

**English 98r. Junior Tutorial
AY 2018-2019**

**American Apparitions:
Gothic & Supernatural Fiction in America, 1780-1900**

Instructor: Emily Silk

“One need not be a Chamber—to be Haunted— / One need not be a House— /
The Brain has Corridors—surpassing / Material Place—” *Emily Dickinson*

Course Overview

Since its colonial beginnings, American literature has been haunted by apparitions of all kinds: literal and psychological, human and supernatural, explained and unexplained, terrifying and melancholy and consolatory. If Emily Dickinson warns us that any place can be haunted—from the chambers of a house to the corridors of the mind—she also urges us to consider who or what is lurking there. This tutorial is guided by that very question: what sorts of apparitions haunted American life and letters during the nineteenth century? We will seek the answers in a series of American literary texts produced between 1780 and 1900, which participate in the genres of Gothic and/or supernatural fiction. More specifically, we will explore how nineteenth-century Gothic and supernatural fiction gave voice to the values, beliefs, anxieties, fears, and turmoils that percolated in American culture during this period. Lurking behind the apparitions in our texts are very real questions, anxieties, and claims about (to name just a few): gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, industrialization and urban living, national and regional identity, political and social life, science and religion, crime and punishment, human will and psychology.

Across the semester, we’ll go ghost-hunting through a vast array of geographies, institutions, and domestic spaces, including: a lonely house on the American frontier, a stately manor in the English countryside, an antebellum plantation, an ancestral home with ties to the Salem witch trials, Civil War battlefields and hospitals, rural country byways, bustling city streets, and—of course—the corridors of the human mind. We will investigate literary texts and authors from all corners of the nineteenth-century literary marketplace: bestsellers and unpublished manuscripts; “cheap” fiction (thrillers, dime novels) and “high” literary fiction; canonical and noncanonical texts; realist and romantic and historical fiction. In these haunted places and haunted texts, we will encounter a cast of characters including headless horsemen, mesmerists, spiritualists, biloquists, detectives, and apparitions of all sorts. What can these hauntings tell us about the sort of world in which they arose?

More broadly, this tutorial serves as an introduction to scholarly writing in the discipline of English. Our readings draw on a range of secondary materials, intended to familiarize you with current approaches to the study of nineteenth-century American literature, as well as to novel studies, genre studies, women and gender studies, race and ethnicity studies, and cultural studies. Ultimately, you will situate your own work in relation to these fields through the research and writing of an original 20-25 page scholarly paper (the junior essay) on a relevant topic of your choosing.

Course Objectives

By the conclusion of this tutorial, you should be able to:

- Articulate major thematic, formal, generic, and historical trends relevant to the study of American Gothic and supernatural fiction during the nineteenth century
- Summarize and participate in current academic debates relevant to the study of American Gothic and supernatural fiction during the nineteenth century
- Describe and analyze a variety of genres, including the Gothic novel, the ghost story, the romance, the realist novel, regional fiction, and the dime novel
- Understand, evaluate, and apply critical methods to literary texts, drawing on scholarly work in gender studies, race and ethnicity studies, genre studies, postcolonial studies, etc.
- Design a research question and conduct scholarly research to address it, making productive use of secondary criticism in addition to primary texts
- Develop a compelling literary argument in the form of a 20-25 page research paper

Required Texts

The following texts should be purchased or borrowed from the library; all other course readings will be made available on Canvas. Unless you already own another edition of the text, I recommend acquiring the editions in parentheses. If you wish to borrow rather than purchase books, all of these texts are available in the Harvard Library system as well as through Borrow Direct and Interlibrary Loan.

- Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland* (1798) [Oxford University Press, 978-0199538775]
- Hannah Crafts, *The Bondwoman's Narrative* (1850s) [Warner Books, 978-0446690294]
- Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) [Penguin, 978-0140390056]
- Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) [Modern Library, 978-0375757402]

Assignments

Engaged participation is the name of the game in tutorial, and your contributions to discussion are a vital part of our seminar experience. Please come to class each week having read and considered the assigned texts, ready to ask questions and to draw our attention to passages that you find particularly interesting, puzzling, problematic, etc. Beyond reading and preparing your personal notes for class, the work of the tutorial is as follows:

Two Mini Writing Challenges (~150 words each), each one emailed to me by 8 pm the night before class. “Definitions” is due in Week 2, and “Sources” is due in Week 5.

