University of Edinburgh  
School of Social & Political Science  
Social Anthropology  
2016-2017

The Anthropology of Monsters: demons, witches, cyborgs and other fabulous creatures

(SCAN10072)

Key Information

**Course Organiser**  
Dr Dimitri Tsintjilonis  
Email: D.Tsintjilonis@ed.ac.uk  
Room 5.30  
Chrystal MacMillan Building, George Square  
Guidance & Feedback Hours: Tuesdays, 13.00 – 15.00

**Location**  
Semester 2  
Tuesdays, 16.10 – 18.00  
Elliot Room, Minto House

**Course Secretary**  
Miss Lauren Ayre  
Email: Lauren.Ayre@ed.ac.uk  
Undergraduate Teaching Office, Ground Floor, Chrystal MacMillan Building

**Assessment deadlines**  
Short Essay: 12 noon Thursday 2nd March 2017  
Long Essay: 12 noon Thursday 6th April 2017

Aims and Objectives

This course is about monsters. It is about the way in which monstrous bodies mix and match realms that should be kept separate – nature/culture, human/animal, male/female, familiar/unfamiliar, material/immaterial and, above all, self/other. From African witches and the ghost of Burnt Woman in Australia to Freddy Krueger or ‘pharma’ animals and cyborgs, it brings together Western and non-Western monsters in order to explore some of the ways in which they have been portrayed and experienced in different ethnographic contexts as well as through time.
Table of Contents

Aims and Objectives ........................................................................................................................................... 1
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................................................. 2
Learning Outcomes ............................................................................................................................................... 3
Teaching ............................................................................................................................................................... 3
Assessment ........................................................................................................................................................... 3
Communications .................................................................................................................................................. 4
Lecture Summary .................................................................................................................................................. 5
Weekly Readings .................................................................................................................................................. 6
Appendix 1 – General Information .................................................................................................................. 12
Students with Disabilities .................................................................................................................................. 12
Learning Resources for Undergraduates ........................................................................................................ 12
Discussing Sensitive Topics ............................................................................................................................. 12
Guide to Using LEARN for Online Tutorial Sign-Up ..................................................................................... 13
External Examiner ................................................................................................................................................... 13
Appendix 2 - Course Work Submission and Penalties .................................................................................. 14
Penalties that can be applied to your work and how to avoid them ................................................................. 14
ELMA: Submission and Return of Coursework ............................................................................................... 14
Extensions: New policy-applicable for years 1 - 4 .......................................................................................... 15
Plagiarism Guidance for Students: Avoiding Plagiarism .............................................................................. 15
Data Protection Guidance for Students ........................................................................................................... 15
**Learning Outcomes**
On completion of this course, the student will be able to:
- Approach the notion of the 'monstrous' from a critical perspective.
- Exhibit a well-informed and critical understanding of cultural and political forces that contribute to the 'monsterization' of the Other.
- Review and assess the anthropological significance of various monsters.
- Gain a substantive knowledge of the role monsters play within culture.
- Develop independent research and oral presentation skills as well as demonstrate the ability to discuss anthropological theory in relation to contemporary social issues.

**Teaching**
The course will consist of a combination of lectures (including, perhaps, a few from guests), individual or group student presentations, and class discussions. Beyond the need to debate some of the central issues, the exact class format can be flexible (depending on student numbers and their interests). Students are encouraged to do their own bibliographical work and to follow up bibliographical references as appropriate. Apart from the main class on Tuesdays, there will be one tutorial every week (Thursday 10:00-10:50, 1.203, 7 Bristo Square OR Thursday 11:10-12:00, 2.301, 7 Bristo Square) – students can sign up for one of them on Learn.

Lectures will be held in conjunction with postgraduates on their course ‘The Anthropology of Monsters: demons, witches, cyborgs and other fabulous creatures’ (PGSP11460).

**Assessment**
Students will be assessed by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Word count limit</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Submission date</th>
<th>Return of feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td>End of semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Essay</td>
<td>1500 words max (excluding bibliography)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>02/03/17 (all coursework is due at 12 noon on the</td>
<td>23/03/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>date of submission)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Essay</td>
<td>3500 words max (excluding bibliography)</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>06/04/17 (all coursework is due at 12 noon on the</td>
<td>27/04/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>date of submission)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(i) A short essay (word-limit: 1500) due on **Thursday 2\textsuperscript{nd} March 2017**; this carries a weighting of 20% towards the final overall mark for the course.
(ii) A longer (word-limit: 3500) essay due on **Thursday 6\textsuperscript{th} April 2017**, this carries a weighting of 70%
towards the final overall mark for the course.

