

**HC 497: Special Topics Honors Abroad**  
**Monsters, Authors, and the Legacy of Frankenstein**  
**Course Syllabus Spring 2026**

**TR 3:30–4:45 PM:** Jan 12–April 9

**Travel Abroad:** May 13–27 (London, Paris, Geneva, Rome)

**Instructor:** Dr. Erin Webster Garrett

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**Office Hours:** TBD (in-person & Zoom)

### **Course Description**

Explore connections between Romantic authors –itinerant observers of the natural and social world—and the concept of the monster as an outsider who reflects and reveals social fears and hidden truths. Through traveling metaphorically and literally to the sights of *Frankenstein*'s birth, class members will investigate, as Shelley and her circle did, enduring questions around what it means to be human, the nature of community connection, and the role of art and the artist in a technology-infused society experiencing rapid, volatile change.

As a signature honors experience, a 12-week in-person course with an online option prepares students intellectually and methodologically for the **embedded study abroad program, which will take place May 13–27**. The course integrates group and individual projects that emphasize real-world learning, critical inquiry, and future visioning.

The Study abroad program will blend a City as Text curriculum with content-relevant visits to sites central to understanding Mary Shelley's life, the composition of her first and most famous novel, *Frankenstein*, and the context of authorship and monsters during times of social and economic revolution.

### **Course Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze literary and cultural texts through lenses of monstrosity, Romanticism, and modernity.
2. Practice ethical, intentional observation in a variety of contexts.
3. Collaborate with others to produce analytical, digital, and/or creative work.
4. Synthesize classroom learning with experiential travel in Europe to produce a scholarly or creative inquiry project integrating course concepts and travel reflections.

### **Honors College Capstone Requirement: Fall 2026 Symposium**

HC 497 is designed to fulfill the requirements of an Honors Capstone as a study abroad experience. All capstone experiences require a public demonstration of knowledge, which can be fulfilled in a variety of ways. Students are especially encouraged to present their travel journals and reflective projects at the Fall 2026 Honors Symposium.

## Course Modality and Weekly Structure

### TUESDAYS (Required Whole-Class Meeting, 3:30–4:45 PM)

- Lecture or mini-lecture
- Whole-group discussion
- Close reading
- Concept introduction
- Learning synthesis

**Modality:** In-person + Zoom option for online students. Attendance online is by permission only and any request must be supported with a letter from the student's academic dean.

### THURSDAYS (Pod Day — No Full-Class Meeting)

Pods work independently on:

- Collaborative analysis
- Digital projects
- Ethics debates
- Applied monster fieldwork

**Deliverable:** One pod reflection or other submission each week will be assigned via D2L

Online/remote students: Participate fully through Zoom/Google Docs/Padlet or other platform as determined collaboratively with your pod.

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### Texts

- *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley. 1831 Text. Penguin Publishers. Copies of text are provided to all students.
- Additional readings will be available and posted online.

### Course Assignments\*

#### 1. Monster Field Notes (5 × 10 pts = 50 pts)

Reflections applying course frameworks + completion of online modules.

#### 2. Short Analysis Papers (3 × 30 pts = 90 pts)

Focused 2–3 page essays with reading logs.

#### 3. Creative Project: *My Modern Monster* (50 pts)

A narrative or hybrid creative work + author statement.

#### 4. Pod Projects & Weekly Pod Work (100 pts total)

Collaborative digital and analytical assignments.

**5. Pre-Travel Presentation (30 pts)**

5–7 minute presentation synthesizing course learning + personal goals.

**6. Travel Journal (May 13–27) (60 pts)**

Daily author/monster entries + prompts.

**7. Final Synthesis Project (100 pts)**

Research, creative, or multimedia project combining course + travel learning.

