

HORROR COMICS



Horror is one of the most venerable and controversial genres in the medium of comics. In the 1950s, the lurid output from EC Comics drew the ire of America's cultural watchdogs, giving rise to decades-long censorship. The super-powered beings of Marvel Comics are often as monstrous as they are heroic. Before *Watchmen*, British comics writer Alan Moore transformed *Swamp Thing* into a sophisticated critique of American culture, and later, Moore and Eddie Campbell produced their mammoth Jack the Ripper saga, *From Hell*. Japan, too, has a long tradition of horror comics, including the work of Junji Ito, and Italy has given the world the long running *Dylan Dog*.

This seminar will explore the vast array of horror comics. How does horror work in comics, as distinct from prose and cinema? How and why are non-moving images scary? The different narrational strategies of short stories, self-contained works, and continuing series will be explored, as will American, Japanese, and European approaches. Special attention will be given to *Frankenstein*, in novel, film, illustration, and comics. Example of such sub-genres as literary horror, horrific superheroes, cosmic (Lovecraftian) horror, ecological horror, as well as the horrors of bodies, sexuality, and adolescence will be encountered.

Students will read many comics, some comics theory, and will do an in-class presentation on a comic or topic of their choosing. The course is a seminar, so discussion will be continuous and required. Enrollment limited.