(iii) At the end of the semester, there will also be a mark for ‘tutorial participation’, this carries a weighting of 10% towards the final mark for the course.

Short Essay Topic
Using particular monsters as illustrations, explore and evaluate ONE of J. J. Cohen’s Theses.

Long Essay Topics
Topics will be handed out in Week 6.

Tutorial Participation
Tutorials will be structured through student presentations of one of the weekly lecture readings and/or brief explorations of particular monsters – we shall discuss the options and fix the programme in our first session (2nd week of the semester).

Assessment Criteria
The following are some of the criteria through which the essays will be marked. However, it is important to note that the overall mark is a result of a holistic assessment of the assignment as a whole.

- Does the essay address the question with sufficient focus?
- Does the essay show a grasp of the relevant concepts and knowledge?
- Does the essay demonstrate a logical and effective pattern of argument?
- Does the essay support an argument with relevant examples?
- Does the essay demonstrate reflexivity and critical thinking in relation to arguments and evidence?
- Is the essay written clearly and convincingly?
- Is the essay adequately presented in terms of: correct referencing and quoting; spelling, grammar and style; layout and visual presentation?

Tutorial participation will be assessed according to the following criteria:
- Attendance.
- Participation in discussion and evidence of having read the week’s readings.
- Quality of Contribution, including showing a level of critical thinking and understanding, as well as Collegial and productive responses to other people’s remarks.

Communications
You are strongly encouraged to use email for routine communication with lecturers. We shall also use email to communicate with you, e.g., to assign readings for the second hour of each class. All students are provided with email addresses on the university system, if you are not sure of your address, which is based on your matric number, check your EUCLID database entry using the Student Portal.

This is the ONLY email address we shall use to communicate with you. Please note that we will NOT use ‘private’ email addresses. It is therefore essential that you check your university email regularly, preferably each day.
## Lecture Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17.01.2017</td>
<td>Introduction: Anthropology of Monsters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24.01.2017</td>
<td>Inhuman Monsters: Witches, Minmin Lights and 'Cave Men'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>31.01.2017</td>
<td>Human Monsters: Strangers, Gods and Dragons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>07.02.2017</td>
<td>Post-Human Monsters: The Quest for Monstrosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14.02.2017</td>
<td>Monstrous Lives: Cyborgs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>20 – 24 February: Creative Learning Festival</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>28.02.2017</td>
<td>Monstrous Imitations: Cyber-bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>07.03.2017</td>
<td>Monstrous Deaths: Zombies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.03.2017</td>
<td>Monstrous Resurrections: (Plastinated) Corpses and Frozen Heads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>21.03.2017</td>
<td>Monstrous (Dis)appearances: The Quest for Monsters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>28.03.2017</td>
<td>Conclusion: Monstrous Anthropologies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Weekly Readings

Anthropology of monsters: demons, witches, cyborgs and other fabulous creatures

All readings can be found in the Main Library (the Reserve Section, The Short Loan Section and elsewhere) or on Learn. In fact, most of them can be accessed electronically. Of course, it goes without saying, the readings on this list are only my choices – you should feel free to develop your lists and discover your own ‘guiding threads’. Please, don’t be put off by the size of the reading list! This is to act as a resource if you wish to explore a particular area yourself. Required readings are indicated for each week, but try not to restrict your attention to just these. It is important to find your own ‘threads’ and follow that which is of interest to you. Of course, just like you, I reserve the right to be confused (!) and change some of the readings.

1. Introduction: Anthropology of Monsters
What are monsters and where can we find them? Starting from the idea that monsters are crucial in how we think about ourselves as well as others, this session explores some of the links between monstrosity and otherness in order to configure a particular anthropology of monsters – that is, an anthropology that seeks to think about monsters but also think with and through monsters as well as ‘be with’ them.

Required Reading

Recommended Reading
Scott, M. W. 2016 ‘To be Makiran is to see like Mr Parrot: the anthropology of wonder in Solomon Islands’. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.) 22: 474-495.

