COURSE THEMES

ENGLISH 106

INDIVIDUAL & SOCIETY

- How does one live as an individual **and** belong to a community or society?
- Individualism—Society shouldn't define who a person is. Individual desires need to be balanced against societal expectations. Each individual has their own role and place in society. How does an individual define, find, and maintain this role? Personal desire and beliefs, choice—freedom and free will—determine one's own identity. An individual can challenge society's rules, which demand (some) conformity. Gender and ethnicity challenge ideas about individualism.
- Society—Normal order and stability—accepted rules of behavior, standard values and attitudes. If societal expectations are excessive, can be restrictive and confining, loss of individuality. Can harm/change individuals. If excessive, though, individualism can lead to disorder, lack of common standards, and even anarchy.
- Do the demands of belonging to a society (e.g., giving up some freedoms or personal desires) actually allow individuals to be free and secure? Do we need to be "watched" or given guidelines/boundaries in order to act morally and ethically? Does individuality make a society better, more productive and more innovative/progressive, even if there are occasional risks that individuals will violate the rights of others?

EXTRAORDINARY & FANTASTIC

- What does it mean to be extraordinary? Fantastic?
  - To deviate far from normal or expected patterns, to be out of regular order. Not according to rule. Conceived of (perhaps irrationally) in the imagination, unreal
  - Exceptional, remarkable, exaggerated, fanciful
- The extraordinary and fantastic can arises out of everyday life and/or be conceived of in the imagination, can be that which is familiar and unfamiliar, possible and seemingly impossible. Science can reveal the fantastic to us? Interplay between reality and fantasy (imagination)?
- How do we react to the fantastic? Wonder, fear, confusion, distrust?
- What does the nature of extraordinary and our reaction to it reveal about us? Our society? How we view certain individuals? Their actions and thoughts?