

Frankenstein Reading Groups

Instead of reading a chapter (or two) of Frankenstein and having a class discussion, we will approach this in a novel way - we will read together in small groups. Each group will focus on one theme in order to assist the entire class to explore the deeper themes of this text. In addition to our reading groups we will have whole class discussions. Our goal should be to practice for college, where the burden of discussion is often carried by students, not by the professor. Here are your responsibilities:

Diary of a Madman: You will keep a diary of your journey through the novel. Your diary is due on the day of the *Frankenstein* test. For every reading assignment your diary should have the following things:

1. **Six quotes** from the reading which show what Mary Shelley implies about your theme. You need to **explain how each quote illuminates your theme**. For example:
Victor says “You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hop that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been.” (15).
In this quote Shelley not only implies that knowledge is sorrow, she implies that knowledge is the devil’s domain. Victor states clearly that his search for knowledge has only brought him sorrow. He describes sorrow as a serpent, just like the serpent in the garden of Eden. Satan tempted Adam and Eve to bite from the tree of knowledge. Once they obtained the knowledge which tempted them, they were forced out of the garden of Eden.
2. **A personal response** about the novel, the ideas related in the novel, or the ideas raised in class. This response should be **at least one page**. It should be you own reaction or reflection on ideas, not a specific analysis of the novel. I want your honest opinion.
3. **Ten new vocabulary words**. Write down ten new words which you encountered in your reading with good definitions. These definitions *must be in your own words*.

Presentations: Each group will be responsible for teaching a chapter. Your group should

1. Give a presentation that discusses the important aspects of the chapter (character, plot, themes, etc.)
2. Provide a visual aid which will help illuminate the chapter, or one aspect of the chapter.
3. Answer questions from the class. You will receive **2 points for every correct answer**. If anyone can stump you with an inferential question, he or she will receive **10 points (5 points for a literal question.)**

Themes:

- **“All knowledge is sorrow”** Byron – Our never ending quest for discovery / knowledge / science leads us to sorrow (like the wedding guest, “a sadder but a wiser man / He rose the morrow morn” – Coleridge)
- **The Creation/Pygmalion/God and Adam Archetype** – “Did I request thee maker, to mold me from the clay?” – Milton What does it mean to be a creator? To be the created? What are the responsibilities of each? What happens if those responsibilities are not met? How much does the created one owe his or her creator?
- **“It takes two, baby”** – Donny and Marie Osmond – What is the role of women in society, and what is the role of the “feminine” in nature and human nature? Does life require balance between the traditional roles of masculine and feminine? What happens when that balance is lost?

- **The monster archetype** – “. . . mmmrrrrgggggh” *Frankenstein*. Monsters can be seen as documents of our fears. Does Shelley’s monster show us what she and the Romantics feared? Are there some universal qualities to monsters? (Are there some basic fears that all humans share?) How have our monsters changed since Shelley’s time? How does Shelley herself view the monster?
- **The destructive power of revenge**- what happens when the desire for revenge consumes a person?

If you are having difficulty completing your notes or understanding the text, you should talk to me outside of class. At the conclusion of the book, you will write an essay based on one of these themes, so careful notes will pay off!

Frankenstein

Reading / Discussion Schedule:

<u>2/14</u> _____	– letters	Theme: Knowledge
<u>2/17</u> _____	– ch. 1-3	Theme: It takes two
<u>2/20</u> _____	– ch. 4-5	Theme: Creation
<u>2/22</u> _____	– ch. 6-7	Theme: Monster (Present 2/28)
<u>2/27</u> _____	– ch. 8-10	Theme: Knowledge
<u>2/29</u> _____	– ch. 11-12	Theme: Monster
<u>3/2</u> _____	– ch. 13-16	Theme: Creation
<u>3/5</u> _____	– ch. 17-19	Theme: It takes two
<u>3/7</u> _____	– ch. 20	Theme: It takes two
<u>3/9</u> _____	– ch. 21-3	Theme: Revenge
<u>3/12</u> _____	– Finish book	Theme: Revenge
<u>3/14</u> _____	- Test	