Course Description
This course is dedicated to Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818) and its cultural repercussions, particularly as charted by the numerous adaptations of the book in film. The story of an ambitious scientist who, like God himself, creates life, but then fails to take responsibility for his creation, stands as a landmark in the tradition of Gothic fiction and is seen by many scholars as the first modern science fiction novel. The idea of the “mad scientist” and the human inclination to hubris, inspired by *Frankenstein* and his transgressive experiment, has become a pivotal motif in fantastic literature and film. As an imaginative (Romantic) response to the darker sides of enlightenment rationality, *Frankenstein* features ideas that are still relevant in our contemporary moment, namely the inherent potential dangers represented by human accomplishments in technology and the natural sciences as well as the need to conduct scientific research and experiments with due respect to ethical values. Seen from another perspective, the novel also presents the story of *Frankenstein*’s creature (the “monster”) as a *Bildungsroman*: the existential drama of a sentient being left alone in a hostile world, a world deserted by God or any source of spiritual guidance. As well as bringing together and commenting upon a range of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment discourses, *Frankenstein* subsequently became the medium through which general cultural and social anxieties were expressed. In this course we examine not only the story and its legacy, but the way in which the generation of a powerful cultural myth can become the container and vehicle for highly diverse anxieties and preoccupations across time.


Requirements
Basic knowledge of film history, film theory and film analysis.
Attendance is mandatory for all seminars and film screenings. Students are expected to come to seminars and film screenings punctually and prepared, to participate actively in the class discussions and to do all the course assignments on time.
* Please, do not use cell phones, smart phones or similar electronic devices during seminars and screenings!

Academic Integrity
Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the
expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

**Attendance**
Attendance is mandatory for all seminars and film screenings. Absences will significantly affect the grade for the course.

Absences are registered in all classes, and lateness is registered as absence. Students should notify the instructor if they are unable to attend class.

Please see the Student Handbook for college policies on absences due to serious illness or other important cause.

**Assessment / Writing Assignments**
Two screening reports (1000 words each) in the first half of the semester (week 3; deadline: Wednesday, Sep 19, 10.45 – and week 7; deadline: Wednesday, Oct 17, 10.45), short in-class writing assignments and presentations, and a final essay (3000-3500 words), due in week 15 (Deadline for final essay: Monday, Dec 17, midnight). The topic of this final essay will be a film analysis/interpretation, based on one of the films screened or discussed throughout the semester.

**Policy on Late Submission of Papers**
All assignments and written work must be submitted electronically and on time. Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

**Grade Breakdown**
- Participation: 33.3 %
- Screening reports: 33.3 %
- Final essay: 33.4 %

If one of these components is graded F, the final course grade cannot be higher than C-. If two components are graded F, the final grade will be F (i.e. the whole class will be failed).

**Schedule**

**Week 1**
Introduction: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Monsters and “Mad Scientists” in popular culture

No Class on Wednesday, September 5, 2018!

**Week 2**
Enlightenment and its Dark Side
Romanticism and Gothic Horror

*Gothic* (1986, Ken Russell)

**Week 3**
Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818)
Aspects and Interpretations (1)
“In the name of God, now I know what it feels like to be God!” – Novel into Film: *Frankenstein* (1931, James Whale)

**Week 4**
Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818)
Aspects and Interpretations (2)

The story continues ...
*The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935, James Whale)

**Week 5**
Hammer Horror:
*The Curse of Frankenstein* (1957, Terence Fisher)

No class on Wednesday, October 3, 2018 (Public Holiday!)

**Week 6**
Who’s the monster?
*The Revenge of Frankenstein* (1958, Terence Fisher)

**Week 7**
Variations to Creation and Madness:
*Frankenstein Created Woman* (1967, Terence Fisher)
*Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* (1969, Terence Fisher)

**Week 8**
“I am a scientist. I cannot sin.” – Mad Scientists
*The Horror of Frankenstein* (1970, Jimmy Sangster)
*Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* (1974, Terence Fisher)
*Frankenstein Unbound* (1990, Roger Corman)
*Metropolis* (1927, Fritz Lang)
*The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1977, Don Taylor)
*Re-Animator* (1985, Stuart Gordon)

**Fall Break: Oct 29 – Nov 2, 2018**

**Week 9**
Body Genres:
*Flesh for Frankenstein / Andy Warhol’s Frankenstein* (1973, Paul Morrissey, Antonio Margheriti)

**Week 10**
Comedy & Childhood Memories:
*Young Frankenstein* (1974, Mel Brooks)
*The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975, Jim Sharman)
*The Spirit of the Beehive* (El espiritu de la colmena, 1974, von Victor Erice)

**Week 11**
A Touch of Shakespeare:
*Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein* (1994, Kenneth Branagh)

**Week 12**
Modern Creations: Monsters, Robots and A.I.

*Ex Machina* (2014, Alex Garland)

**Week 13**

“There is no such thing as *Frankenstein*, there are only *Frankensteins* …” – New Perspectives (1): *Frankenstein* (2015, Bernard Rose)

**Week 14**

“There is no such thing as *Frankenstein*, there are only *Frankensteins* …” – New Perspectives (2): *Victor Frankenstein* (2015, Paul McGuigan)

**Week 15**: Completion Week

**Essay Deadlines**

Deadline for screening report 1 (1000 words): week 3, Wednesday, Sep 19, 10.45
Deadline for screening report 2 (1000 words): week 7, Wednesday, Oct 17, 10.45
Deadline for final essay (3000-3500 words): week 15, Monday, Dec 17, midnight

**Literature**

We use the *Frankenstein* text of the 1818 first edition. If you purchase the book, pick this edition:


Literature:


Sanders, Steven M. (ed.). The Philosophy of Science Fiction Film. Lexington: The University of Kentucky, 2008.


See also the Google Classroom resources for this class.