2. Inhuman Monsters: Witches, Minmin Lights and ‘Cave Men’
Focusing on the idea that monstrosity is historically and socially conditioned, we shall explore the idea that a monster’s body is always ‘pure culture’ – the embodiment, that is, of culturally specific fears, desires, and fantasies.

Required Reading
3. Human Monsters: Strangers, Gods and Dragons

From culture specific expressions of cannibalistic fantasies and incestuous desires to ‘universal’ fantasies and fears, we shall discuss the idea that monsters may be seen as tokens of a fracture within the human ‘psyche’ or as stemming from a universal substratum of human sociality associated with anything from evolution to human cognition.

Required Reading

Recommended Reading

4. Post-Human Monsters: The Quest for Monstrosity

Life in the late 20th and 21st centuries constructs monstrosity not just as a representational category that can be ‘read’ in the fashion we discussed in the previous two lectures, but also as an ontology – a way of being or, perhaps, a way of becoming. Within this ontology, more often than not, monstrosity is embraced and celebrated. In this and the following four sessions, we’ll explore the most important dimensions of this monstrosity by treating it as the result of particular technologies. Technologies which are meant to transcend ‘the human’ in order to embrace otherness and celebrate difference.
**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


**5. Monstrous Lives: Cyborgs**

What kind of monster is a cyborg? Does it delimit or expand the possibilities of being? Focusing on the way it re-configures and transcends a number of binary dichotomies (nature/culture, subject/object, flesh/machine), we shall explore its monstrosity and the fashion in which it re-distributes the value of difference and identity by creating new (hybrid) bodies.

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


Vainshtein, O. 2012 “‘I Have a Suitcase Just Full of Legs Because I Need Options for Different Clothing’: Accessorising Bodyscapes”. *Fashion Theory* 16(2): 139-70.
6. Monstrous Imitations: Cyber-bodies
What kind of monster is an avatar? We shall explore the difference between cyborgs and cyber-bodies (avatars). While the cyborg, at least in its original conception, is linked to the world of cells, neurons, blood and biological processes, the cyber-body can be defined as a disembodied, wireless, inorganic entity, made of pure bits of information.

Required Reading

Recommended Reading

7. Monstrous Deaths: Zombies
Why does the zombie terrify? Tracing its career from its Haitian origins to its most recent incarnations in popular culture, this lecture will explore the uniqueness of zombies. Compared to cyborgs and avatars, a zombie is wholly devoid of consciousness and personal agency. We shall discuss the way its monstrosity is embedded in this very lack.

Required Reading

Recommended Reading

8. Monstrous Resurrections: (Plastinated) Corpses and Frozen Heads
Focusing on plastinates, ‘famous’ corpses and cryonic suspension, we shall explore the horror embedded in another kind of monster – a monster, that is, which depends on being both an object and a subject. This kind of monster is not about a new kind of body (as with cyborgs), disembodiment (as with avatars) or lack of consciousness (as with zombies). So, what is it about? Where does its monstrosity stem from?

Required Reading

Recommended Reading

9. Monstrous (Dis)appearances: The Quest for Monsters
Bringing together the monsters from the last four sessions, this lecture explores the idea that – despite the horror and the promise they present – ‘post-human’ monsters reinstate that which they supposedly supersede. In this way, perhaps, ‘the human’ reigns supreme in a universe that has no space for otherness.

Required Reading

Recommended Reading
Foley, M. 2013 ‘The Monster in the mirror: Reflecting and deflecting the mobility of gendered violence onscreen’. In M. Levina and D-M. T. Bui (eds) Monster Culture in the 21st Century, pp.87-98. New York & London: Bloomsbury. [e-
10. Conclusion: Monstrous Anthropologies

Returning to the way the course was introduced, we shall re-consider the link between monsters and otherness in order to bring together some of the themes we examined and foreground them in ‘a monstrous anthropology’ rather than an anthropology of monsters – an anthropology, that is, within which the anthropologist may have the opportunity to usurp the place of the monster.

