From Enlightenment-era celebrations of rationality and knowledge, to 19th-century visions of the Industrial Revolution, to modernist parables about the alienated individual in a bureaucratic world contoured and supported by the latest technology, the human being and the machine have been mutually interdependent figures in modern world literature. How does our sense of the human being, and of humanism more generally, intersect with visions and realizations of the mechanical, the electrical, the robotic, the industrialized, the weaponized, and the computerized “other”? How does the image of the machine, in turn, shape the way we understand and talk about individual and collective identities and movements, mechanical aptitudes and human machinations? This online course gives students an overview of the most powerful poems, stories, and plays from around the world that chart the unpredictable relationship between the human being and the machine—in science fiction, horror, magical realism, coming of age narratives and even Holocaust fiction. Our texts tentatively include selections from Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes; Mary Shelley’s Gothic novel Frankenstein; Karl Čapek’s play R.U.R. (Rossum’s Universal Robots); Osamu Tezuka’s manga classic Metropolis; and short stories by Edgar Allen Poe, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Franz Kafka, E. M. Forster, Tadeusz Borowski, Julio Cortázar, and Haruki Murakami.