The Grotesque:
Modern contemporary art, film, TV, and literature embrace the bizarre in a way never before seen. Many might term what they see and read as “grotesque”—used negatively to mean that which is strange, unsightly, obscene, and in some cases, even funny.

The grotesque as a scholarly study, however, is something different. It’s not altogether different, mind you, for certainly the grotesque always includes elements of the bizarre. Yet many authors and artists have used the grotesque—this elusive intersection of humor and horror—to question the strongest rhetoric that holds our society together. We will look at the persuasive qualities of the grotesque and come to a fuller understanding of how this aesthetic has become more rhetorically complex over time. In general, the grotesque addresses the paradoxes, hypocrisies, and binaries seen in our post-modern society. By examining the rhetorical aspects of the grotesque, students will come to a deeper understanding of how it affects their civic, academic, and personal lives.

Writing Process and Peer Reviews: Writing is an ongoing dialogue between writer and the reader. As such, students will write multiple drafts throughout the semester. This includes crafting an evolving thesis that truly allows exploration of an issue and reworking the thesis as new claims and evidence are discovered. Students are also part of a writing community, and as such, much of the participation grade will be based on student interaction within the peer review groups. As an integral component in helping one’s classmates become better writers through the workshop process, students will be asked to provide constructive, yet honest, feedback. Students will also be expected to take the comments of their peers very seriously, and to implement their suggestions in each progressive draft.

Conventions and Effective Application: This is fundamentally a writing course focused around the rhetoric of the grotesque. Students will be evaluated for their comprehension of, and ability to engage with, the creative and theoretical material covered. We will review the fundamental rules of writing, including sentence structure, use of active voice, vibrant imagery, and discovery of your own writer’s voice. Writing is a dialogue, not a monologue, not a lecture. Students will extend writing practice to special rhetorical situations even as they make their work accessible to secondary audiences in other disciplines.

Content Knowledge: Students will demonstrate comprehension of the grotesque’s place in society by composing pieces for specific audiences and purposes and adapting content and style around this specialized discourse. Students also will continuously reflect on and synthesize their knowledge about rhetoric and the grotesque.
**Availability:** I try to be as available as possible to address any questions or concerns about course assignments. However, in order to give all students equal time, I am only able to look at extra drafts during my office hours. I also encourage you to visit the Writing Center (located in the Norlin Commons, room E111). This is a valuable resource that provides one-on-one writing consultations.

**Attendance Policy:** Because of the workshop-seminar format of the course, your attendance and active participation are essential. You can miss up to three class meetings without it affecting your participation grade. There are no distinctions between “excused” and “unexcused” absences—if you’re not here, you can’t participate. No matter the reason, for each absence beyond those three, your participation grade will drop by 10%.

* If you miss more than 8 classes, you will receive an F in the course

** If you are unable to attend class on a workshop day, you must still submit your paper on CULearn and read and comment on your group members’ drafts

**Tardiness:** Occasional (one or two) instances of minor lateness are understandable and will not be penalized. But repeated or extreme tardiness (more than ten minutes) will result in a lowered participation grade. The deduction for repeated or extreme tardiness will be 5% for each instance. If you have a medical reason for being late, proper documentation can excuse an extreme tardiness.

**Technology:** NO use of cell phones in class. If your cell phone is out, you will receive a 10% deduction off of your final participation grade. Laptops and tablets may be used, but if you are on any website (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) that is not appropriate to the course, you will receive a 10% deduction off your final participation grade.

**Late Paper Policy:** Rough drafts absolutely must be turned in on time, as your paper will not be workshopped if your peers haven’t read it. Late papers will affect your grade as follows:

Smaller writing assignments (paper proposals, outlines, summaries of readings, etc.): A late assignment will result in a 10% deduction for every day the assignment is late.

Major assignments (rhetorical analysis, critical response, annotated bibliography, and research paper): A late paper will result in a 3.3% reduction for every day the paper is late.

**Extensions:** You may request, if needed, one extension during the semester. This must be requested at least 24 hours in advance of the due date. This extension may only be used for a FINAL paper.

**Participation:** A good portion of your grade is based on your contribution to class discussions and workshops. This also means coming to class prepared. Many of the assignments will ask you to answer specific questions about a story or article—I strongly advise writing these questions out on a piece of paper and bringing your answers with you to class.
Conferences: During the course of the semester, we will meet for two individual 10-minute conferences to discuss your writing. You will schedule the first conferences at a time of your choosing. The second conference will be during your final paper. I sincerely want to know how I can best help you as a writer, how I can help you achieve what is most important to you. You can help me be a better reader of your work if you prepare questions and concerns about a piece of writing ahead of our conference.

Required Texts/Materials

1. Franz Kafka *Metamorphosis*
2. Max Brooks, *World War Z*
3. Justin D. Edwards and Rune Graulund *Grotesque*
4. Additional reading assignments. These will typically be posted to Desire2Learn
5. Copies of your work when needed for class discussion
6. Word or Word-compatible software

Strongly Suggested
MLA Handbook, 7th edition

Writing Assignments
You will be asked to complete informal in-class writings, formal essays, and a research or creative project.

