Visions of trauma saturate global popular culture, ranging from contemplations of real-world historical events to fantasies of apocalypse. This course explores one of pop culture’s most enduring themes through the study of literature, comics, and cinema produced from the 1980s through the present day. Through primary and secondary texts, students will examine how cultural artifacts produced by different creators and at different moments in contemporary global history engage with both traumatic memory and the anticipation of traumatic return. Questions this course will explore include the following: Is trauma, as many have claimed, "unrepresentable?" How have various pop cultural texts sought to portray traumatic events, both real and imagined? What might the pop cultural domain offer creators and audiences that so-called "high culture" cannot? How can we theorize traumatic representation in pop culture with regard to other factors, e.g. literary/aesthetic qualities, historical events, contemporaneous ideological debates, and local and global reception? While considering these questions, students will explore a variety of theoretical approaches to the study of trauma, as well as engaging more broadly with global socio-political developments and cultural phenomena in the contemporary period.

Required Texts to Purchase


*Reading materials not listed here are available on the course website.

Requirements

**Participation:** Students are expected to complete all readings before the class meeting for which they are assigned, attend all in-class film viewings, and participate in class discussion. Your participation grade relies on your regular contribution of questions and comments to class dialogue. The final participation grade will reflect the percentage of class meetings in which a student actively contributed to course dialogue and activities (students will receive one "freebie" week that works like a dropped quiz grade).

**Lead Discussion of Assigned Article:** Each student in the course will be responsible for leading a discussion of one of the secondary readings listed on the course schedule. You will provide an overview of the central argument presented in the article, explicate any
important theoretical concepts, historical events, or other references crucial to understanding the thrust of the author's argument, and initiate a class-wide discussion of the article in terms of how it can inform our understanding of the primary materials it accompanies.

**Short Response Papers:** Students will complete two 3-page response papers to be submitted on the dates listed on the course schedule. These papers should engage in some way with traumatic representation in any 1-2 works that we have studied to date.

**Final Paper:** At the end of the semester, undergraduate students will submit a 12-15 page (double-spaced, 12-point font) final paper plus bibliography of at least 4 scholarly sources. Graduate students will submit a 20-page final paper plus bibliography of at least 6 scholarly sources.

**Midterm Essay Exam:** Undergraduate students will complete a midterm essay exam.

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduates</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation: 20%</td>
<td>Participation: 25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead Discussion of Assigned Article: 10%</td>
<td>Lead Discussion of Assigned Article: 15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short response papers (2X10%): 20%</td>
<td>Short Response Papers (2X10%): 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm essay exam: 20%</td>
<td>Final Paper: 40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper: 30%</td>
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**Course Schedule**

**Week 1: Introduction to the Course (8/30)**

- Laurie Vickroy, “Representing Trauma: Issues, Contexts, Narrative Tools”

**Week 2: Mediating War Memory: Trauma and Representation (9/6)**

- Puneet Kohli, “The Memory and Legacy of Trauma in Art Spiegelman’s Maus”
- **GRADS:** Rosemary V. Hathaway, “Reading Art Spiegelman’s Maus as Postmodern Ethnography”
- **SIGN UP FOR ARTICLE DISCUSSIONS**

**Week 3: Mediating War Memory: Trauma and Nation (9/13)**

- **Anime:** Isao Takahata, *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988)
- **Anime Clip:** *Barefoot Gen* (1983)
• Susan Napier, “No More Words: Barefoot Gen, Grave of the Fireflies, and ‘Victim’s History’”
• Wendy Goldberg, “Transcending the Victim’s History: Takahata Isao’s Grave of the Fireflies”

Week 4: Visions of Apocalypse: Trauma and Repetition as SF Trope (9/20)
• Thomas Heberer, “The ‘Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution’: China’s Modern Trauma”

Week 5: Visions of Apocalypse: Unpacking the Monster Film (9/27)
• Film: Bong Joon-ho, The Host (2006)
• Christina Klein, “Why American Studies Needs to Think about Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-ho”
• GRADS: Hye Jean Chung, “The Host and D-War: Complex Intersections of National Imaginings and Transnational Aspirations”

Week 6: Modern Hauntings: Specters of Trauma (10/4)
• Short Story: Ekaterina Sedia, “Tin Cans” (2010)
• Short Story: Vajra Chandrasekera, “The Sill and the Dike” (2015)
• Sigmund Freud, “Repression” (1915)
• Michael Mayerfeld Bell, “The Ghosts of Place”

Week 7: Modern Hauntings: Maternal Horror (10/11)
• Film: Jennifer Kent, The Babadook (2014)
• Barbara Creed, “Horror and the Monstrous Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection”
• GRADS: E. Ann Kaplan, “Motherhood and Representation: From Post World War II Freudian Figurations to Postmodernism”
• RESPONSE PAPER #1 DUE

