

LLC SYLLABUS
FRANKENSTEIN AT 200: THE MONSTER AS THE MIRROR OF HUMANITY

When: Tuesdays, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m., September 18, 2018 – November 20, 2018

Where: Temple Beth-El

Coordinators: Lois and Bob Kemp
lakemp@gmail.com, H: (401) 247-2773, C: (401) 864-8331
wrkemp@cox.net, H: (401) 247-2773, C: (401) 644-3232

Course Description: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is 200 years old this year. This story has been endlessly retold and has inspired legions of writers, artists, scholars, and theatrical producers. In the past two years alone, new books have been published inquiring into the life of its nineteen-year-old author, investigating the science behind the story, annotating the work for scientists and engineers, and considering how the monster has become a cultural icon. In this course we will use a beautiful new annotation as well as other secondary works to explore some of the themes presented by *Frankenstein*, including myth, science fiction, scientific ethics, tragedy, morality, and acquisition of language, as well as the influence of the story on literature, art, the movies, and popular culture.

Format: Participants will read the text and lead a discussion of any topic or theme that resonates with them. Participants are encouraged to use supplementary materials and media they feel will bring additional life to their selected theme. The first four weeks of the course will be devoted to an in depth study of the 1818 text. We will spend the remainder of the course discussing themes presented by the work and its influence on popular culture. In every case, we will offer alternative discussion topics to allow participants flexibility to choose topics of greatest interest to them.

Resources/Expenses: Text: *The New Annotated Frankenstein*, edited with a foreword and notes by Leslie S. Klinger, New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017. *PLEASE NOTE:* It is important that we have a common version to facilitate discussion. The book is available from Amazon.com for about \$24 and from other booksellers at varying prices.

Guidelines for Presentations: Think about your schedule, as well as your interests, when selecting a topic. You are welcome to present by yourself or in a team of two. We hope that we have offered enough flexibility so that all of the time slots in the course calendar will be covered. Your presentation (whether individual or team) should be between 30-40 minutes in length in order to allow time for discussion. There are many different formats you may use for your presentation. If you have chosen to lead a class discussion on an aspect of the text, please prepare discussion questions for distribution to the class the week before you are scheduled to lead the discussion. Please send your questions to one of the coordinators, and we will distribute them to the class. If you also would like to present supplementary materials on the day of the discussion, that, of course, will be most welcome. If you have chosen a topic for which some other form of advance preparation by the class would be helpful, please either provide the class with a copy of the material you would like them to review or a citation to where they can find it online. We have tried to list more topics and ideas for discussion in the Course Calendar than we can cover in 10 weeks. In addition, if you have an idea for a presentation that we haven't suggested in the Course

Calendar, please let us know so we can find the most appropriate place to schedule it. Please select your topic and week early to help us with our planning and so that we can make any necessary adjustments in the sequence of presentations and discussions. Please email us as soon as you know what you want to do.

COURSE CALENDAR

Key: "a." and "b." indicate the first and second hour.

1. WEEK ONE – SEPTEMBER 18

- a. Class introductions, Temple Beth-El Rules, begin discussion of introductory articles
- b. Discussion of introductory articles (continued); *Frankenstein*: Foreword, pp. xix-xxxi (the historical world of Mary Shelley); review list of resources and possible topics for presentations or discussions

2. WEEK TWO – SEPTEMBER 25

- a. *Frankenstein*: Foreword, pp. xxxi-lxxix (Life of Mary Shelley, The Genesis of *Frankenstein*, Contemporary Reception, The Legacy of *Frankenstein*, A Note on the text); *Frankenstein*: Letters of Robert Walton, pp. 1-34
- b. Choice of presentation/discussion topics (If more than one class members is interested in the same topic, small group meeting to allocate responsibility, exchange contact information); fill in the class calendar

NOTE: For weeks 5 through 10, feel free to choose any of the topics below, any of the other topics suggested by the attached list of Resources for Frankenstein at 200, or any other similar theme that is of interest to you. There are many ways of looking at some of the general topics. For example, numerous branches of science have struggled with the moral implications of invention and innovation, and the discussion about one of these fields may be of greater interest to you. And, of course, the cinematic approaches to the Frankenstein story will never be exhausted! If any of the topics is of interest to multiple participants, that is perfectly O.K. We will work with you to help you define your approaches so that they don't overlap too much. The schedule itself is flexible and designing it to accommodate everyone's interests will be part of our collaborative work on this course.

