

**Carleton University
Winter 2017
Department of English**

**ENGL 2906 B Culture and Society: Gothic and Horror
Prerequisite(s): 1.0 credit in ENGL at the 1000 level or permission of the Department**

**Tuesdays 6:05 – 8:55 pm
182 Unicentre**

Instructor: Aalya Ahmad, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: please email me for an appointment

Course Description:

This course is an overview of Gothic and Horror fiction as literary genres or fictional modes that reflect and play with prevalent cultural fears and anxieties. Reading short stories that range from excerpts from the eighteenth-century Gothic novels to mid-century weird fiction to contemporary splatterpunk stories, students will also draw upon a wide range of literary and cultural studies theories that analyze and interpret Gothic and horror texts. By the end of this course, students should have a good grasp of the Gothic and Horror field, of its principal theoretical concepts, and be able to apply those concepts to texts more generally.

Trigger Warning: This course examines graphic and potentially disturbing material. If you are triggered by anything you experience during this course and require assistance, please see me.

Texts: All readings are available through the library or on ARES. **Please note:** where excerpts are indicated, students are also encouraged to read the entire text.

Evaluation:

15% Journal (4 pages plus works cited list) due January 31

This assignment is designed to provide you with early feedback. In a short journal, please reflect on what you personally have found compelling about Gothic or horror fiction, including a short discussion of a favourite or memorable text(s). References to films and adaptations are also permissible so long as the main focus is upon print text. Evaluation will be based on quality of writing and presentation, content and the inclusion of primary references.

20% Short Presentation (February 14th to the end of the course)

Every lecture starting February 14th, 2-3 groups of 5 each will make short (10-15 minutes maximum) presentations on either a horror text or some aspect of Gothic/horror literature (for example, a particular type of monster or convention, a historical period or an author). Evaluation will be based on quality of research into the subject, the inclusion of at least two references to the critical theory discussed in the course, and the style and content of a 1-2 page handout produced by the group. You will have some class time for basic preparation but it is expected that you arrange to do the majority of this group work outside class.

35% Critical Essay (10-12 pages plus cover page and works cited list) due April 4

This essay asks you to analyze a work of Gothic or Horror fiction in detail, using at least three theoretical readings as secondary sources. You may compare two texts. Your primary text(s) need not necessarily be chosen from the readings from this course, but if that is the case, please discuss your choice with the instructor or teaching assistants at least two weeks before due date. Evaluation will be based upon organization, style, content, and citations.

Please note: a 5% bonus mark can be obtained on this assignment by taking a draft to the Writing Tutorial Service by **March 21st** (2 weeks) before the due date.

30% Take-Home Examination (handed out on April 4th, the last day of class) due April 25

A choice of topics will be provided. Exam will be short essay style.

Please note: 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 10 Introductions, Definitions

H.P. Lovecraft "Supernatural Horror in Literature" (public domain)
Noel Carroll, Introduction and Chapter 1, *The Philosophy of Horror* (full text online CU library)
Stephen King, excerpts from *Danse Macabre* (posted on CU Learn)
Matt Hills, Preface, Chapter 1, *The Pleasures of Horror* (posted on CU Learn)

January 17 The Gothic

Horace Walpole, Chapter 1 of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) (full text online CU)
Ann Radcliffe, Volume 2, Chapter 5 of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) (Gutenberg)
Matthew Lewis, Volume 3, Chapter 9 of *The Monk* (1796) (full text online CU)
Mary Shelley, Ch. 5,7,10,16, 20 of *Frankenstein* (1818) (full text online CU)
Ann Radcliffe, "On the Supernatural in Poetry" (1826)

January 24 The Victorians

J. Sheridan LeFanu, "Carmilla" (1872, Gutenberg)
Robert Louis Stevenson, "The Body Snatcher" (1884)
Bram Stoker, Chapters 2-3 from *Dracula* (1897, Gutenberg)
Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Leather Funnel" (*Tales of Terror and Mystery*, full text online, CU)
Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" (1919)

January 31 The Americans Journal Due

Edgar Allan Poe, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845) and "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839, full texts online, CU)
Henry James, "The Romance of Certain Old Clothes" (1868, online)
Ambrose Bierce, "The Middle Toe of the Right Foot" (1890, online)
Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846)

February 7 The British/Europeans

Guy de Maupassant, "The Horla" (1887)
Franz Kafka, "In the Penal Colony" (1919)
M.R. James, "Casting the Runes" (1911)
Rudyard Kipling, "The Mark of the Beast" (1890)
Tzvetan Todorov "The Fantastic" (1975)

February 14 Psychological/Supernatural

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892)
Shirley Jackson, Chapter 1, 4.6, 5.4 from *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959)
Mary E. Wilkins-Freeman, "Luella Miller" (1902)
Richard Matheson, "Born of Man and Woman" (1950)
Julia Kristeva, "Approaching Abjection" from *Powers of Horror* (1980)

February 21 Spring Break, no class *****

February 28 Weird Tales

H.P. Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu" (1928)
Ray Bradbury, "The Veldt" (1950)
C.L. Moore, "Shambleau" (1953)
Jerome Bixby, "It's A Good Life" (1953)
S.T. Joshi, "Introduction" to *The Weird Tale* (1990)

