

Course Outline

ENGL 2202A: Weird Fiction

Professor Grant
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Address

Prerequisite: Second-year standing or permission of the department

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 contact me.

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

Course Description

Weird fiction is a type of literature caught somewhere between horror and the supernatural, at times bordering upon science fiction and the gothic. In this course, students will read short stories representative of the genre. Lectures and activities build upon students' familiarity with the weekly readings by charting the development of weird fiction's generic conventions, by analyzing writers' implementation of narrative techniques, and by leveraging philosophical concepts and theoretical tools for making sense of the strange and the bizarre. The overarching goal of the course is for students to encounter and to understand the weird-fiction genre, its stories, its history, and its big ideas, so that they can apply their understanding to their own critical and creative project—or exam—by the course's end. Beyond the successful completion of the course, students should ultimately be able to interpret new stories in this genre, converse clearly and thoughtfully about them, and situate them in larger philosophical and historical contexts.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course all students will be able to:

1. recognize, find examples, and analyze the major tropes and generic conventions of weird fiction
2. explain how the weird-fiction genre evolved from the nineteenth century to the present
3. define, identify, and analyze the narrative techniques used by weird fiction writers
4. describe the philosophical and theoretical concepts for making sense of this genre of fiction and leverage them as tools for making sense of the strange and bizarre
5. apply their knowledge and skills of weird fiction to interpret new stories in the genre and situate them in larger historical and philosophical contexts.

Course Modules

Getting Started (Sept. 4)	Introduction: Weird Fiction
Module 1 (Sept. 9-25)	Precursors to Weird Fiction

Module 2 (Sept. 30-Oct. 14)	Lovecraft
Module 3 (Oct. 16-Nov. 4)	Lovecraft's Legacy
Module 4 (Nov. 6-13)	Kafka
Module 5 (Nov. 18-27)	Kafka's Legacy
Module 6 (Dec. 2-4)	Conclusion: Call of the Weird

Reading List

The short stories, unless otherwise noted, will be available on ARES and/or Brightspace. There are 12 short stories--as well as 3 parables--of varying length that you will read and study. The full reading list with authors and dates may be found on Brightspace too. You are responsible for reading each short story by the time of the first date given in the schedule but are also encouraged to read each story multiple times in part or in whole.

Reading Schedule

"The Fall of the House of Usher"	"Up from Slavery"
"Young Goodman Brown"	Kafka Parables
"The Death of Halpin Frayser"	"The Metamorphosis"
"The Outsider"	"The Town Manager"
"The Rats in the Walls"	"Bloodchild"
"The Call of Cthulhu"	"The Library of Byzantium"
"A Redress for Andromeda"	

valuation

% of Grade

In-Class Reading Quizzes (unannounced and brief)	15
In-Class Assignments (unannounced and brief)	20
In-Class Test	25
Final Exam	40
TOTAL	100