

**Carleton University
Winter 2024 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English**

**ENGL 4607A
Studies in 20th- and 21st-century Literature
Childhood and Time in 20th-century Ghost Stories**

**Prerequisite: Fourth-year standing or permission of the department
Preclusions: none**

**Wednesday 2:35 pm - 5:25 pm
In-person, not suitable for online students**

**Instructor: Adam Barrows
Email: adambarrows@cunet.carleton.ca**

******This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change.
A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term.******

Course description

Children and young adults have been so often situated at the core of stories of supernatural haunting and possession over the course of the twentieth century that the child as ghost, the possessed child, and the child communing with spectral figures have become clichés of film and television horror. A rich critical literature both within English literary studies and within child studies has explored the ways in which ghost stories about children and childhood touch upon changing social conceptions of childhood and innocence, anxieties about childhood agency and sexuality, and concerns over changing family structures. Less well explored, however, is what the haunting/haunted child trope reveals about changing socio-cultural conceptions of time and temporality in the twentieth century. As inherently temporal figurations (childhood as a temporal stage of becoming or developing, the ghost as a return of the past or the repressed), the child and the ghost both reveal fault lines in modernity's temporal integrity, touching upon anxieties over the experience and expression of time and temporality as well as concerns about historical progression and human development. In this course, we will read a range of ghost stories featuring children by English and American authors. Students will produce a critical annotated bibliography and a critical essay.

Learning Outcomes

In this course students will learn to: identify and discuss key themes and formal features of representative works of fiction by a range of English language writers of ghost stories; independently research the work of one English language ghost story writer of their choice; as appropriate, place works by English language writers within their national, cultural, political and

historical contexts; conduct secondary research in the service of original literary analysis and argumentation.

Required Texts (all texts are available through Octopus Books: octopusbooks.ca/students)

James, Henry. *The Turn of the Screw and Other Stories*. Oxford, 2008.

King, Stephen. *The Shining*. Anchor, 2012.

Mitchell, David. *Slade House*. Vintage, 2016.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. Vintage, 2004.

Evaluation

Attendance: **10%**

Annotated Bibliography: **35%**

Research Paper: **55%**

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Attendance

You are expected to attend every class and to readily participate in course discussion. Participation includes having carefully read the assigned pages for the day.

Annotated Bibliography

For this assignment, you will present 8-12 secondary critical sources that you have read as part of your research for the final essay. For each bibliographical entry, you must provide a substantial paragraph in which you summarize the thesis and major evidence of the critic, suggesting ways in which the source affirms or challenges the claims made by other critics included in your bibliography. This assignment will require intensive reading in the critical literature on your chosen author. Each source need not necessarily treat ghosts or childhood as its main subject. The source may not explicitly deal with your author, but in such cases, you must provide a clear rationale in the annotation as to why the source is relevant. At least half of your sources must have a publication date after the year 2000. Due on **February 28** (electronic submission preferred). Late submissions will be accepted with a 10-point deduction.

Research Paper

This assignment asks you to make an argument about the role of ghosts and/or childhood in the work of a twentieth- or twenty first-century author who may or may not be represented on the syllabus. The paper should be thesis-driven, and the argument must be supported by close textual evidence as well as situated within existing critical debate (which you will have summarized in your annotated bibliography). Your claim must primarily be based on close and original readings of representative texts by the author. In addition, you should discuss your author's work in

relation to at least two texts from the syllabus. Papers should be between 10 and 14 pages long (double-spaced 12-point Times New Roman or equivalent).

You have four grading options for submission of the paper, as follows:

Option One: Submit the paper on **April 10** (55%)

Option Two: Submit a proposal on **Feb. 14** (5%), and the final paper on **April 10** (50%)

Option Three: Submit a proposal on **Feb. 14** (5%), a partial draft (at least five pages) on **March 6** (15%), and the final paper on **April 10** (35%)

Option Four: Submit a proposal on **Feb. 14** (5%), a partial draft (at least five pages) on **March 6** (15%), a complete draft on **March 27** (20%), and final paper on **April 10** (15%)

All graded proposals, partial drafts, and complete drafts will receive extensive written feedback from me with clear suggestions for revision. Electronic submission preferred for all assignments. Late submissions will be accepted with a 10-point deduction.