



**College of the Holy Cross
Holy Cross Online Learning**

2019 Alumni & Friends Community Book Discussion

Faculty Participants:

Robert Bellin, *Biology*

Ellen Perry, *Classics*

Mary Doyle Roche '90, *Religious Studies*

Faciliator:

Debra Gettelman, *English*

Discussion & technical questions:

hconline@holycross.edu

Discussion Description:

Over the course of five weeks, Holy Cross faculty members will lead us in an online discussion of Mary Shelley's classic novel [*Frankenstein*](#). Assigned as the summer reading for the current first-year Class of 2022, Holy Cross students have been discussing this novel throughout the academic year – now is your chance to join in the conversation! Considered to be one of the world's first works of science fiction, *Frankenstein* is far from our current image of what a horror story is and from the movies inspired by the book. The horror depicted in this novel comes from within and reveals the atrocities that people can commit while acting with good intentions, as well as our shared desire for a sense of belonging. What are the literary, ethical and scientific implications of this story and its overarching meaning for us today?

Course Materials:

Participants are asked to read Mary Shelley's [*Frankenstein*](#) (the 1818 text; we prefer the Penguin Classics edition). The book can be purchased at all major booksellers and can be borrowed from many public libraries. The online discussion is provided at no cost through our web-based platform. Suggested supplemental resources will be offered each week for those desiring to learn more about that week's topic.

Discussion Activities:

Each week includes a discussion video (approximately 20-30 minutes) with different Holy Cross faculty members. Participants will then have the opportunity to reflect on the topics discussed in each week's video, and to pose questions to the faculty member leading that week's discussion via an interactive class discussion board. Our faculty will monitor all online discussion board questions/comments throughout the five week program.

We anticipate participants spending no more than one to two hours per week on discussion activities.

Discussion Mastery:

There are no graded activities in this online discussion. To get the most out of the experience, full participation in all activities is recommended. Please comment on classmates' posts as we create an electronic environment that replicates the intellectually stimulating atmosphere present in Holy Cross classrooms.

Discussion Facilitator:



Debra Gettelman
Associate Professor, English

Prof. Gettelman will facilitate each week's video discussion, bringing her expertise on 19th Century British literature and culture into the conversation.

Discussion Schedule:



Week #1 (April 15-21)

Ellen Perry
Professor, Classics

In a pre-recorded video, Prof. Perry will discuss the experience of teaching *Frankenstein* to first-year students – what resonates, what themes help to facilitate an understanding of the novel, etc.



Week #2 (April 22-28):

Robert Bellin
Professor, Biology

In a pre-recorded video, Prof. Bellin will discuss the state of scientific knowledge at the time Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*.



Week #3 (April 29-May 5):

Mary Doyle Roche '90
Associate Professor, Religious Studies

In a pre-recorded video, Prof. Roche will discuss ethical themes that *Frankenstein* raises for us today, especially relationships between creatures and creators and the moral problem of monster-making.



Weeks #4 - #5 (May 6-19):

Video panel discussion and conversation with all three faculty, moderated by Prof. Debra Gettelman, answering your questions/comments from prior weeks. The final video for this section will post on Monday, May 13.