- **Response Papers** (2–3 pages, double spaced). For the units on Grotesque and Power, Uncanny and Carnivalesque, and Monstrous and Grotesque Bodies, you will write a response paper on a reading or film of your choosing. The paper will look at a particular element discussed in class and further the analysis of that element.

- **Comparative Essay** (4–5 pages, double spaced). You will choose a fairy tale and trace its progression, looking at versions that include aspects of the grotesque and versions that have been sanitized or Disney-fied. You will address how the differences affect the tale.

- **Final project.** You may choose between a research essay and a creative piece.

  For the creative piece, you will write a story, shoot a short film, create a photographic essay, etc. that uses elements of the grotesque. You will research information about the element(s) you plan to include (e.g., the grotesque body, the carnivalesque, etc.) and then write a short 2–3 page paper on how you incorporated these elements and the rhetorical choices you made in doing so.

  For the research paper, you will explore an aspect of the grotesque as it’s represented in one or more of the works we’ve addressed or as it’s represented in a work we haven’t. The paper will be 6–7 pages.
Grades
Assignments will count as follows:
- Response Papers: 5% each (total of 15%)
- Comparative Paper: 25%
- Research or Creative Project: 25%
- Final Project Presentation: 5%
- All other assignments (outlines, summaries, etc.): 15%
- Participation, including attendance and workshops: 15%

Grading Scale

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
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<td>94–100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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“**A**” work is not only thought provoking and structurally polished but also completed with a high level of critical independence, fresh thinking, logical organization, and excellent mechanics and style.

“**B**” work is well above average; it explores difficult questions in a way that is creative, critical, and thought provoking. It is critically and organizationally sound, stylistically competent, and contains few errors.

“**C**” work is adequate and meets minimum requirements. The work is functional at a college level and all aspects of the assignment have been addressed. However, it may lack sufficient critical inquiry, organizational clarity, and control over mechanics and style.

“**D**” work is substandard at the college level. It is usually completed in haste and reflects little thought or attention to detail. A “**D**” indicates that major portions of the assignment are completed poorly.

“**F**” work is incomplete or inadequate. An “**F**” will also be given if plagiarism has occurred.

Course Schedule

*Most assignments are to be submitted to D2L. However, some assignments will be brought to class in hard copy form while others will be submitted via e-mail. The schedule below indicates the method of submission for each assignment. Please check it before turning your homework in.*

**We will be meeting in a computer lab on many days to conduct in-class work. On such days, you will need to have any notes, research, and drafts available for use during the class period. Failure to come equipped for such classes will result in a lowered participation grade. And you’ll miss out on valuable research time!*
Jan 14
—Introduction to the course

Assignment—Due Jan 16
1. Read “History of the Grotesque,” available on D2L, and Chapter 1 of Grotesque
2. Read “How to do a Close Reading,” available on D2L

Unit 1: Grotesque and Power

Jan 16
—History of the grotesque: art, literature, and society
—Discussion of close reading

Assignment—Due Jan 22
1. Read Grotesque Chapter 2, “Michel Foucault: Ab/normal Grotesque”
2. Read “In the Penal Colony” and answer the reading questions. Both are available in course content on D2L

Jan 21
—Discussion of “Penal Colony”
—Policing the abnormal: visibility

Assignment—Due Jan 23
1. Read “Discipline and Punish” and “The Yellow Wallpaper,” both available on D2L

Jan 23
—Discussion of “Yellow Wallpaper”

Assignment—Due Jan 28
1. Read Metamorphosis and answer the reading questions

Jan 28
—Discussion of Metamorphosis

Assignment—Due Jan 30
1. Read Grotesque Chapter 9, “Grotesque States,” “Erupting States,” and “Violated States”
2. Read “History of Apartheid,” “The Other,” and “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” available on D2L

Jan 30
—The other
—Apartheid and Imperialism

Assignment—Due Feb 4
1. Watch District 9 and answer the viewing questions (I will be holding two screenings of the film. You will want to either attend one of the screenings or find access to the film elsewhere.)
Feb 4
—District 9 discussion

**Assignment—Due Feb 6**
1. Read “Writing Response Papers”
2. Choose the work you’d like to write your response paper on and brainstorm topics to write about. **Bring a list of possible topics to class on Thursday**

Feb 6
—Writing response papers
—Writing conventions

**Assignment—Due Feb 11**
1. Complete your first response paper and **post it to the dropbox on D2L by class time**

Unit 2: Fairy Tales

Feb 11
—“The Grotesque and Fairy Tales”; “The Girl with No Hands”

**Assignment—Due Feb 13**
1. Read “Faithful Johannes” and “The Twelve Brothers” and answer the reading questions, all available on D2L

Feb 13
—Discussion of “Faithful Johannes” and “Twelve Brothers”
—The progression of fairy tales: how they’ve changed: the example of “Little Red Riding Hood”