If you would prefer to lead the discussion in one of the hours of Week Three or Week Four, the coordinators will welcome that!

3. WEEK THREE – OCTOBER 2

- a. *Frankenstein*: Victor Frankenstein's narrative, Volume I, Chapters I - VII, pp. 35-120; Volume II, Chapters I and II, pp. 121-138
- b. *Frankenstein*: The creature's narrative, Volume II, Chapters III-V, pp. 139-160; the creature tells the DeLaceys' story, Volume II, Chapter VI, pp. 161-166; innocence lost, Volume II, Chapters VII and VIII, pp. 167-175; creature's despair, embitterment, quest for his creator, malignity, demand, Volume II, Chapter VIII, pp. 175-184

4. WEEK FOUR – OCTOBER 9

- a. *Frankenstein*: Victor Frankenstein's narrative resumes, homecoming, Volume II, Chapter IX, pp. 185-190; travels with Clerval, avoidance, Volume III, Chapters I and II, pp. 191-212; decision, confrontation, consequences, threat, Volume III, Chapter III, pp. 213-222; more consequences, Volume III, Chapters IV-VII, first part, pp. 223-263

- b. *Frankenstein*: Robert Walton’s epistolary narrative resumes and the story is concluded, Volume III, Chapter VII, second part, pp. 262-277

5. WEEK FIVE – OCTOBER 16

- a. Frankenstein and Science
- b. Frankenstein, Science, and Scientific Ethics

6. WEEK SIX – OCTOBER 23

- a. Frankenstein and the acquisition of language
- b. Frankenstein and development of personality

7. WEEK SEVEN – OCTOBER 30

- a. Frankenstein and geography
- b. Frankenstein and the Creature Encounter One Another – Dramatic Reading

8. WEEK EIGHT – OCTOBER 6

- a. Literature inspired by Frankenstein (H. P. Lovecraft and Ahmed Saadawi)
- b. Literature inspired by Frankenstein (“Presumption; or, the Fate of Frankenstein,” an 1823 play by Richard Brinsley Peake)

9. WEEK NINE – NOVEMBER 13

- a. Music and Dance inspired by Frankenstein (Liam Scarlett/Lowell Liebermann Frankenstein ballet)
- b. Mary Shelley and her parents (especially her mother)

10. WEEK TEN – NOVEMBER 20

- a. Frankenstein at the Movies
- b. End of Session Party

Supplementary Materials: Some of the additional source materials we discovered in preparing for this course include the items listed on the separate document, *RESOURCES FOR FRANKENSTEIN AT 200*. We hope that referring to this document will give you an idea for the topic you would like to explore with the class and a head start for researching it. Please feel free to recommend any other relevant topic that is of interest to you and will be of interest to the class.

LLC Policies-in-brief: (Please see the *LLC Guide to Collaborative Learning* for detailed information regarding these items.)

- **Food:** Food is NOT allowed in the classrooms. Beverages are allowed but must be covered. Food is permitted in the break room but must NOT include pork, shellfish, or meat mixed with dairy.
- **Parking:** Do NOT park in any assigned spaces. Vehicles parked in assigned spaces will be towed at owner’s expense.
- **Cancellations:** All information about class cancellations for any reason (including weather) will be communicated to the class by the coordinator through email. Please do NOT call the Temple Office.
- **Technology:** The TV/computer setup in each room accepts flash drives and provides Internet access. Individual laptops may NOT be connected to these setups. *Only the class coordinator or a trained designee* should set up the TV/computer at the beginning of class and break it down at the end of class. If you have not been trained, do not set up, change or tinker with the classroom technology.