Required Reading


Recommended Reading


Viveiros de Castro, E. 2001 ‘GUT Feelings about Amazonia: Potential Affinity and the Construction of Sociality’. In L. Rival and N. Whitehead (eds), Beyond the visible and the material, Oxford: Oxford University Press [e-reseve]
Appendix 1 – General Information

**Students with Disabilities**
The School welcomes disabled students with disabilities (including those with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia) and is working to make all its courses as accessible as possible. If you have a disability special needs which means that you may require adjustments to be made to ensure access to lectures, tutorials or exams, or any other aspect of your studies, you can discuss these with your Student Support Officer or Personal Tutor who will advise on the appropriate procedures.

You can also contact the Student Disability Service, based on the University of Edinburgh, Third Floor, Main Library, You can find their details as well as information on all of the support they can offer at: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service](http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service)

**Learning Resources for Undergraduates**
The Study Development Team at the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) provides resources and workshops aimed at helping all students to enhance their learning skills and develop effective study techniques. Resources and workshops cover a range of topics, such as managing your own learning, reading, note-making, essay and report writing, exam preparation and exam techniques.

The study development resources are housed on ‘LearnBetter’ (undergraduate), part of Learn, the University’s virtual learning environment. Follow the link from the IAD Study Development web page to enrol: [www.ed.ac.uk/iad/undergraduates](http://www.ed.ac.uk/iad/undergraduates)

Workshops are interactive: they will give you the chance to take part in activities, have discussions, exchange strategies, share ideas and ask questions. They are 90 minutes long and held on Wednesday afternoons at 1.30pm or 3.30pm. The schedule is available from the IAD Undergraduate web page (see above).

Workshops are open to all undergraduates but you need to book in advance, using the MyEd booking system. Each workshop opens for booking two weeks before the date of the workshop itself. If you book and then cannot attend, please cancel in advance through MyEd so that another student can have your place. (To be fair to all students, anyone who persistently books on workshops and fails to attend may be barred from signing up for future events).

Study Development Advisors are also available for an individual consultation if you have specific questions about your own approach to studying, working more effectively, strategies for improving your learning and your academic work. Please note, however, that Study Development Advisors are not subject specialists so they cannot comment on the content of your work. They also do not check or proof read students' work.

To make an appointment with a Study Development Advisor, email iad.study@ed.ac.uk

(For support with English Language, you should contact the English Language Teaching Centre).

**Discussing Sensitive Topics**
The discipline of Social Anthropology addresses a number of topics that some might find sensitive or, in some cases, distressing. You should read this Course Guide carefully and if there are any topics that you may feel distressed by you should seek advice from the course convenor and/or your Personal Tutor.
For more general issues you may consider seeking the advice of the Student Counselling Service, http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-counselling

Guide to Using LEARN for Online Tutorial Sign-Up
The following is a guide to using LEARN to sign up for your tutorial. If you have any problems using the LEARN sign up, please contact the course secretary by email Lauren.Ayre@ed.ac.uk.

Tutorial sign up will open on Monday 16th January 2017 and will close on Friday 20th January 2017 at 5pm.

Step 1 – Accessing LEARN course pages
Access to LEARN is through the MyEd Portal. You will be given a log-in and password during Freshers’ Week. Once you are logged into MyEd, you should see a tab called ‘Courses’ which will list the active LEARN pages for your courses under ‘myLEARN’.

Step 2 – Welcome to LEARN
Once you have clicked on the relevant course from the list, you will see the Course Content page. There will be icons for the different resources available, including one called ‘Tutorial Sign Up’. Please take note of any instructions there.

Step 3 – Signing up for your Tutorial
Clicking on Tutorial Sign Up will take you to the sign up page where all the available tutorial groups are listed along with the running time and location.

Once you have selected the group you would like to attend, click on the ‘Sign up’ button. A confirmation screen will display.

IMPORTANT: If you change your mind after having chosen a tutorial you cannot go back and change it and you will need to email the course secretary. Reassignments once tutorials are full or after the sign-up period has closed will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

Tutorials have restricted numbers and it is important to sign up as soon as possible. The tutorial sign up will only be available until Friday 20th January 2017 so that everyone is registered to a group ahead of tutorials commencing in Week 2. If you have not yet signed up for a tutorial by this time you will be automatically assigned to a group which you will be expected to attend.

External Examiner
The External Examiner for the Social Anthropology Honours programme is: Dr Adam Reed, University of St Andrews.
Appendix 2 - Course Work Submission and Penalties

Penalties that can be applied to your work and how to avoid them.

