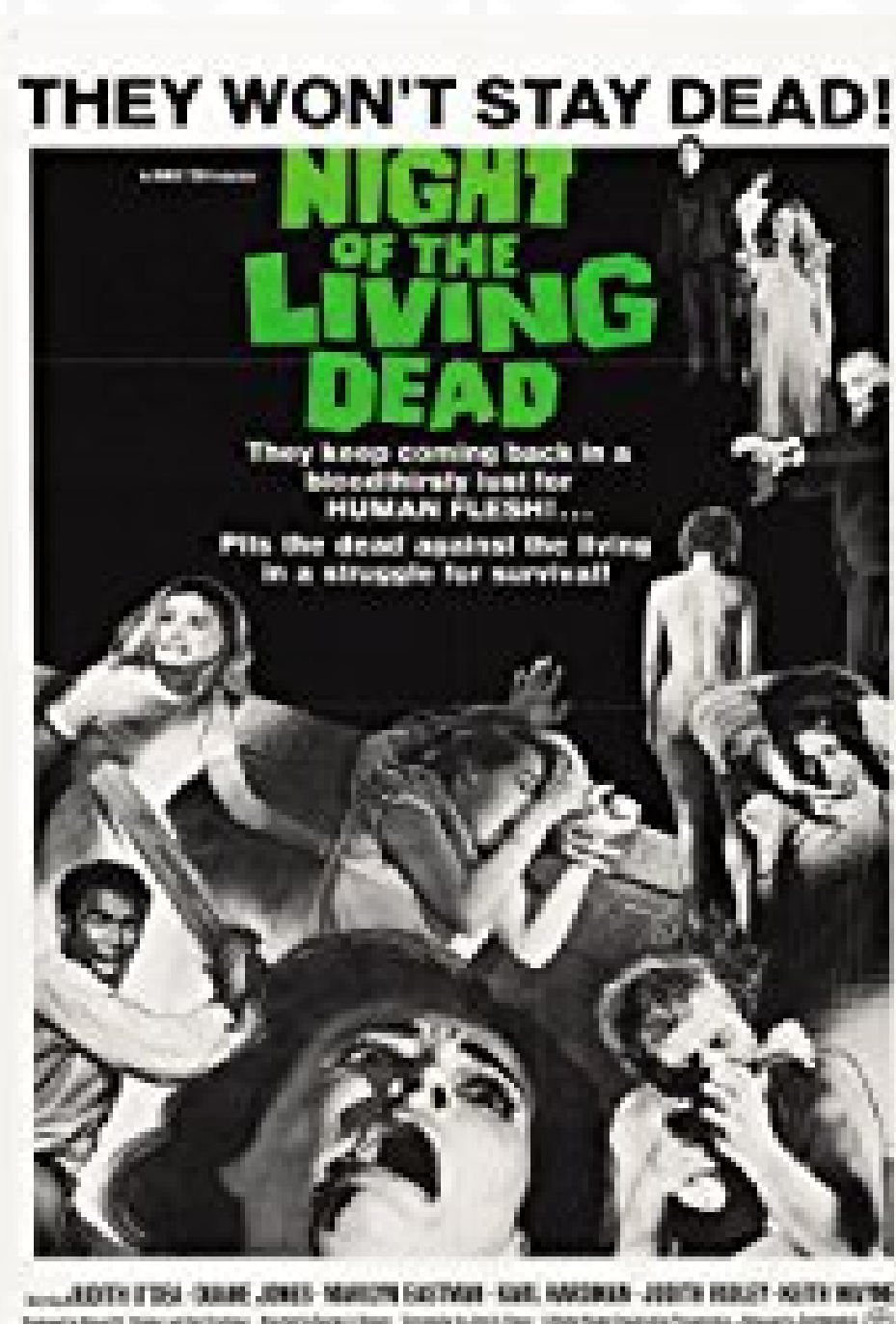
*This class is divided into two 2-hour sessions so that we can view a film together (usually) on Mondays and discuss them on Wednesdays. Though most of the films are on reserve at the library, there are limited copies. I expect you to have watched any film you're planning to write about at least twice, which means that you might want to invest in a copy of the film or films about which you intend to write, especially since you don't need to purchase a textbook for this class. Many of these films are also available to view on online streaming platforms.

