Dear IB English 2 Students,

Last June, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s Gothic novel *Frankenstein* celebrated its 200th anniversary. Written in the Romantic form, this work continues to be discussed, written about, filmed, parodied, and marveled over even in 2018. But what makes it worthy of holding a place in the literary canon—and more importantly—why should it matter to you?

International Baccalaureate students “recognize[e] their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet” and “help to create a better and more peaceful world.” So how does Shelley’s monster story, touted by some scholars as the world’s first work of science fiction, relate to your study? **Bioethics** is a significant consideration in this work, as the philosophical and medical elements embedded within the plotline scream for our attention. Similarly, though the work is categorized as fiction, we might consider what we can learn about science from literature. Additionally, we must examine **popular culture** in conjunction with our study: is there anyone who hasn’t seen at least a film clip of an eight foot tall creature with bolts protruding from its neck? Have you heard the song “The Monster Mash”? Have you watched the recent horror series *Penny Dreadful*? Or have you heard those iconic lines from Mel Brooks’ *Young Frankenstein*? Adaptations abound, and they are simply too numerous to mention here. Finally, the motifs of friendship and preoccupation with appearance ripple throughout the work. These elements are certainly not the only considerations, but these will serve as a preliminary guide to your thinking as you read.

Annotate *Frankenstein* as you read this summer; you may elect to use post-it notes or a more traditional note-taking format with any of the bold-faced elements above in mind.

Your essay (750—1,000 words) will be hybrid in nature. Not only will it feature your literary analysis that examines one of the aforementioned subjects, but it will also serve to develop the relevance of the same topic in your own world.

Your starting point will be to formulate a clear, arguable thesis. Take a stand. A weak thesis usually results in a weak paper.

Use documentation following your textual support. For example: (Shelley 33).

Use quotes to support your ideas, not to pad your paper. The desire to use lengthy quotes usually equates to a lack of ideas on the part of the writer. Quotes do not count as part of your 750 words. Use direct quotes from the novel only; do not use outside sources.
Do not attempt to present others’ writing as your own. As IB scholars, you have a moral obligation to uphold your integrity as a student—and you do not want to tarnish your reputation with a notation that cites plagiarism on your academic record.

When you read, turn off your electronic paraphernalia, focus, and read closely. To jump onto Spark or Cliff Notes shows you are unwilling to think for yourself, and I would ask instead that you trust the critical thinking skills you have developed over your educational career and behave like a scholar. I am sorry to have to be blunt, but perhaps this will be helpful to you in understanding the expectations I will have for you this year.

Why are you taking this course? Ask yourself this question and then answer it honestly. You should be taking this course because you want to be the best reader, writer, speaker, and thinker you can be in your college freshman literature/composition course fifteen months from now.

You will write many essays next year for this class. Those essays are expected to be, consistently, the best work you can put forth, and I expect that your writing will improve as a result of what you learn in class.

In addition to your summer reading, you will read several lengthy novels, several dramas, nearly one hundred poems, and a dozen short stories for this course.

Should you have any questions, feel free to stop by Room 1007. If you have any questions as you are reading or writing this summer, e-mail me at dgalambos@ojrsd.com.

I look forward to welcoming you back this fall. Until then, have a lovely, safe summer.

Mrs. Galambos