

THURSDAY, MARCH 13TH | 2PM-3:30PM | FERGUSON THEATER

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LECTURE SERIES

# Monsters in the Christian Tradition

AN ILLUSTRATED PRESENTATION BY STEPHEN T. ASMA, PH.D. AS PART OF  
THE PROVOST'S OFFICE'S DISTINGUISHED FACULTY FELLOWSHIP LECTURE SERIES

## To be a monster is to be an omen.

Sometimes the monster is a display of God's wrath, sometimes a portent of the future, sometimes a symbol of moral virtue or vice, sometimes an accident of nature.

Many people have heard of Leviathan and Behemoth in the Old Testament, but lesser known are the race of Giants – born of human women who were impregnated by fallen angels. So too, while many Christians may have a St. Christopher statue on the dashboard of their cars, Christopher is rarely depicted (as the Eastern Church believes) as a monster with a dog's head. Many ancient and medieval monsters have been conveniently edited out of modern orthodoxy, but they played important roles in previous eras.

The monster is more than an odious creature of the imagination. It is a kind of cultural category – employed in domains as diverse as religion, biology, literature, and politics. In this lecture, Dr. Asma will examine some of the fabulous creatures of ancient legend, and draw parallels to our contemporary uses and abuses of monsters.

**Stephen T. Asma, Ph.D.** is a professor of philosophy and Distinguished Faculty Scholar at Columbia College Chicago. He is the author of several books, including *Buddha for Beginners* (Writers & Readers, 1996) *Stuffed Animals and Pickled Heads: The Culture and Evolution of Natural History Museums* (Oxford University Press, 2001) and *The Gods Drink Whiskey: Stumbling Toward Enlightenment in the Land of the Tattered Buddha* (Harper Collins, 2005). He is currently at work on his fifth book, *Monsters: An Unnatural History*, forthcoming from Oxford University Press in 2008. Dr. Asma writes extensively for the *Chronicle of Higher Education Review*, and is a published visual artist and a blues musician. Visit [www.stephenasma.com](http://www.stephenasma.com).

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