

The Gothic and the Novel

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Office Hours: Barker 029, Thursday 3-5 and by appointment

Course Description:

Gothic novels unsettle the boundaries that we erect between body and mind, self and other, living and dead, will and compulsion, natural and supernatural. Many of the techniques and conventions found in gothic novels also unsettle the boundary between the gothic and the fictional by reflecting on the general experience of engaging with a work of fiction.

In this tutorial, we will take an interest in how gothic novels are useful for helping us think about the broader field of the novel. Perhaps more so than any other genre, gothic novels take an interest in rendering the act of engaging with a work of fiction mysterious and strange. For this reason, they have a lot to teach to literary critics, who aim, among other things, to produce a new experience of a familiar text. Like modern novel theorists, writers of gothic fiction take up matters such as the fictive, affect, the phenomenology of reading, the relationship between lyric and narrative, plot, and belief. Throughout the semester, we will look to these broader concerns without losing sight of each novel's uniqueness.

General Goals:

One of our most important goals will be to introduce the field of the gothic novel at an upper-division level. Another will be preparing to write a 20-25 pp. piece of critical writing due at the end of the course demonstrating mastery of both literary works and of methods of literary analysis. To work toward achieving this goal, a short critical paper (5-6 pp.), a 2-page prospectus with an annotated bibliography including 8-10 sources, and a full draft will be due at various points throughout the semester. Meetings with the English Department research librarian Odile Harter and the department writing fellow will help you work toward achieving this goal. Each student will present a discussion question about a primary or secondary reading either two or three times over the course of the semester (depending how many decide to take the course). The question should be e-mailed to me at least 48 hours before the day of the presentation. The goal is make sure that your interests help guide how we engage with the texts.

Assignments, Dates, and Grading Breakdown

Regular Attendance and Participation: 25%

2 or 3 Discussion Questions: 15%

First Short Paper: 10% (Week 4)

Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography: 15% (Week 6)

Full Draft (submitted to Department Fellow only): 10% (Week 10)

Final Draft: (Week 14) 25%*

*The final draft must be completed to receive a passing grade for the course.

Course Books:

I will provide each participant with before the start of the term, with copies of the secondary readings. If you don't already own the novels, purchase these copies so that we are all on the same page:

The Castle of Otranto (Dover Thrift Editions, ISBN-13: 978-0-846-43412-4)

The Mysteries of Udolpho (Penguin Classics, ISBN 0-14-043759-2)

Zofloya (Oxford UP, ISBN 978-0-19-954973-3)

Frankenstein (Penguin Popular Classics, ISBN 978-0-14-062332-1)

Wuthering Heights (Barnes & Noble Classics, ISBN 13: 978-1-59308-128-7)

Lady Audley's Secret (Oxford UP, ISBN 978-0-19-953724-2)

Tess of the d'Urbervilles (Dover Thrift Editions, ISBN 0-486-41589-9)

Weekly Readings:

Week 1: How is the gothic a consequence of the Enlightenment? What do the experience of the sublime and the experience of the uncanny have in common?

Immanuel Kant, from "The Analytic of the Sublime" (3-page excerpt)

Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny"

Cultural History: Terry Castle, introduction to *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (1995).

Week 2: Library research visit with Odile

Screening of Alfred Hitchcock's "Rebecca"

What are gothic effects?

Edmund Burke, from *Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful* (3-page excerpt)

William Wordsworth, from the "Preface" to the *Lyrical Ballads* (paragraph excerpt)

Week 3: What does it mean to believe in a work of fiction? To what end does Walpole strain our belief?

The Castle of Otranto, Horace Walpole

S.T. Coleridge, passages from *Biographia Literaria* (3-page excerpt)

Week 4: How does Radcliffe represent the workings of the mind?

The Mysteries of Udolpho, Ann Radcliffe

Philosophical psychology: Marshall Brown, chapter from *The Gothic Text* (2006).

Passage from Wordsworth's "Preface" (1 paragraph)

*First Short paper due

Week 5: How does Radcliffe represent the passions?

The Mysteries of Udolpho, Ann Radcliffe

Affect theory: Chapter from Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion from Hume to Austen* (1997).

Week 6: What is the relationship between the novel and allegory? How does the character of Victoria reflect on the character of the reader?

Zofloya, or the Moor, Charlotte Dacre

Theory of the Novel: from Margaret Doody, *The True Story of the Novel* (1997).

*Annotated Bibliography and Prospectus due

Week 7: Why is the monster horrible?

Frankenstein, Mary Shelley

Psychoanalytic criticism: Julia Kristeva, "On the Abject" (1982).

Screening of Ridley Scott's "Alien"

Week 8: What is the relationship between violence and embodiment? How do *Frankenstein* and *Alien* dramatize or otherwise register the fact of their mediation?

Frankenstein

Media Studies: Jules Law, "Gothic Violence and Virtuality in *Frankenstein*, *Dracula* and *Strange Days*," *ELH* (2006).

Week 9: What is the role of the gothic in the history of the novel?

Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte

Teleology of the Novel: Nancy Armstrong, "A Gothic History of the English Novel," *New Directions in the English Novel* (2014).

Week 10: Are the things referenced in novels fictional or real?

Wuthering Heights

Literary theory: Elaine Freedgood, "Ghostly Reference," *Representations* (2014).

*Full draft of final paper due to Department Writing Fellow

Week 11: Why are sensation novels so designated? How do they compare to gothic novels? Why are Lady Audley's fascinations dangerous?

Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret* (this is a 450-page novel, but it is a real page-turner, full of long passages that can be skimmed)

Encyclopedia Entry: Nancy Armstrong, "The Sensation Novel" (2011).

In-class screening: clip of Lace from *The Bachelor*

Week 12: How does *Tess* participate in projects of the sensation novel? Where does it diverge from these?

Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Thomas Hardy

Review last week's secondary reading

Week 13: In which earlier traditions does the reader participate? Is an act of reading self-enclosed or does it possess the free-standing significance of ritual?

Tess of the d'Urbervilles

New Historicism: Catherine Gallagher, "*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*: Hardy's Anthropology of the Novel" (1998)

Week 14: Junior Tutorial Conference, final papers due

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas or writing without giving them proper credit. Consequences of plagiarism can range from failure on the paper to dismissal from the course to even more serious actions. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with Harvard FAS's Honor Code: "*Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one's own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.*"

Collaboration: In individual assignments, academic collaboration and external sources should be always cited.

Attendance/Participation: Attendance is both appreciated and required, both for the general tutorial meetings and our meetings. Each day of missed class results in a deduction of five points from the attendance/participation grade. You can avoid this penalty once (for whatever legitimate or illegitimate reason) by writing a substantive paragraph on the week's reading. Your participation should always reflect that you have done and thought about the readings.

Due Dates & Late Grades: Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due by 9pm on the date listed in the schedule. Late assignments will be docked 1/3 letter grade per day late, except for the final paper, which are required for a passing grade in the course and must be turned in before the due date. I do not grant extensions except in cases of emergency, or turns of events that cannot be planned around. A fight with your roommate is, on these grounds, a better excuse than a deadline for another class (please don't pick a fight with your roommate). I do not grant extensions after the deadline. If you turn in a

paper late, providing an excuse from your resident dean could (*maybe!*) decrease the late deduction.

Email: If you have a question that you need to ask me by email, be sure to give me at least 24 hours, or you may not get a response until it's too late.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: *“Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term. Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although Faculty are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.”*