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**GRADING SUMMARY (500 points total)**

Assignment	Points
Field Notes	50
Short Analyses	90
Creative Project	50
Pod Projects	100
Pre-Travel Presentation	30
Travel Journal	60
Final Synthesis Project	100
Engagement	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>

A = 450–500

B = 400–449

C = 350–399  
D = 325–350  
F = <325

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Tentative Course Schedule (12 weeks + 3 weeks Travel)

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## **WEEK 1 — Seeing Like an Author / Being Seen Like a Monster**

**01/12 Tuesday (Whole Class):**

- Introductions
- City-as-Text method
- Monster Theory (Cohen)

**01/14 Thursday (Pod Day):**

POD TASK: Noticing Workshop + shared Google Doc

**DUE:** Field Notes #1

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## **WEEK 2 — Mary Shelley's Radical Roots**

**01/19 Tuesday:**

- Wollstonecraft, Godwin, political philosophy
- Romantic rebellion

**01/21 Thursday:**

POD TASK: Annotated biography comparisons

**DUE:** Short Analysis #1

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## **WEEK 3 — Frankenstein Vol. I: Creation & Ambition**

**01/26 Tuesday:**

- Gothic science
- Victor's epistemological failures

**01/28 Thursday:**

POD TASK: Scientific Instruments & Gothic Context mini-atlas

**DUE:** Field Notes #2

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## **WEEK 4 — Frankenstein Vol. II: The Creature Speaks**

**Tuesday:**

- Rejection, empathy, surveillance

**Thursday:**

POD TASK: Passage Analysis Collaboration

**DUE:** Short Analysis #2

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## **WEEK 5 — Romantic Landscapes & The Sublime**

**Tuesday:**

- Mont Blanc
- Awe & terror

**Thursday:**

POD TASK: Mapping the Sublime (digital map)

**DUE:** Field Notes #3

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## **WEEK 6 — The Female Author as Monster**

**Tuesday:**

- Author's Introduction, 1831
- Mary Shelley Journals and select letters
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**Thursday:**

POD TASK: Victorian ads analysis

**DUE:** Short Analysis #3

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## **WEEK 7 — Gothic Urbanism: London, Paris, Rome**

### **Tuesday:**

- Jekyll/Hyde
- Gothic policing & the monstrous city

### **Thursday:**

POD TASK: Digital “Monstrous City” Gallery

**DUE:** Field Notes #4

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## **WEEK 8 — Science, Ethics, and Playing God**

### **Tuesday:**

- AI, CRISPR, bioethics
- Responsibility of creators

### **Thursday:**

POD TASK: Ethics Debate Prep (groups assigned topics)

**DUE:** Creative Project Draft

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## **WEEK 9 — Workshop Week: My Modern Prometheus**

### **Tuesday:**

- Writing workshop

### **Thursday:**

POD TASK: Peer critique & revision

**DUE:** Creative Project

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## **WEEK 10 — Afterlives of Frankenstein**

### **Tuesday:**

- Film, media, AI, digital monstrosity

**Thursday:**

POD TASK: AI/Monster Case Study

**DUE:** Field Notes #5

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## WEEK 11 — Monsters Across Cultures

**Tuesday:**

- Global folklore & cross-cultural anxieties

**Thursday:**

POD TASK: Pick-a-Monster Group Teaching Demo Prep

**DUE:** Final Project Proposal

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## WEEK 12 — Final Synthesis + Travel Preparation

**Tuesday:**

Final Presentations Round 1

**Thursday:**

Final Presentations Round 2 + Travel Orientation Overview

**DUE:** Pre-Travel Portfolio

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PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION (May 6–10) — SINGLE SESSION (2–3 hrs)

**Agenda:**

- Flights, passports, safety
- Packing & money
- Cultural expectations (UK, France, Switzerland, Italy)
- Academic expectations abroad
- Journals & prompts distributed
- Emergency procedures
- Group norms: ethical flânerie

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# **Tentative STUDY ABROAD ITINERARY**

## **(May 13–27)**

**May 13: Depart DFW → LHR**

**May 14–18: London**

- Walking tour, Oyster cards
- Wollstonecraft's grave
- Jack the Ripper tour
- Musical/play
- Bath day trip + Frankenstein Museum

**May 18–20: Paris**

- Arrival + walking tour
- Louvre, Eiffel Tower
- Flâneur exercises
- Train to Geneva

**May 20–24: Geneva & Alps**

- Mont Blanc excursion
- Villa Diodati
- University of Geneva tour
- Travel to Rome (May 24)

## **May 24–27: Rome**

- Keats-Shelley House
- Non-Catholic Cemetery
- Vatican & catacombs
- Return to DFW (May 27)