March 7 Disturbing Genders

Joyce Carol Oates, "Martyrdom" (1992)
Kathe Koja, "The Neglected Garden" (1991)
Amal El-Mohtar, "Biting Tongues" (2011)
Kelly Rose Pflug-Back, "Razor Voices" (2011)
Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, "The Queen's Looking Glass" in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979)

March 14 Scary Fairytales

Angela Carter, "The Bloody Chamber" (1979)
Manly Wade Wellman, "The Desrick on Yandro" (1952)
Neil Gaiman, "Snow, Glass, Apples" (1994)
Fritz Leiber, "Smoke Ghost" (1941)
Jack Zipes, Chapter 1 of *The Irresistible Fairy Tale* (2012)

March 21 The Splatterpunks

Michael Shea, "The Autopsy" (1980)
David Schow, "Jerry's Kids Meet Wormboy" (1989)
Clive Barker, "Dread" (1984)
Poppy Z. Brite, "Calcutta, Lord of Nerves" (1992)
Philip Brophy, "Horrality" in *The Horror Reader* (2000)

March 28 Intersectionalities/Intertextualities

S.P. Somtow, "Chui Chai" (1991)
Nalo Hopkinson, "Greedy Choke Puppy" (2000)
Stephen King, "The Ten O Clock People" (1993)
Edogawa Rampo, "The Human Chair" (1925)
Ken Gelder, "Postcolonial/Global Horror" in *Postcolonial Studies* (2010)

April 4 Speculative Fiction and The Newer Weird

Ramsey Campbell, "A Street Was Chosen" (1991)
Kim Newman, "Going to Series" (2005)
Gemma Files, "The Emperor's Old Bones" (1999)
China Miéville, "Säcken" (2015)
Ann and Jeff Vandermeer, excerpt from *The New Weird* (2008)

Critical Essay Due, Take-Home Exam Issued, Due April 25th

REQUEST FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). **Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.** After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website (www.carleton.ca/pmc) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence, which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Theory and Criticism

Aguirre, Manuel. *The Closed Space: horror literature and western symbolism*
Atwood, Margaret. *Strange Things: the Malevolent North in Canadian Literature*.
Auerbach, Nina. *Our Vampires, Ourselves*
Clemens, Valdine. *The Return of the Repressed*
Clover, Carol. *Men, Women and Chainsaws: gender in the modern horror film*
Daniels, Les. *Living in Fear: A History of Horror in the Mass Media*
Fleenor, Juliann E., ed. *The Female Gothic*
Freeland, Cynthia. *The Naked and the Undead: evil and the appeal of horror*
Gelder, Ken, ed. *The Horror Reader*
Golden, Christopher, ed. *Cut! Horror Writers on Horror Film*
Gross, Louis S. *Redefining the American Gothic: from Wieland to Day of the Dead*
Leffler, Yvonne. *Horror as Pleasure*
Massumi, Brian, ed. *The Politics of Everyday Fear*
Mishra, Vijay. *The Gothic Sublime*
Propp, Vladimir, *Morphology Of The Folktale*
Punter, David. *The Literature of Terror*
Sage, Victor and Allan Lloyd Smith, eds. *Modern Gothic: a reader*
Salomon, Roger B. *Mazes of the Serpent: an anatomy of horror narrative*
Twitchell, James. *Dreadful Pleasures: an anatomy of modern horror*.
Varma, Devendra P. *The Gothic Flame: Being a history of the Gothic Novel in England: its origins, efflorescence, disintegration, and residuary influences*.

Fiction (including some noteworthy anthologies)

Barker, Clive. *Books of Blood*
Blackwood, Algernon. *Tales of the Mysterious and Macabre*
Blatty, William Peter. *The Exorcist*.
Bloch, Robert. *Psycho* (plus numerous short stories)
Brooks, Max. *World War Z*
Burgess, Tony. *Pontypool Changes Everything*
Charnas, Suzy McKee. *The Vampire Tapestry*.
Crawford, F. Marion. *The Screaming Skull and other great American ghost stories*
Datlow, Ellen, and Windling, Terri. eds. *The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror* (series)
Due, Tananarive. *The Living Blood* and the "African Immortals" series
Ellis, Bret Easton. *American Psycho*. New York
Ellison, Harlan. *Deathbird Stories* and *Alone Against Tomorrow*
Etchison, Dennis, ed. *Masters of Darkness* (series)
Hartwell, David, ed. *The Dark Descent*.
Hopkinson, Nalo, ed. *Mojo: conjure stories*
Hutchison, Don, ed. *Northern Frights* (series)
James, M.R. *Collected Ghost Stories*
Kilpatrick, Nancy. *The Vampire Stories of Nancy Kilpatrick*
Matheson, Richard, *I Am Legend* (plus numerous short stories)
Moore, Alan, and Eddie Campbell. *From Hell: being a melodrama in sixteen parts*.
Rampo, Edogawa. *Japanese Tales of Mystery & Imagination*.
Suzuki, Koji. *Ring*
Wyndham, John. *The Day of the Triffids* and *The Midwich Cuckoos*

And many many many more!