

**English 299B51: Gods and Monsters: The Supernatural in Western Literature  
Summer I (May 12-June 12) hybrid course**

Class times: MTWR 8:00am-10:00am and online

Instructor: Dr. Yvonne Bruce

Office: O'Malley Center 224

Office hours: After class, by appointment; online

Email: [ybruce@jcu.edu](mailto:ybruce@jcu.edu) . Email is the best way to correspond and consult with me. I will reply within twenty-four hours, and generally, I check my own email in the afternoon. In your emails to me, please use standard English of appropriate formality, fill in the subject line, and include your full name.

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**Required Texts**

- James, Heather, et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of Western Literature*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Norton, 2005. ISBN-13: 9780393925722. Price: This book, which is soon to be replaced by the ninth edition, is available online for an average cost of between thirty and forty dollars.
- Morrison, Toni. *Song of Solomon*. New York: Penguin, 1987. I would prefer that you buy the Penguin edition of this book, which has been reprinted numerous times since its original publication and is available very cheaply online.

**About the course**

*It is fear that first brought gods into the world.*  
--Petronius

This is a course of questions and conundrums. We will examine the presence of the supernatural in Western literature from ancient Mesopotamian creation myths to Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*—works separated by 2500 years that explore the same themes: our relationship to the sacred and the profane, the limits of our control of external events, the ethical implications of particular systems of belief, the power of sexual attraction.

Along the way, you will be introduced to many classics of the Western canon—the monumental religious works, Roman epic, medieval romance, the modern short story and novel. As we read and discuss, we will be confronted with questions whose implications go far beyond the limits of the course: Why do we believe in our gods? What do these beliefs reveal about us? What is the difference between the divine and the monstrous?

This course satisfies the Core requirement for literature, Division II Humanities.

**About the hybrid format**

This course is what's called a hybrid or blended course. This means that it is a mix of face-to-face meetings and online participation in a roughly fifty-fifty ratio. Your online

activities will be conducted using Blackboard and will include **discussion, quizzes, collaborative writing, and additional readings**. A previous familiarity with Bb is desirable but not necessary, although ongoing access to Bb and the internet throughout the term is. More information about Bb, browser requirements for online access, and technical help will be discussed during the first week of class and is available through JCU's [Center for Digital Media](#)

### Course schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<b>Week 1</b>	Introduction	Creation myths: excerpts from <i>Enuma Elish</i> , Hesiod, and <i>Gilgamesh</i>	Excerpts from the Hebrew Bible	
<b>Week 2</b>		Excerpts from Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i>		Excerpts from Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i>
<b>Week 3</b>	Excerpts from the Christian Bible and the Quran	<b>Wiki collaborative writing due</b>	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i>	<b>Paper due</b>
<b>Week 4</b>		Packet of short readings		
<b>Week 5</b>	Toni Morrison, <i>Song of Solomon</i>		<b>Final project due</b>	<b>Final exam</b>

### Course Policies and Grading

Absences/Late and missing work You may miss ONE face-to-face class period without penalty. Each absence more than that—for any reason—will result in a ten-point deduction from your grade. All late work is penalized one-half grade per twenty-four-hour period it is tardy. After one week, late work is worth zero.

Grading I grade using a points system. Your grade for the term equals the number of points you earn divided by the number of points it is possible to earn, which means that you can calculate your grade on your own at any time. All grades will be posted to Blackboard, so PLEASE keep track of them, alerting me immediately in case of error or omission.

The grading scale is as follows: 93-100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 87-89 = B+; and so on. Your final grade will be rounded up ONLY IF the final percentage is five-tenths of a point or less away from the higher grade. Thus, 89.5 = A-. 89.4 = B+.

Plagiarism Most plagiarism is committed inadvertently, through a student's failure to properly attribute paraphrased or quoted material to its source, and we will discuss proper attribution and documentation as necessary. Repeated inadvertent plagiarism will negatively affect your grade. Plagiarism committed with the intent to deceive—cutting unattributed internet sources and pasting them into your writing, copying others' work to give the impression that the thought it expresses is yours, submitting borrowed or purchased papers—will result in immediate failure of the course and a reporting of the infraction to the academic dean, which latter will result, if I have any say, in dismissal from the university. Please review the university's definition of and policies on plagiarism at <http://www.jcu.edu/english/compositionprogram/plagiarism.htm> . If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, *please* ask me, in class or out of it.

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#### **Additional information**

- Bring your syllabus, notebook, and text to class every day we meet face to face. Expect to read assignments *at least* twice in preparation for class; do not expect to do well in this class without taking thorough, conscientious notes throughout the semester. For more information about this class and the English department, visit the department website: <http://www.jcu.edu/english/> . If at any time you are unsure how to fulfill your responsibilities for English 299, or you have any questions about the material or areas of concern you feel are not being addressed, please don't hesitate to contact me.
- Students who require special accommodations because of a disability should register immediately at the office of **Services for Students with Disabilities**, Administration Building 7A, Garden level (x 4967) and should make arrangements with me for these accommodations as soon as possible thereafter. For more information go to <http://www.jcu.edu/campuslife/disabilities/> . Be aware that students who do require accommodations are responsible for making all specific arrangements ahead of time and that additional accommodations do not include exceptions to my absence policy.