- **Definitions:** Drawing on Brockden Brown and the secondary readings for this week, write a definition of “the Gothic” in your own words (no quotes) that is ~100 words in length (short paragraph). Then rewrite your definition in ~50 words (1-2 sentences). Then rewrite it again, in 10 words or less (short sentence or phrase). Submit all three definitions.

- **Sources:** After reading Hawthorne’s *House of the Seven Gables*, use Harvard library resources to find and read one scholarly article that makes an argument about the novel. Then, complete and submit the “Source Analysis” exercise (distributed in class during Week 4). Come to class with copies of your chosen article for the group, and be prepared to discuss your findings.

Two “Seminar Starters.” Twice during the semester, each student will be responsible for “starting” class with a brief reflection on the week’s reading. During your seminar starter weeks, you will:

- Circulate a written reflection (no more than 1 double-spaced page) by 8 pm the night before class; your reflection should meditate on some aspect of the week’s readings, as well as raise questions for discussion
- Open the conversation in seminar, informally presenting (in about 3-5 minutes) your reflections and questions to the class
- Invite classmates to raise additional questions or topics for discussion (at this point, other members of the tutorial will have an opportunity to share what they wish most to cover during the seminar time)

Short Paper (5-6 pages) that makes an argument based on a close reading of one or more works read during the first four weeks of the course.

Junior Essay (20-25 pages) on a topic of your choice, to be determined in consultation with me. The final essay is due at the end of reading period and is preceded by several intermediate deadlines:

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| Week 6 | 1-Hour Research Workshop at Widener Library (in class) |
| Week 7 | 2-Page Prospectus outlining topic and provisional argument

Annotated Bibliography of at least 8-10 sources, with a brief description of each work’s argument and how the essay will engage with it |
| Week 9 | 10-Page Partial Draft of the junior essay |
| Week 11 | 20-25 Page Full Draft of the junior essay (this will be followed by a short “reverse outline” assignment, deadline TBD) |
| READING WK | Final Junior Essay due to the English Department (date and time TBD) |
| READING WK | 5-Minute Presentation on your research, to be delivered aloud at the Junior Tutorial Conference (time and location TBD) |

In addition, please be sure to mark your calendar for two required Junior Tutorial General Meetings:

- Tutorial Program Welcome and Overview (time and location TBD)
- Seniors Tell All – Reflections on the Junior Essay (time and location TBD)

Finally, across the semester there will be a few additional workshops and sessions held outside of class (all dates and times are TBD):

- **Departmental Writing Fellow Consultation:** each student in the tutorial program is required to consult at least once with the Departmental Writing Fellow on a draft of the junior paper.
- **Optional Junior Paper Workshops:** the Departmental Writing Fellow will lead 2-3 optional workshops on topics relevant to the junior paper process (topics to be announced later in the semester).
- **Houghton Library Visit:** our tutorial also will have an opportunity to visit Houghton Library, which holds an incredible collection of rare books and manuscripts relevant to our syllabus. We will schedule an hour-long library visit outside of class time to examine these materials with a Houghton librarian.

