

CHID 490

Monsters and Aliens: Encountering Others

Professor Maria Elena Garcia | Writing Credit | CHID Gateways Credit | Spring 2013

This research seminar is designed to help students conceptualize, develop and finish significant research projects in a single quarter. It should be useful for a wide range of students—students with varying degrees of research experience and with varied research interests. The class can be applied towards the CHID senior thesis requirement or it can be used to develop a stand-alone research project. The topic for this year's research seminar is the theme of "otherness." More specifically, we will engage non-human otherness and take non-human agency seriously. What happens when we consider the possibility that "rocks listen" and "earth-beings" (such as rivers and glaciers) speak? Are spiders and snails self-aware? Can robots suffer? We will also tackle theoretical and artistic renditions of monstrosity and alien-ness, from the genetic manipulation of animal bodies, to the torture of human bodies, to the proliferation of zombies. It is my hope that our rigorous examination of these and other issues will serve as windows through which we can view the workings of alterity and marginalization as well as survey pathways to alternative and better futures.

