How do people deal with the unfamiliar? What frightens them most? What is it that makes something threatening? In this course, we will apply such questions to the writings of pre-modern and early modern Japan and China. In both countries, there is rich and varied tradition of literature on the strange or supernatural that stretches back more than a millennium. But rarely, if ever, are these accounts solely about the ghosts, monsters, and foreigners they feature. In addition to making “good reading,” they also reflect worldviews and concerns of the readers and writers of their day and often can be read as attempts to create or subvert an existing order. Looking at Japan and China together is not to suggest that we can map one tradition onto the other. Rather, it is intended to give us a way to critically examine the evolution of similar genres of writing in different yet not entirely unrelated contexts. Drawing on secondary scholarship on “fantastic” writing in multiple traditions, we will work towards enhancing our appreciation of these works not as mere diverting stories but rather as commentaries on and refractions of the world around them.