TRIGGER WARNING: This course features a number of horror films. Please don't take this class if you think this will have a negative influence on your emotional and/or mental health.

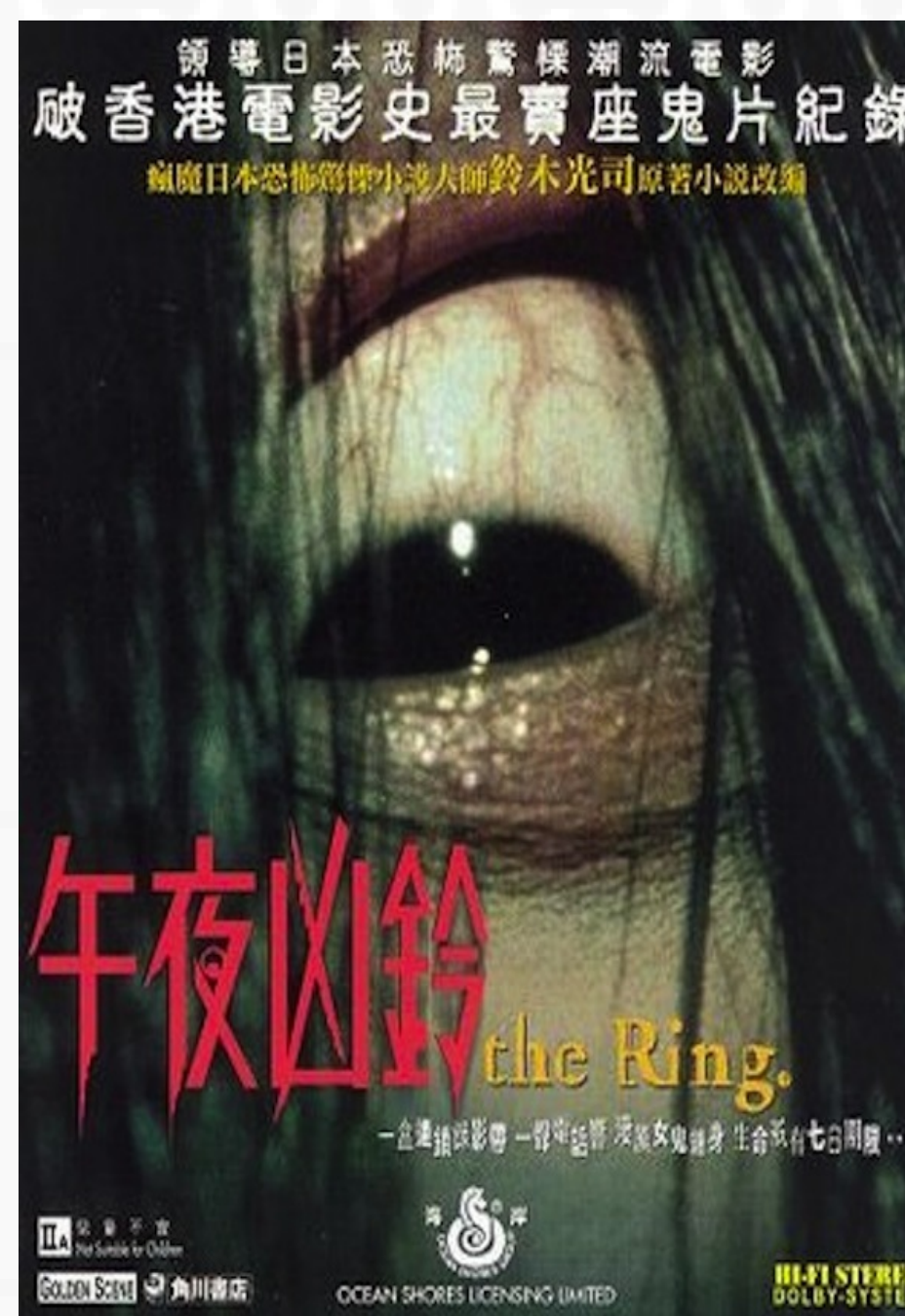
Course Films



Nosferatu
Dir. F. W. Murnau
Germany
1922



The Night of the Living Dead
Dir. George Romero
USA
1968



Ringu (The Ring)
Dir. Hideo Nakata
Japan
1998



28 Days Later
Dir. Danny Boyle
UK
2003



El Laberinto del Fauno (Pan's Labyrinth)
Dir. Guillermo del Toro
Mexico & Spain
2006