Grading Breakdown:

Attendance & Class Participation: 10%

Short Assignments (mini-challenges, seminar starters, conference presentation): 10%

Short Paper: 15%

Prospectus & Annotated Bibliography: 10%

Drafts of Junior Essay: 10%

Junior Essay: 45%

COURSE SYLLABUS

WEEK 1 **Introduction**

In Class Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle” (1819) & “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (1820)
St. John de Crèvecoeur, “Distresses of a Frontier-Man” in *Letters from an American Farmer*
(1782)

UNIT 1: EARLY AMERICAN HAUNTINGS

During the first unit of this course, we will explore the nature of Gothic encounters across three sites in antebellum American fiction: the frontier, the plantation, and the laboratory. Charles Brockden Brown’s *Wieland*, set in eighteenth-century rural Pennsylvania, explores psychological, spiritual, and physical terrors on the edges of social life. Hannah Crafts’ *The Bondwoman’s Narrative* draws on Gothic tropes to track its heroine’s escape from slavery on a North Carolina plantation. This novel also has a remarkable and ghostly history: discovered as an unpublished manuscript in 2001, it was attributed definitively in 2013 to Hannah Bond—who herself escaped from slavery in the late 1850s. Our unit closes with short stories by Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne, two masters of the Gothic, the supernatural, the fantastic, and the horrible. We will (loosely) focus our study of Poe and Hawthorne on the site of the laboratory, from which we will explore the mysterious and often terrifying underbelly of mid-century science, technology, medicine, and criminal investigation. Along the way, we will ask a series of questions about the genre(s) of our texts. What exactly is the “Gothic,” and what are its characteristics? Where does the Gothic overlap with the supernatural, the weird, the fantastic, and the horrible? What anxieties and terrors—political, social, institutional, personal—lurk behind the plots and places of these texts?

WEEK 2 **The Frontier: Early American Wilderness**

In Class Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland; or, The Transformation* (1798)

- * Ann Radcliffe, “On the Supernatural in Poetry” (1826)
- * Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds, “Charles Brockden Brown and the Frontiers of Discourse” in *Frontier Gothic: Terror and Wonder at the Frontier in American Literature* (1993)
- * Suzanne Rintoul, “Gothic Anxieties: Struggling with a Definition” (2005)
- * Adam Frost & Zhenia Vasiliev, “How to Tell You’re Reading a Gothic Novel” (2014)

* **Due 8 pm the night before class: “Definitions” Mini-Challenge**

WEEK 3 **The Plantation: American Slavery**

In Class Hannah Crafts, *The Bondwoman’s Narrative* (composed 1850s, published 2002)
Harriet Beecher Stowe, “The Stratagem” from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852)

- * Karen Sanchez-Eppler, “Gothic Liberties and Fugitive Novels: The Bondwoman’s Narrative and the Fiction of Race” from *In Search of Hannah Crafts* (2004)
- * Ellen Moers, “The Female Gothic” from *Literary Women* (1976)

WEEK 4 The Laboratory: Science, Medicine & Detection

In Class Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Birth-Mark” (1843) & “Rappaccini’s Daughter” (1844)
Edgar Allan Poe, “The Murders on the Rue Morgue” (1841), “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar” (1845), “Preface” to *Tales of the Grotesque and the Arabesque* (1840)

- * Tzvetan Todorov, from *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1975)
- * Jack G. Voller, “Allegory and Fantasy: The Short Fiction of Hawthorne and Poe” in *The Supernatural Sublime* (1994)
- * Toni Morrison, from *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992)
- * In-class discussion: building blocks of the research paper

Due **Short paper due** (submit via email by midnight)

UNIT 2: HAUNTED HOUSES, HAUNTED MINDS

In this unit, we will consider haunted houses—domestic spaces—and their correlates in haunted minds. With Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The House of the Seven Gables* as our bridge, we will move to consider a series of late-nineteenth century fictions offering intensely psychological portraits of the human mind: Henry James’s enigmatic novella *The Turn of the Screw*, Edith Wharton’s psychologically charged ghost tale “The Eyes,” and Gilman’s iconic short story “The Yellow Wallpaper.” Each of this unit’s fictions is deeply invested in presenting the workings of the human mind, and in the houses—an ancestral manor in Old Salem, a stately English manor house, a rented summer home—that reflect the anxieties, fears, and terrors of their occupants. In this unit, we will ask: what is “gothic” about the human mind? what exactly haunts these houses? when is a ghost a ghost, and when is it something else entirely?