Week 8: UNDERGRADUATE MIDTERM EXAMINATION (10/18)
• MIDTERM ESSAY EXAM (GRADS DO NOT ATTEND CLASS THIS WEEK)

Week 9: Becoming-Other: Trauma and Identity Politics in SF (10/25)
• Novel: Octavia Butler, Lilith’s Brood (1987-89), Part I (Dawn)
• Laura Bollinger, “Symbiogenesis, Selfhood, and Science Fiction”
Week 10: Becoming-Other: Trauma and Identity Politics in SF (11/1)

• **Novel:** Octavia Butler, *Lilith’s Brood* (1987-89), Parts II and III (*Adulthood Rites* and *Imago*)

Week 11: Becoming-Other: Envisioning the Collapse of Subjectivity (11/8)

• **Film:** John Carpenter, *The Thing* (1982)
• Ronald Allan Lopez Cruz, “Mutations and Metamorphoses: Body Horror is Biological Horror”
• **GRADS:** Eric White, “The Erotics of Becoming: Xenogenesis and ‘The Thing’”

Week 12: Trauma in the Fantasy Imagination: Postmodern Trends (11/15)

• **Short Story:** Sarah Monette, “After the Dragon” (2010)
• **Short Story:** Ruthanna Emrys, “The Litany of Earth” (2014)
• Maria Nikolajeva, “Fairy Tale and Fantasy: From Archaic to Postmodern”

Week 13: Trauma in the Fantasy Imagination: Envisioning Disaster (11/22)

• **Manga:** Miyazaki Hayao, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1982)
• Gwendolyn Morgan, “Creatures in Crisis: Apocalyptic Environmental Visions in Miyazaki’s Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind and Princess Mononoke”
• GRADS: Richard Klein, “Knowledge of the Future: Future Fables”
• **RESPONSE PAPER #2 DUE**

Week 14: Dystopian Landscapes: Repression and Return (11/29)

• **Short Story:** Project Itoh, “The Indifference Engine” (2007)
• **Short Story:** Natalia Theodoridou, “Android Whores Can’t Cry” (2015)
• Mark Seltzer, “Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere”
• **GRADS:** Marija Cetinic, “Sympathetic Conditions: Toward a New Ontology of Trauma”

Week 15: Dystopian Landscapes: Trauma and Capitalism (12/6)

• **Film:** Bong Joon-ho, *Snowpiercer* (2013)
• Gerry Canavan, “If the Engine Ever Stops, We’d All Die’: *Snowpiercer* and Necrofuturism”

Week 16: Wrap-Up Discussion and Final Paper Workshop (12/13)
• Wrap-Up Discussion
• Final Paper Workshop

FINAL PAPER DUE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20TH BY 5:00 PM

Classics & Humanities Scholarship Opportunities

The Friends of Classics Charter Scholarship
The Martha Biehl Memorial Scholarship
The Robert and Paula Cottam Scholarship
The Viola Granstaff Memorial Scholarship
The Jack McGrory Study Abroad Scholarship

Go to the SDSU Scholarships Home Page and search under Classics or Humanities: http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/scholarship/index.html

Academic Honesty

The University adheres to a strict policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. These activities will not be tolerated in this class. Become familiar with the policy and what constitutes plagiarism (http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/srr/cheating-plagiarism.html). Any cheating or plagiarism will result in failing this class and a disciplinary review by the University. These actions may lead to probation, suspension, or expulsion. Examples of Plagiarism include but are not limited to:

• Using sources verbatim or paraphrasing without giving proper attribution (this can include phrases, sentences, paragraphs and/or pages of work)
• Copying and pasting work from an online or offline source directly and calling it your own
• Using information you find from an online or offline source without giving the author credit
• Replacing words or phrases from another source and inserting your own words or phrases
• Submitting a piece of work you did for one class to another class

Students With Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473.
You can also learn more about the services provided by visiting the Student Disability Services website. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

**Student Services**

A complete list of all academic support services is available on the Academic Success section of the SDSU Student Affairs website.

For help with improving your writing ability, the staff at the SDSU Writing Center is available in person and online.

Counseling and Psychological Services offers confidential counseling services by licensed psychologists, counselors, and social workers. More info can be found at their website or by contacting (619) 594-5220. You can also Live Chat with a counselor http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/cps/therapist-consultation.aspx between 4:00pm and 10:00pm, or call San Diego Access and Crisis 24-hour Hotline at (888) 724-7240.

**Turnitin**

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. You may submit your papers in such a way that no identifying information about you is included. Another option is that you may request, in writing, that your papers not be submitted to www.turnitin.com. However, if you choose this option you will be required to provide documentation to substantiate that the papers are your original work and do not include any plagiarized material.

**Blackboard Technical Support**

Student support for Blackboard is provided by the Library Computing Hub located on the 2nd floor of Love Library. They can be reached at 619-594-3189 or hub@mail.sdsu.edu