**Assignment—Due Feb 18**

Feb 18
—Discussion of Cinderella stories

Feb 20
—Writing a comparative paper

**Assignment—Due Feb 25**
1. Decide on a fairy tale you’d like to research. The fairy tale must have at least one grotesque and one sanitized version (or at least a considerably less grotesque one.) (On course reserve are three books, Philip Pullman’s translation of the Grimm tales, *My Mother She Killed Me*, and Carter’s *Bloody Chamber*; you might use these to look for original and retold versions). **E-mail me your choice**
Feb 25
***We will be meeting in the computer lab, Duane G116***
—Outlining
—In-class work on papers
  **Assignment—Due Feb 27**
  1. Complete an outline of your paper. **Post it to the Dropbox on D2L and bring a paper copy to class**

Feb 27
—Workshop of outlines
—Moving from outlines to drafts
  **Assignment—Due Mar 4**
  1. Complete the Comparative Paper rough draft. **Post a copy to the dropbox on D2L AND bring two paper copies to class**

Mar 4
—Small-group workshops of drafts
—Revising papers
  **Assignment—Due Mar 6**
  1. Read Freud’s “The Uncanny” and “The Sandman”

**Unit 3 The Uncanny and the Carnivalesque**

Mar 6
—Discussion of the uncanny and “The Sandman”
  **Assignment—Due Mar 11**
  1. Complete the Comparative Essay final draft. **Post it to the dropbox on D2L by class time**

Mar 11
—**Buffy** “The Puppet Show”
  **Assignment—Due Mar 13**
  1. Read “Carnivalesque” and “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings”

Mar 13
—Discussion of “Very Old Man”
  **Assignment—Due Mar 18**
  1. Watch *Willy Wonka* and answer the reading questions (I will be holding two screenings over the weekend)

Mar 18
—Discussion of *Willy Wonka*
  **Assignment**
  1. Read Edwards and Graulund, “Monstrous and Grotesque”—**Due Mar 20**
2. Complete the response paper for this unit and post it to the dropbox on D2L—
   Due Friday Mar 21

Unit 4: Monsters and the Grotesque Body

Mar 20
—Introduction to monsters and the grotesque body
   Assignment—Due Tuesday, Apr 1
   1. Watch *Freaks* and answer the viewing questions, available on D2L

Enjoy your spring break

Apr 1
—Discussion of *Freaks*
   Assignment—Due Apr 3
   1. Read WWZ through “Warnings” (to p. 45) and answer the reading questions, available on D2L

Apr 3
—Discussion of WWZ
   Assignment—Due Apr 8
   1. Read WWZ through “Turning the Tide” (to p. 137) and answer the reading questions, available on D2L

Apr 8
—Discussion of WWZ
   Assignment—Due Apr 10
   1. Read WWZ “Home Front USA” and answer the reading questions, available on D2L

Apr 10
—Discussion of WWZ
   Assignment—Due Apr 15
   1. Finish WWZ

Apr 15
—Discussion of WWZ
   Assignment—Due Apr 17
   1. Decide what you would like to do for your final project and e-mail me your choice
   2. Read “Evaluating Sources” and “Argumentation”

Apr 17
Introduction to research paper: performing research and evaluating sources

Assignment—Due Apr 22
1. Perform research on your topic. Find three of your five sources and annotate them by including the following:
   a. Write a brief summary (four or five sentences) that explains the main arguments and evidence used.
   b. Assess the source by explaining whether it’s valid (is it biased or objective, is the information reliable, etc.).
   c. Explain how this source will be of use to you

Apr 22
***We will be meeting in the computer lab, Duane G116***

—In-class work

Assignment—Due Apr 24
1. Create an outline or storyboard for your paper. Post it to D2L and bring a paper copy to class

Apr 24
—Workshop of outlines
—Conventions, drafting, and revisions

Assignment—Due Apr 29
1. Come up with one or two questions to ask during individual conferences

Apr 29
—Individual conferences; regular class will not be held

Assignment—Due May 1
1. Complete your final project rough draft. Post a copy to the dropbox and bring two copies to class

May 1
—Workshop of drafts
—Class reflection

Your final papers are due May 8th at midnight on D2L.

Enjoy your summers!

University Policies

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined as the use of another’s ideas or words without appropriate
acknowledgment. Examples of plagiarism include failing to use quotation marks when directly quoting from a source; failing to document distinctive ideas from a source; fabricating or inventing a source; turning in someone else’s work as your own; and copying information from electronic sources. In this course, if you hand in a piece of writing that is plagiarized in full or in part, you will receive a failing grade on that assignment and the F will be factored into your final course grade.

The Honor Code: All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/.

Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

Religious Observances: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. In this class, I ask that you contact me at least one week ahead of the date(s) that you will be absent so that we can discuss any assignments/class material that you will miss.
**Classroom Behavior:** Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

**Discrimination and Harassment:** The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh.