

ENG 212W-000: READINGS IN LITERATURE AND POPULAR CULTURE

MORAL PANICS

in the United States:

LITERATURE, MEDIA, AND FILM

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MWF 8:00am-8:50am

Office Hours: Callaway N-207A; W 1:00pm-2:00pm or by appointment

Course Description

Belief in “threats to the very fabric of society” is everywhere in popular culture. Many TV commercials depict living rooms as breeding grounds for hordes of animated bacteria that surround unsuspecting infants. Advertisements with captions such as “See Something, Say Something” promote distrust of strangers as well as one’s friends and neighbors. Do we really now live in a world of constant risk, on the verge of social and literal collapse?

While potential threats to ourselves and to others are very real, where do we draw the line between ensuring safety and succumbing to moral panic that leads to paranoia and unfair persecution of certain peoples? This is one of the questions we will address in this class. Through an exploration of various texts, films, and media, we will encounter tropes from the cultural imagination of the United States that have caused, and continue to cause, dread and anxiety: “the mentally ill,” “the dysfunctional family,” “children at risk,” “oddballs and outcasts,” “contagion and disease,” and “technophobia.”

Objectives

This course is specifically designed to be interdisciplinary in scope and content. No familiarity with any of the texts, films, videos, concepts, or terminology used is assumed. Rather, the main goal of this class is to bring a group of diverse academic interests together in a supportive environment so that we may create new knowledge based on shared experiences. That said, by the end of the semester, you should be able to do the following with ease and confidence: understand the academic and popular definition of “moral panic”; identify salient connections between popular culture and literary and media production; independently and collectively perform college-level research using material and digital archives; compose well-organized, critically astute essays written in an academic style; and demonstrate all of the above through class participation, written work, and oral debate.

Required Texts*

- Robert Bloch. *Psycho*
- Pat Cadigan. *Synners*
- Elias Canetti. *Crowds and Power*
- Jack Finney. *The Body Snatchers*
- Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yahuda. *Moral Panics, Second Edition*. ISBN: 1405189339; 978-1405189330
- Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers. *A Pocket Style Manual, Sixth Edition*. ISBN: 0312542542; 978-0312542542
- Stephen King. *The Mist*
- Gustave Le Bon. *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*. ISBN: 0486419568; 978-0486419565
- Ira Levin. *Rosemary's Baby*
- Clark McPhail. *The Myth of the Madding Crowd*. ISBN: 0202303758; 978-0202303758
- Arthur Miller. *The Crucible*. ISBN: 0142437336; 9780142437339

* A text without an ISBN number indicates that any edition is acceptable for class use.

*The instructor will provide all necessary supplementary texts.

Resources

Emory Student Health Services is located at 1525 Clifton Road (1st & 2nd floors) and provides outpatient medical care for enrolled Emory students with a valid Emory ID card. Spouses, qualified Domestic Partners and unmarried children over 18 years of age are also eligible for primary medical care by appointment on a fee-for-service basis. For an appointment, call (404) 727-7551 or go to <http://studenthealth.emory.edu/>.

The Emory Counseling Center is located at 1462 Clifton Road, Suite 235, and provides free and confidential services for a variety of student needs. The staff understands that student life is a transitional period and can bring pressure and stress. They try to help students understand this period, find ways of coping with crises, and grow from their experiences. To schedule an appointment, call (404) 727-7450 or go to <http://studenthealth.emory.edu/cs/>.

Access, Disability Services and Resources: If you have a disability, a chronic illness, or personal issues and are in need of a classroom accommodation, please make an appointment with me to discuss this as soon as possible so that we can contact ADSR and discuss how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The ADSR is located at 110 Administration Building and can be reached at (404) 727-9877 (voice), (404) 712-2049 (TDD), or by visiting <http://www.ods.emory.edu>.

The Emory Writing Center offers 45-minute individual conferences to Emory College and Laney Graduate School students. Our discussion- and workshop-based approach enables writers of all levels to see their writing with fresh eyes and to practice a variety of strategies for writing,

revising, and editing. The EWC is a great place to bring any project—from traditional papers to websites—at any stage in your composing process. EWC tutors can talk with you about your purpose, organization, audience, design choices, or use of sources. They can also work with you on sentence-level concerns (including grammar and word choice), but they won't proofread for you. Instead, they'll discuss strategies and resources you can use to become a better editor of your own work.

