

## *Summer 2017*

**AP/EN 3170 3.0A (S1)**

### ***Horror and Terror: Variations on Gothic***

**Course Director:**

Dr. Natalie Neill  
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**Delivery Format:**

online (Lectures will be posted on our course website every Monday and Wednesday by noon.)

**Time:**

NA

**Description:**

This course provides an overview of the history and characteristics of gothic literature through a survey of diverse texts, beginning with the first gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, and ending with the comic book and TV series *The Walking Dead*. We will explore how stories about ghosts, vampires, and zombies give voice to personal fears and social anxieties. We will also address the issue of reception and literary value by considering the complex and contradictory responses that gothic narratives have elicited from readers and critics. In semi-weekly audio lectures and online discussions, we will consider the following questions (among others): What is gothic fiction? What makes a gothic text recognizable as such? Can we arrive at a definition that accommodates the varieties of gothic expression? How have the literary conventions that were established in early tales of supernaturalism been appropriated and reworked by later practitioners of the genre? How does gothic narrative change when it is adapted to new forms and media? What accounts for the enduring popularity of this genre? And, finally, why study gothic literature at all? What can be learned from reading gothic texts?

By the end of the course, students will understand the conventions of gothic fiction and the history of the genre. Students will recognize and apply important gothic concepts (e.g., horror vs. terror, explained vs. unexplained supernatural, the uncanny, doppelgängers, the shadow, the sublime, the grotesque, the abject, the gothic Other, the abhuman, etc.). Written assignments and online discussions will allow students to exercise their skills in literary and popular culture analysis and develop their ability to express ideas and arguments effectively.

**Category:**

D

**Area:**

NA

**Period:**

NA

**Historical Requirement:**

NA

**Requirements:**

Essay 1 (5 pages) - 35%

Essay 2 (6-7 pages) - 45%

Two 1-2-page Reading Responses with participation component - 20%

**Reading List:**

These required books will be available for purchase at the York Bookstore:

- Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (Oxford World's Classics)
- J. S. LeFanu, *Carmilla* (Wildside)
- Daphne Du Maurier, "The Birds" in *Don't Look Now: Selected Stories of Daphne Du Maurier* (NYRB)
- Robert Kirkman and Tony Moore, *The Walking Dead, Vol. 1: Days Gone Bye* (Image Comics)

Additional required readings (excerpts, short stories) are available as etexts and will be posted on the course Moodle site.

Students are also responsible for watching *The Shining* (dir. Stanley Kubrick) on their own. Copies of the film are available on 4-hour reserve loan at York's Sound and Moving Image Library, which is located on the main floor of Scott Library.

**Open To:**

Yr2, Yr3, Yr4