This course explores how categories of difference such as race, gender, sexuality, class, size and disability produce some people as human and others as less than human within film and society. By analyzing the representational politics of horror films, we will understand how society sees difference as monstrous and as a means of legitimizing the oppression and elimination of those framed as “other.” Who we fear as a society (and as individuals) is dependent on structural power dynamics and discourses of normalcy that produce “others” as deviant. Our fears are shaped and reshaped through the genre of horror where filmmakers and audiences work out cultural anxieties together.

Learning Objectives:

Over the course of the semester, students will be able to:

Effectively identify how horror movies mobilize normative conceptions of gender, racial and sexual difference as well as subvert those norms

Analyze how the categories of difference shape the lived experiences of marginalized people on both individual and societal levels, in local and global contexts

Explain how power dynamics are at play in the contexts of culture, society, politics, economics and technology as well as the role that they play in naturalizing hierarchies of difference and perpetuating stereotypes.