The EWC is located in Callaway N-212. We encourage writers to schedule appointments in advance as we can take walk-ins on a limited basis only. We require hard copies of traditional paper drafts and encourage you to bring a laptop if you're working on a digital or multi-modal text. Please bring a copy of your assignment instructions, too. For more information about the EWC, or to make an appointment, visit <http://writingcenter.emory.edu/>.

*If you feel uncertain as to whether or not you might benefit from any of these services, please come to my private office hours or make an appointment with me for a specific time to meet in my office. I am here to help you succeed in this class and at Emory in any way I can.

Policies

Emory Honor Code

All students are expected to adhere to Emory College Honor Code. While it may seem unnecessary to insist on originality and on observing proper citation practices, please take a look at the Honor Code standards. If you have any questions, please see me. You may read the full version of the Emory Honor Code here:

http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html

E-Mail and Office Hours

I am available by e-mail M-F until 10:00pm. Any e-mails sent after that time will be answered the following day. E-Mails sent during the weekend should be marked "high importance" if they require my urgent attention. My office hours are on Wednesday from 1:00pm to 2:00pm in Callaway N-207A.

Attendance

You are granted three excused absences, no questions asked. More than a total of six absences, however, will lower your final grade by a half a letter. For instance, if you have an A grade, more than six absences will lower your grade to an A-. Similarly, you are granted three excused incidents of tardiness without penalty (Sometimes things just happen; believe me, I know!). However, any incident of lateness beyond three will result in a reduction of your participation grade by 1%. This may sound harsh, but excessive tardiness is disruptive and unfair to your more punctual peers. If you have a reasonable excuse for lateness, you are more than welcome to see me after class and explain your situation. Should emergencies or unforeseen problems arise regarding attendance, please contact me.

Late Work

Late assignments are considered on a case-by-case basis and can be turned in without penalty only under certain conditions, such as illness or unexpected emergencies. The definition of “emergency” is subject to my discretion. “I chose to do the work for another class instead of yours” does not qualify. “I didn’t check the syllabus” does not qualify. However, should you need an extension to complete an assignment, notify me in advance. *Any assignment turned in late by a student without notifying me in advance will receive a grade of “D”(51.0) on the assignment.* Please feel free to contact me if you have concerns about any assignments!

Technology

Personal computers are only for note taking and for going over assigned readings. Cell phones must be turned to vibrate. Texting, playing video games, and use of social networking sites during class time are disruptive, disrespectful to your peers, and will lower your participation grade significantly (1 point for each incident). You will receive a private e-mail notification from me for each incident, as well as an opportunity within one week of notification to come to my office hours and contest it. Should your reasoning not hold up (or you don’t appear within a week), the mark will stand; if you have a legitimate reason for being on Facebook or playing Halo during class time, the mark will be removed.

Grades

Average Score	Letter Grade	Average Score	Letter Grade
95 and above	A	78 to 81.99	C+
92 to 94.99	A-	75 to 77.99	C
88 to 91.99	B+	72 to 74.99	C-
85 to 87.99	B	68 to 69.99	D+
82 to 84.99	B-	51 to 67.99	D

Above is the grading scale for the class.* You will be graded on two film quizzes (10% total), class participation (attendance and daily preparation) (10%), eight response papers (20% total), three essays (35% total), and a group debate (25%).

* Any grade below “D” (51) constitutes a failing grade and will appear as an “F” (50 or below).

* You may have noticed that this grading system contains point spreads (for example, an “A-” ranges from 92.0 to 94.99). Since we all know that a point or two can mean the difference between an “A” or an “A-,” I will post your decimal grades on the course Blackboard site. At any time during the semester, you can log in and see your exact numerical grade. If you ever have a question or concern about your grade, I encourage you to see me during my office hours.

Assignments

Response Papers

The course is divided up into units, during which time we will focus on a particular example of moral panic. At the end of each unit, you will be asked to turn in a one-page response paper. Response papers are a great way for you to practice writing and they help me gauge where we are regarding collective understanding of the topics under discussion. What I would like for you to do when you write these papers is to use the moral panics we learn about as a springboard to think about moral panics that are of interest to you. For instance, at the end of our unit on “Neighbor Watching” you might want to write about your ideas regarding debates over privacy, or any number of things that come to mind. Response papers are informal, and require citations only when direct quotes are involved. In fact, what I’m really looking for are two things: first, what part of a text or film connects to your choice of topic; and second, what you think about it. My comments on these will be of a “devil’s advocate” nature, as a way of helping you get in the habit of looking at an issue from multiple perspectives. Don’t hesitate to ask me any questions before you turn in a response paper.

