

Fall/Winter 2019-2020

AP/EN 2170 3.0A (F)

Horror and Terror: Variations on Gothic

Course Director:

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Delivery Format:

Lecture

Time:

Lecture: Fridays 10:30am-12:30pm
Tutorials: Fridays 12:30-1:30pm, 1:30-2:30pm

Description:

This course provides an overview of the history, characteristics, and social function of the gothic through a survey of motley texts, beginning with the first gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, and ending with a unit on 21st-century gothic literature and culture. We will read about ghosts, monsters, and survivors (and those who don't survive!) with an eye to understanding how the gothic taps into our deepest fears while also giving vent to social criticism and satire. Along the way, we will address the issues of reception and literary value by considering the complex and contradictory responses elicited by gothic texts. In lectures and tutorials, we will discuss the following questions (among others): What is the gothic? Can we arrive at a definition that accommodates the varieties of gothic expression? How have recent practitioners of the genre appropriated and reworked the conventions that were established in the early tales of supernaturalism? How does the gothic change when it is adapted to new forms and media? What accounts for the enduring popularity of the genre? And, finally, why study the gothic at all? What can be learned from engaging with gothic texts and culture?

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will understand the conventions of gothic fiction and the historical development of the genre. They will recognize and apply important gothic concepts (e.g., horror vs. terror, the grotesque, the posthuman, the sublime, the uncanny, abjection, alterity, defamiliarization, hybridity, etc.). Written assignments and 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

Historical Requirement:

N/A

Requirements:

Essay 1 (In-Class) (10%)
Essay 2 (20%)
Essay 3 (30%)
Participation in tutorial group (including a conference-style presentation) (15%)
Optional Experiential Activity (TBA) (Up to 5 bonus points)
Final Test (25%)

Reading List:

These required books will be available for purchase at the York University Bookstore:
Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (Oxford)
Sheridan Le Fanu "Carmilla" in *In a Glass Darkly* (Oxford)
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 (short stories, etc.) are available as etexts and will be posted on the course Moodle site. Students will also be responsible for one horror film (TBA).

Open To:

Years 2, 3, 4