TERM: Spring 2025
COURSE NUMBER & CATEGORY: ENGL 5000: Seminar: Advanced Studies
COURSE TITLE: From Frankenstein to AI
SECTION TIMES/DAYS: W 4:30-7:00 pm
INSTRUCTOR: Alexandra Neel

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:

This course takes a deep dive into arguably the first novel expression of our fear and fascination with artificial intelligence—Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818). The first third of the semester will be devoted to the Romantic cultures that gave rise to Shelley's "hideous progeny," from scientific experiments and global explorations to artistic and literary trends (e.g., the gothic novel) during the period. We'll explore the novel's legacy in contemporary fiction, film, and television, including works such as Poor Things (novel and film), Ex Machina, and The Lifecycle of Software Objects, and conclude the semester with an exploration of the various ways we understand AI and our posthuman future today. How has the discourse surrounding machines and learning shifted? What are the limits of both human and artificial intelligence? Can we think of non-human intelligence as something other than a power to be mastered and harnessed by human wrangling?

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will learn how to close read, research, and contextualize their work within larger debates about AI and its impact on society and the humanities.

CLASS LEVEL RESTRICTION: RECOMMENDED/PREREQUISITES:

Junior/Senior Only   English Major/Minor

COURSE ATTRIBUTES:

OLD CURRICULUM   NEW CURRICULUM

☐ GENRES (LD)   ☐ DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH (LD)
☐ HISTORIES (LD)   ☐ HISTORY OF LIT, MEDIA, AND CULTURE (LD)
☐ AUTHORS (UD)   ☐ READING AND WRITING GENRES (LD)
☒ CRITICAL/THEORETICAL (UD)   ☐ THEORY, POWER, AND RHETORIC (LD)
☐ COMPARATIVE (UD)   ☐ PRE-1800 (UD)
☐ CREATIVE/ARTISTRY   ☐ CREATIVE ARTISTRY UD)
                                                  ☐ RACE, INTERSECTIONALITY, AND POWER (UD)
                                                  ☐ UPPER-DIVISION ELECTIVE (UD)
                                                  ☒ 5000-LEVEL SEMINAR (UD)

CORE ATTRIBUTES:
N/A