Research Papers

The three formal papers required for this class will go from short to longer lengths, and the critical requirements will advance in tandem with our critical skill advancement throughout the course. The breakdown is as follows:

Paper 1: 3 pages (10% of grade); Paper 2: 5 pages (15% of grade); Paper 3: 7 pages (20% of grade).

You will have an opportunity to turn in a paper draft before each paper is due. The draft does not have to be complete, nor is it graded. However, they are required, since they are a chance for you to have me go over your work and give you assistance before you turn in your finished paper.

For the research paper topics, you will need to write about a text or film from the perspective of your own major or, if you are undeclared, from your personal interest. For instance, if your major is Neurobiology, what issues do you notice in a particular text or film? Your secondary sources should also come from your chosen area. The *Pocket Style Guide* will help you with the appropriate citation practices. For example, if your major is Psychology, you would use APA style; if your major is Literature, you would use MLA; if your major is Chemistry, you would use CSE. Getting acquainted with different citation rules will serve you well throughout your academic and professional career.

No outside sources are required for the first paper. Paper 2 requires a minimum of 5 sources. Paper 3 requires a minimum of 10 sources. We will spend some time in class acquainting ourselves with the numerous resources for different majors you have at your disposal. Should you ever have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to see me during my office hours as many times as you like or that you feel is necessary.

* All written work must adhere to these general formatting specifications: typed on one side; double spaced; 12 point font using only Times New Roman; 1 inch margin on all sides; your last name in the upper right hand corner of all pages; page numbers appearing consecutively in the upper right hand corner of all pages; stapled in the upper left hand corner; and turned in to the instructor in paper copy. The Purdue University OWL website provides instructions and examples of basic format specifications and particulars (citations, bibliography, etc): <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

Any paper that fails to meet these requirements will receive a grade of "D" (51.0). When assignments are due they must be handed in to the instructor at the beginning of class. Should you decide to turn in a paper by e-mail due to time constraints or absence, you must still hand in a paper copy at the next class meeting. If you are unsure how to format your work to create a header for your name and page numbers, please see me privately. If it turns out that the number of students who do not know how to do this exceeds those that do, then we will take some time in class to go over it.

Final Project: Moral Panic Debate Teams

Early in the semester, we will split up into groups and vote on moral panics of interest. At the end of the semester, the teams will debate an issue, and the class will vote on the winners. Winners will be based on criteria such as participation, strength of argument, and depth of research. The minimum amount of sources needed is twelve. Each team must also turn in a bibliography of sources consulted, with each member's initials next to their contributions.

Notes

Pop quizzes may be given at the instructor's discretion and will be included in your class participation grade.

Depending on circumstances, some aspects of the syllabus may be subject to change.

Some of the material in this course may be of a graphic nature. If this is a problem for you at any time, please see me so we can make arrangements to ensure your success in completing the assignments.

Schedule

Week 1 "Let's Get Together": Thinking About Crowds

W. 1/15 Introductions

F. 1/17 Bion, selection from *Experiences in Groups*

Week 2 "Let's Get Together"