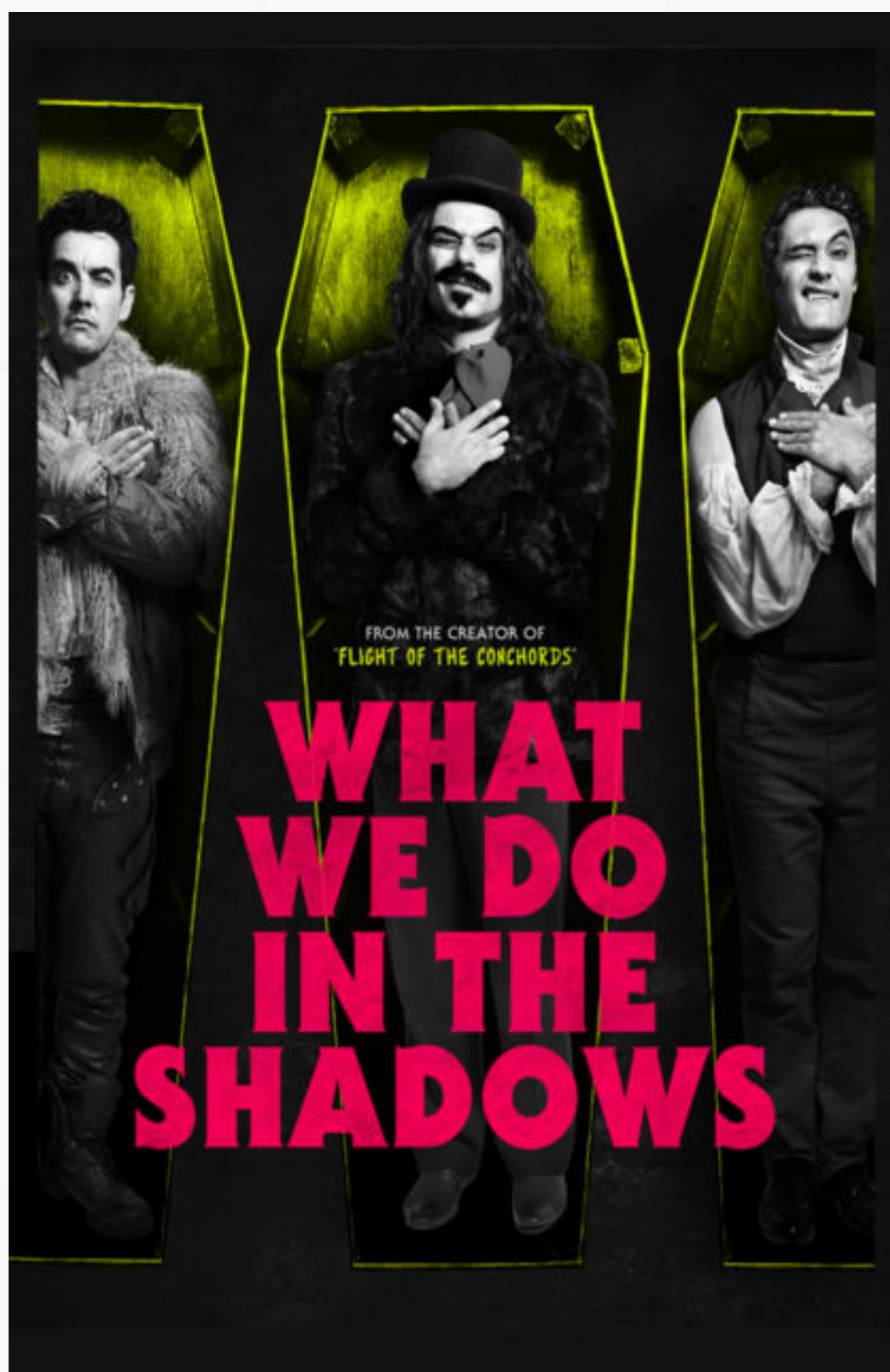
Gwoemul (The Host)
Dir. Bong Joon-Ho
South Korea
2006



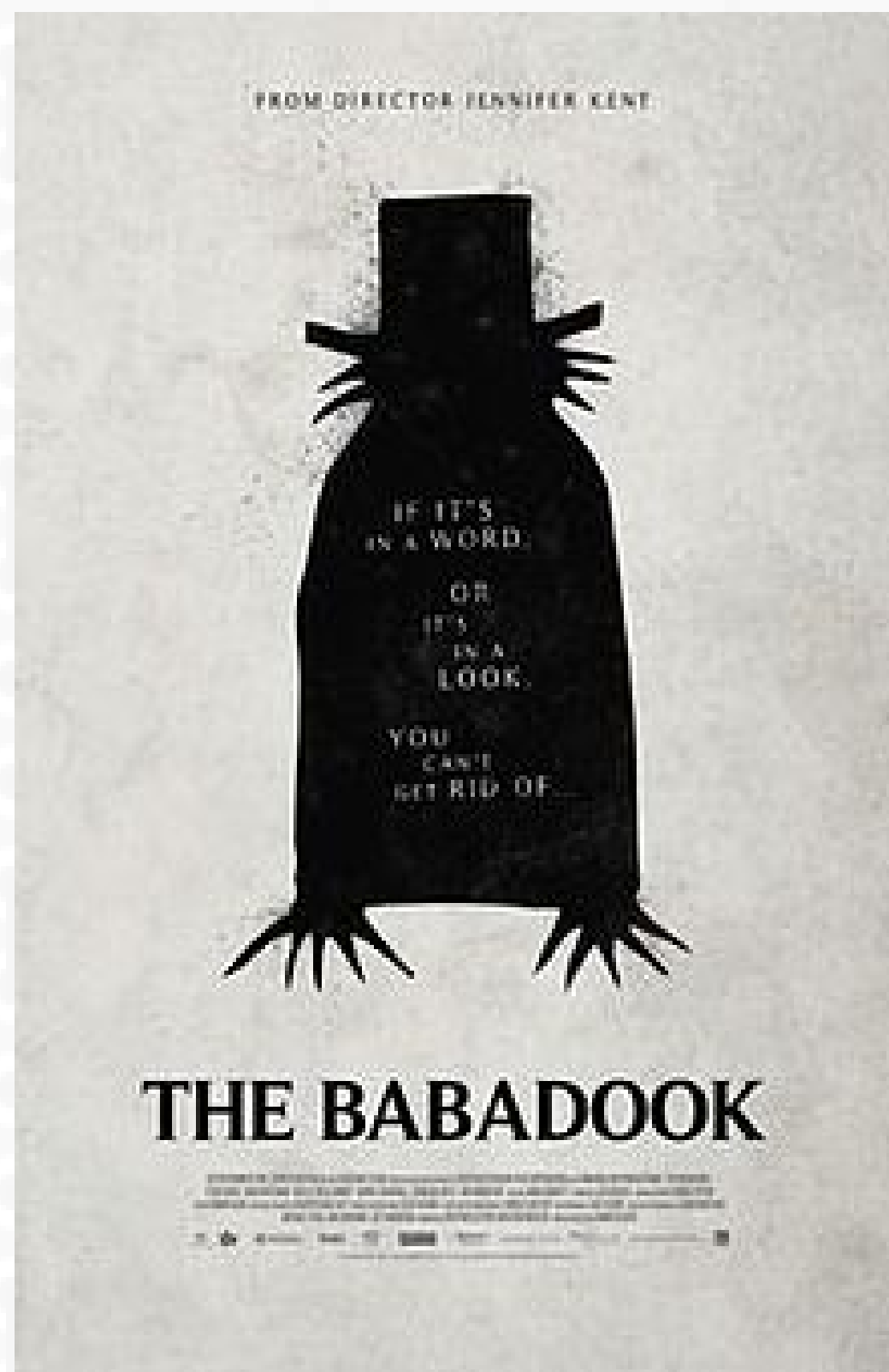
District 9
Dir. Neill Blomkamp
South Africa, New Zealand, &
USA
2009



A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night
Dir. Ana Lily Amirpour
Iran & USA
2014



What We Do in the Shadows
Dir. Taika Waititi & Jemaine Clement
New Zealand
2014



The Babadook
Dir. Jennifer Kent
Australia
2014



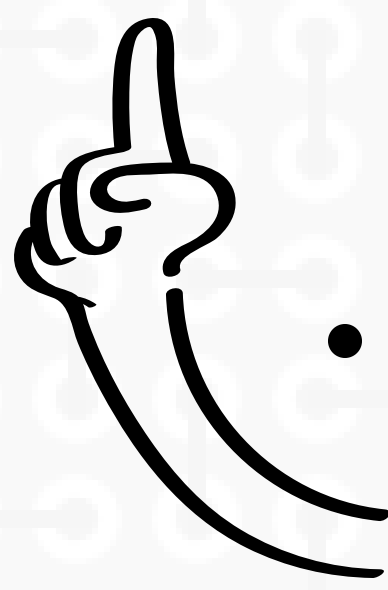
Busanhaeng (Train to Busan)
Dir. Yeon Sang-ho
South Korea
2016

Course Requirements

The components of a successful course experience are never that complicated. You need to work hard at your college classes to do well, and when you do not work hard, your grades reflect that effort.

Success in this course is largely based on your presence in class to view the film screenings and to participate in the group discussions. *Don't hide. Show up.* If you want an A, you need to complete assigned activities and readings, show up with your best intentions, and work hard.

Remember!



A syllabus is a contract. Failure to meet any of these requirements may result in an F for the course:

- Have regular access to Blackboard, our digital anthology, and the Internet.
- Complete **all** course assignments (This one is very important to me.)
- **Attend class.** Regularly. 4 unexcused absences is the limit. Above four and you lose a full letter grade for each absence. An excused absence is one for which you can document a health issue or a personal crisis.
- If you miss a screening, you are expected to locate and watch the film on your own. Viewing all course films is part of coming to class prepared.
- **Participate.** Take risks. Be curious. Be wrong sometimes. Be right sometimes. Be present, open minded, and a **good citizen** of our class.
- **Participate** in classroom activities, which may include individual free writes, discussion, group work, etc.
- Did I mention that **participation** is important? As a general rule of thumb, be prepared to contribute a thoughtful question, comment or response at least once a week in class in order to receive a full participation mark. You are of course encouraged to contribute more often if you wish.

Learning Objectives:



Writing Skills

We will learn to write clearly and to develop coherent arguments. As part of our work to further develop the fundamental skills and approaches necessary to write film criticism, we will complete a number of writing assignments, including a major critical essay.



Film Analysis

Through both written assignments and written and in-class discussion, we will develop and present film analysis. In order to develop our skills to write and discuss film criticism, we will also gain a basic fluency in the theoretical and critical idioms of film scholarship.



Global Film Traditions

We will learn about film traditions from regions around the globe and the global cultures and histories they represent. In particular, we will focus on the figure of the monster and the monstrous to guide us through this work.

This course satisfies two Stony Brook Curriculum (SBC) requirements:

GLO (Global Studies): 1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the interconnectedness of the world, past and present; 2. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a society or culture outside of the United States.

HUM (Humanities): 1. Understand the major principles and concepts that form the basis of knowledge in the humanities; 2. Understand the theoretical concepts that undergird one or more of the humanities; 3. Develop an awareness of some of the key historical themes of one or more of the humanities; 4. Develop an awareness of the multi- or interdisciplinary nature of issues within the humanities; 5. Develop an awareness of the contexts (historical, social, geographical, moral) in which these issues emerged; 6. Develop the verbal and written skills to articulate valid arguments on these issues.

Academic Dishonesty

You can review the definition of academic dishonesty, review the principles of academic honesty, and learn about the consequences of academic dishonesty at Stony Brook's website, https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/catagacadish.html. Academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Officer.

Using internet sources can sometimes lead students to commit academic dishonesty unintentionally. Please make sure to always acknowledge your sources, whether they be from the internet, from a book, or any other source. Please also feel free to ask me if you are unsure how to cite something. It's better to be safe than sorry!

Academic Integrity

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary.

Critical Incident Management

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn.

Americans with Disabilities Act

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Grades Breakdown

Final Paper



In-Class Activities/Participation



Scene Analysis Presentation



Homework/Readings



Quizzes



Homework will be limited to VERY short readings and short written responses to the films. Readings will typically be posted on our digital textbook and responses will be submitted via Blackboard. Sometimes the homework assignment will take place in a discussion thread on Blackboard.