There are three types of penalties that can be applied to your course work and these are listed below. Students **must** read the full description on each of these at: [http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/current_students/teaching_and_learning/assessment_and_regulations/coursework_penalties](http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/current_students/teaching_and_learning/assessment_and_regulations/coursework_penalties)

Make sure you are aware of each of these penalties and know how to avoid them. Students are responsible for taking the time to read guidance and for ensuring their coursework submissions comply with guidance.

- **Incorrect submission Penalty**
  When a piece of coursework is submitted to our Electronic Submission System (ELMA) that does not comply with our submission guidance (wrong format, incorrect document, no cover sheet etc.) a penalty of 5 marks will be applied to students work.

- **Lateness Penalty**
  If you miss the submission deadline for any piece of assessed work 5 marks will be deducted for each calendar day that work is late, up to a maximum of seven calendar days (35 marks). Thereafter, a mark of zero will be recorded. There is no grace period for lateness and penalties begin to apply immediately following the deadline.

- **Word Count Penalty**
  The penalty for excessive word length in coursework is one mark deducted for each additional 20 words over the limit. If the limit is 1500 words then anything between 1501 and 1520 words will lose one point, and so on. Word limits vary across subject areas and submissions, so check your course handbook. Make sure you know what is and what is not included in the word count. Again, check the course handbook for this information. You will not be penalised for submitting work below the word limit. However, you should note that shorter essays are unlikely to achieve the required depth and that this will be reflected in your mark.

**ELMA: Submission and Return of Coursework**

Coursework is submitted online using our electronic submission system, ELMA. You will not be required to submit a paper copy of your work.

Marked coursework, grades and feedback will be returned to you via ELMA. You will not receive a paper copy of your marked course work or feedback.

For details of how to submit your course work to ELMA, please see our webpages here. Remember, there is a 5 mark incorrect submission penalty, so read the guidance carefully and follow it to avoid receiving this.
Extensions: New policy-applicable for years 1 - 4

From September 2016, there will be a new extensions policy that applies to all courses in the school from years one to four.

If you have good reason for not meeting a coursework deadline, you may request an extension. Before you request an extension, make sure you have read all the guidance on our webpages and take note of the key points below. You will also be able to access the online extension request form through our webpages.

- Extensions are granted for 7 calendar days.
- Extension requests must be submitted no later than 24 hours before the coursework deadline.
- If you miss the deadline for requesting an extension for a valid reason, you should submit your coursework as soon as you are able, and apply for Special Circumstances to disregard penalties for late submission. You should also contact your Student Support Officer or Personal Tutor and make them aware of your situation.
- If you have a valid reason and require an extension of more than 7 calendar days, you should submit your coursework as soon as you are able, and apply for Special Circumstances to disregard penalties for late submission. You should also contact your Student Support Officer or Personal Tutor and make them aware of your situation.
- If you have a Learning Profile from the Disability Service allowing you potential for flexibility over deadlines, you must still make an extension request for this to be taken into account.

Plagiarism Guidance for Students: Avoiding Plagiarism

Material you submit for assessment, such as your essays, must be your own work. You can, and should, draw upon published work, ideas from lectures and class discussions, and (if appropriate) even upon discussions with other students, but you must always make clear that you are doing so. Passing off anyone else's work (including another student's work or material from the Web or a published author) as your own is plagiarism and will be punished severely.

When you upload your work to ELMA you will be asked to check a box to confirm the work is your own. All submissions will be run through 'Turnitin', our plagiarism detection software. Turnitin compares every essay against a constantly-updated database, which highlights all plagiarised work. Assessed work that contains plagiarised material will be awarded a mark of zero, and serious cases of plagiarism will also be reported to the College Academic Misconduct officer. In either case, the actions taken will be noted permanently on the student's record. For further details on plagiarism see the Academic Services' website:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/plagiarism

Data Protection Guidance for Students

In most circumstances, students are responsible for ensuring that their work with
information about living, identifiable individuals complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. The document, *Personal Data Processed by Students*, provides an explanation of why this is the case. It can be found, with advice on data protection compliance and ethical best practice in the handling of information about living, identifiable individuals, on the Records Management section of the University website at:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/dpforstudents