M. 1/20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. No class.

W. 1/22 Le Bon, *The Crowd*, "Introduction"

F. 1/24	Le Bon, <i>The Crowd</i> , Book I; McPhail, Chapter 1
Week 3	“Let’s Get Together”
M. 1/27	Stephen King, <i>The Mist</i> , Parts 1-3; Blumer, “Social Attitudes and Non-Symbolic Interaction” http://www.jstor.org/stable/2262360
W. 1/29	SNOW DAY
F. 1/31	King, <i>The Mist</i> , Parts 4-6; Le Bon, <i>The Crowd</i> , Book II, Chs. III and IV, Book III, Ch. I
Week 4	“Welcome to the Terrordome”: Theories of Moral Panic
M. 2/3	King, <i>The Mist</i> , Parts 7-11; Canetti, “The Survivor”
W. 2/5	Goode and Ben-Yehuda, “The Moral Panic: An Introduction” “Enter the Moral Panic”; Canetti, “The Crowd” pp. 1-47; Research Methods Overview
F. 2/7	Goode and Ben-Yehuda, “Three Theories of the Moral Panic”; Canetti, “The Crowd” pp. 48-92; Debate teams assigned; Response Paper 1 due
Week 5	“See Something, Say Something”: Neighbor Watching
M. 2/10	Arthur Miller, <i>The Crucible</i> , Act One; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, “The Renaissance Witch Craze”
W. 2/12	SNOW DAY
F. 2/14	<i>The Crucible</i> , Act Two and Act Three
Week 6	“See Something, Say Something”
M. 2/17	Miller, <i>The Crucible</i> , Act Four; McPhail, Ch. 2; explore the <i>Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project</i> , http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/home.html
W. 2/19	Film: <i>The Crucible</i> (1996)
F. 2/21	Film: <i>The Crucible</i> (1996); Response Paper 2 due
Week 7	“Wrong Side of the Tracks”: Oddballs and Outcasts
M. 2/24	Film: <i>The Crucible</i> (1996); Paper 1 draft due
W. 2/26	Quiz on <i>The Crucible</i> (1996); Goode and Ben-Yehuda, “Collective Behavior” Rod Serling, “The Monsters are Due on Maple Street” (we will also watch this in class)

F. 2/28 Canetti, "The Command"; Shirley Jackson, "The Lottery"; **Response Paper 3 due**

Week 8 "Still Ill": Mental Illness

M. 3/3 *Psycho*, Chs. 1-6; selection from *Science Blog*, "Mental Illness Stigma Entrenched in American Culture"; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, "Deviance, Morality, and Criminal Law"; **Guest Speaker from Active Minds at Emory; Paper 1 due**

W. 3/5 *Psycho*, Chs. 6-10; Wahl, "Murder and Mayhem"; McPhail, Ch. 3

F. 3/7 *Psycho*, Chs. 11-17; Foucault, selection from *Abnormal*; **Response Paper 4 due**

Week 9

SPRING BREAK

Week 10 "There Goes the Neighborhood": Dysfunctional Families

M. 3/17 Isaac Asimov, "Robbie"; Canetti, "The Pack"; Freud, Ch. X, "The Group and the Primal Horde"

W. 3/19 Attending a conference, NO CLASS. In the meantime, watch the film: *We're the Millers* (2013) (on reserve at the Music and Media Library)

F. 3/21 NO CLASS; watch *We're the Millers* (2013)

Week 11 "Stranger Danger": Children at Risk

M. 3/24 Quiz on *We're the Millers*; Ira Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, pages 1-70; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, "The Media Ignite and Embody the Moral Panic"; **Response Paper 5 due**

W. 3/26 Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, pages 71-144; De Young, "Another Look at Moral Panics: The Case of Satanic Day Care Centers"

F. 3/28 Levin, *Rosemary's Baby*, pages 145-218; Jenkins and Maier-Katkin, "Satanism: Myth and Reality in a Contemporary Moral Panic"; **Response Paper 6 due**

Week 12 "Plugged In": Technophobes and Technophiles

M. 3/31 Pat Cadigan, *Synners*, Chs. 1-7; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, "Social Movements"; **Paper 2 draft due**

W. 4/2 Cadigan, *Synners*, Chs. 8-15; McPhail, Ch. 5

F. 4/4 Cadigan, *Synners*, Chs. 16-22

Week 13 **“Plugged In”**

M. 4/7 Cadigan, *Synners*, Chs. 23-27; **Paper 2 due**

W. 4/9 Cadigan, *Synners*, Chs. 28-32

F. 4/11 Cadigan, *Synners*, Chs. 33-Epilogue; **Response Paper 7 due**

Week 14 **“Cooties”: Disease and Contagion**

M. 4/14 Jack Finney, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, Chapters 1-7; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, “Social Problems”

W. 4/16 Finney, *Body Snatchers*, Chapters 8-14; Canetti, “Transformation”

F. 4/18 Finney, *Body Snatchers*, Chapters 15-21; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, “The Moral Panic Meets Its Critics”; **Response Paper 8 due**

Week 15

M. 4/21 **Paper 3 draft due;** Debate Groups

W. 4/23 Debate Groups

F. 4/25 Debate Groups

Week 16

M. 4/28 Debate Groups; Last day of class

M. 5/5 **Paper 3 due**