I will try to give you more than ten **quizzes** across the semester. I will drop 4-6 of your lowest quiz grades (depending on how many quizzes we are able to complete). Quizzes will typically test film terminology and the films we view.

Major Assignments

#1 Final Paper

You will write a critical essay analyzing one or more of our films. I will provide questions to help you create a thesis. Your paper must cite at least one secondary source.

Due: December 10th

#2 In-Class Activities/Participation

Because discussion is central to the success of our class, I expect you all to try to share your thoughts or questions at least once per week when we meet. Additionally, there will usually be at least one minor activity to complete per class. These activities will typically serve to jump-start our discussion.

#3 Scene Analysis Presentation

You and a partner will deliver a 5-10 minute scene analysis presentation at the start of one class session. We will sign up for slots during our first class, so it is up to you to choose the date, film, and your partner. Please see the assignment sheet for more details.

Due: _____



Course Schedule






DATE	In Class	Due for Next Class
M Aug 27	Introduction; What is a monster? Why should we care about monsters in global cinema?	Read syllabus and sign up for scene analysis presentation
W Aug 29	SCREENING: Night of the Living Dead Introduction to homework	Add to discussion thread on Blackboard. Be ready to discuss NOTLD in class.



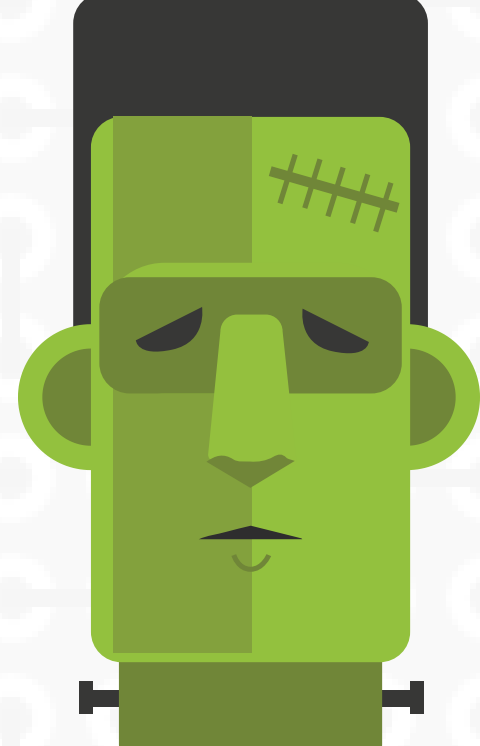


**Unit 1:
Zombies and
Introduction**

DATE	In Class	Due for Next Class	Notes
M Sept 3	No class- Labor Day		
W Sept 5	<p>Discuss NOTLD Focus: Zombies and monstrosity, casting, camera angles</p> <p>I will deliver a demo scene analysis presentation and answer any further questions regarding this assignment.</p>	<p>Monster reading (link on BB)</p> <p>Respond to reflection question on Blackboard.</p>	
M Sept 10	SCREENING: 28 Days Later	Add to discussion thread on Blackboard. Be ready to discuss 28 Days Later in class.	
W Sept 12	<p>Discuss 28 Days Later</p> <p>Focus: The digital zombie, apocalypse and politics, reading the mise en scene</p> <p>Group #1's scene analysis presentation.</p>	Respond to reflection question on Blackboard.	
M Sept 17	SCREENING: Train to Busan	Add to discussion thread on Blackboard. Be ready to discuss Train to Busan in class.	
W Sept 19	<p>Discuss Train to Busan</p> <p>Focus: Sympathy and zombies, politics and zombies, dehumanization, comparison of the three zombie types we've seen.</p> <p>Group #2's scene analysis presentation.</p>	<p>Zombie reading (link on BB)</p> <p>Respond to reflection question on Blackboard.</p>	

