

English 102 Course Description

Inquiry into Fear Professor Robin Nicks

In this course, students will consider the definition and establishment of certain cultural fears. By looking at a range of texts about fear, students will familiarize themselves with the construction, promotion, and deconstruction of fear in the news media, in literature, and popular culture. We will also explore the fine differences that separate fear from “gross” and “thrill.”

We will begin with an exploration of the ways in which the media constructs and encourages the “wrong” fears. Then, we will move to an historical inquiry into fears, examining literary texts that have become classics of the horror and sci-fi genres and investigating which fears these texts speak to in terms of the context of the period and culture in which they were written. Then we will move into horror film and contemporary urban legends, discussing which cultural fears these texts play upon and encourage.