DATE	In Class	Due for Next Class	Notes
M Sept 24	SCREENING: Ringu	Add to discussion thread on Blackboard. Be ready to discuss Ringu	 <p data-bbox="1786 671 2173 736">Unit 2: Ghosts</p>
W Sept 26	<p>Discuss Ringu</p> <p>Focus: Technohorror, the monstrous-feminine, haunting, Samara's world domination!</p> <p>Group #3's scene analysis presentation.</p>	Interpret one of the film's images provided on BB.	
M Oct 1	SCREENING: The Babadook	Add to discussion thread on Blackboard. Be ready to discuss The Babadook	
W Oct 3	<p>Discuss The Babadook</p> <p>Focus: How is this ghost different? Is this even a ghost? Hauntings, sound, and affect. Why/how has the Babadook become a meme and a gay icon?</p> <p>Group #4's scene analysis presentation.</p>	Sound reading on BB. Interpret one of the film's images provided on BB.	
M Oct 8	October Break- No class.		
W Oct 10	<p>Catch up.</p> <p>Focus: How to "read" and write about images and sound in film.</p> <p>Bring computer- course survey</p>	If you didn't do it in class, complete the mid-term course survey (link in BB) for a quiz grade!	 <p data-bbox="1856 2384 2118 2513">Unit 3: Vampires</p>
M Oct 15	SCREENING: Nosferatu	Add to discussion thread on Blackboard. Be ready to discuss Nosferatu	
W Oct 17	<p>Discuss Nosferatu</p> <p>Focus: German expressionism, set design, sound, the image of the vampire.</p> <p>Group #5's scene analysis presentation.</p>	Write a 3-2-1 micro-film review of Nosferatu on BB.	

DATE	In Class	Due for Next Class	Notes
M Oct 22	SCREENING: A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night	Add to discussion thread on Blackboard. Be ready to discuss A Girl Walks...	
W Oct 24	Discuss A Girl Walks... Focus: Why B&W?, the "final girl," monstrous-feminine, the image of the vampire Group #6's scene analysis presentation.	You choose: Either (1) Interpret one of the film's images provided on BB. or (2) Write a 3-2-1 micro-film review of A Girl Walks... on BB.	
M Oct 29	SCREENING: What We Do In The Shadows	Add to discussion thread on Blackboard. Be ready to discuss What We Do...	
W Oct 31 	Discuss What We Do... Focus: What is the horror comedy genre? How do you make a vampire (or any monster) funny?; The documentary. Group #7's scene analysis presentation.	Horror/Comedy reading on BB. Respond to reflection question on BB. 	
M Nov 5	SCREENING: Pan's Labyrinth	Add to discussion thread on Blackboard. Be ready to discuss Pan's Labyrinth.	
W Nov 7	Discuss Pan's Labyrinth Focus: War and monsters, color choice; What genre is this film? Can monster films be therapeutic? Group #8's scene analysis presentation.	Pan's Labyrinth reading on BB. Respond to reflection question on BB.	
M Nov 12	SCREENING: The Host	Add to discussion thread on Blackboard. Be ready to discuss The Host.	

DATE	In Class	Due for Next Class	Notes
W Nov 14	Discuss The Host Focus: Politics and monsters, Ecohorror Group #9's scene analysis presentation.	You choose: Either (1) Interpret one of the film's images provided on BB. or (2) Write a 3-2-1 micro-film review of The Host on BB.	
M Nov 19	Introduce and prepare to write the final paper. -Thesis writing activity -Reminder of secondary sources -Writing/outlining/monster activity	On BB, submit your thesis statement, outline and the film(s) you plan to write about. Begin to work on your final paper!	
W Nov 21 	No class: Thanksgiving break!		
M Nov 26	SCREENING: District 9	Add to discussion thread on Blackboard. Be ready to discuss District 9.	
W Nov 28	Discuss District 9 Focus: Racism and monsters, dehumanization Group #10's scene analysis presentation.	Work on your final paper.	
M Dec 3	What have we learned about monstrosity? Are monsters progressive or regressive political tools? Different monster theories; Monsters from around the world; Group activity with short film or music video.	Finish your rough draft and print out three copies to bring to class.	

DATE	In Class	Due for Next Class	Notes
W Dec 5	Peer Review workshop. Make sure you bring in three copies of your rough draft!	Submit your final draft to BB by midnight on December 10th.	
M Dec 10	<p>Final class! Final course survey- bring a computer!</p> <p>Conclusions: How can we define our current era of monster/horror films? Why are monsters worth studying? Which monster(s) do we think best encapsulates our present anxieties as a nation? How can we use the skills and concepts we learned in this class in other courses and beyond?</p>	Submit your final draft to BB by midnight on December 10th.	