WEEK 5 Ancestral Homes, Haunted Histories

In Class Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851)
Emily Dickinson, “One need not be a Chamber—to be Haunted—” (1860s)

- * **Due 8 pm the night before class: “Sources” Mini-Challenge** [no assigned secondary reading this week; find and identify one source on your own per the Mini-Challenge]
- * In-class discussion: identifying and analyzing secondary sources

→ *Note:* individual conferences this week to discuss short paper feedback & research topic ideas

WEEK 6 Junior Paper Research Workshop (no assigned reading this week)

In Class Instead, please begin to research and read texts relevant to your junior paper topic.

By noon the day before class, please email the tutorial a 2-3 sentence topic ‘pitch’ and a starter list of 5 sources that you think will be relevant to your topic.

- * In-class visit to Widener: conducting library research (with Odile Harter, research librarian)
- * In-class discussion: writing an effective prospectus & annotated bibliography

WEEK 7 **Psychological Tales: Paranoia & the Paranormal**

In Class Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw* (1898)
Edith Wharton, “The Eyes” (1910)

- * Bruce Robbins, “Recognition: The Servant in the Ending” from *The Servants’ Hand: English Fiction from Below* (1987)
- * Shoshana Felman, “Henry James: Madness and the Risks of Practice” from *Writing and Madness* (2003)

Due **Prospectus & Annotated Bibliography Due** (submit via email by midnight)

WEEK 8 **Psychological Tales: Marriage & Medicine**

In Class Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1891) & “Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper” (1913)

- * Sandra Gilbert & Susan Gubar, excerpt from *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979)
- * Susan S. Lanser, “Feminist Criticism, ‘The Yellow Wallpaper,’ and the Politics of Color in America” (1989)
- * Elaine R. Hedges, “‘Out at Last’?: ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’ after Two Decades of Feminist Criticism” (1992)

→ *Note*: individual conferences this week to discuss prospectus feedback & next steps

UNIT 3: SPECTERS OF SLAVERY AND CIVIL WAR

This unit will take us to the aftermath of the Civil War: in many ways the defining event in nineteenth-century American life, and the climax of an increasingly heated national contest over the “peculiar institution” of slavery. The war claimed the lives of an estimated 620,000 soldiers, dividing and devastating families across the nation; its outcome definitively decided the status of four million slaves, officially emancipated by constitutional amendment in 1865. In this unit, we consider the battlefield and the home front as haunted sites across three texts: “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” by Civil War veteran Ambrose Bierce; “The Case of George Dedlow” by physician Silas Weir Mitchell, who treated soldiers during the war; and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps’ bestselling spiritualist novel *The Gates Ajar* (1868), which offered comforting visions of Heaven to families grieving for loved ones lost in battle. We will also consider the specter of slavery and the rise of Jim Crow laws in African American literature at the turn of the twentieth century. We will read Charles W. Chesnutt’s “The Goophered Grapevine” and “Po’ Sandy,” from his short story collection *The Conjure Woman*; and the murder mystery “Talma Gordon,” by prolific novelist, playwright, and journalist Pauline Hopkins.

WEEK 9 **Battlefield Specters: Soldiers & Spiritualism**

In Class Ambrose Bierce, “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” (1890)
Silas Weir Mitchell, “The Case of George Dedlow” (1866)
Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, selections from *The Gates Ajar* (1868)

- * Drew Faust, from *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (2008)
- * Bridget Bennett, “‘There Is No Death’: Spiritualism and the Civil War” from *Transatlantic Spiritualism and Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (2007)

Due **10-Page Partial Draft of Junior Paper Due** (submit via email by midnight)

WEEK 10 **Slavery’s Ghosts: From Reconstruction to the Jim Crow Era**

In Class Charles W. Chesnutt, “The Goophered Grapevine” & “Po’ Sandy” (1899)
 Pauline Hopkins, “Talma Gordon” (1900)

- * Charles Chesnutt, “Superstitions and Folklore of the South” (1901)
- * W. E. B. Du Bois, from *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)
- * Zoe Trodd, “Vanished Past and Vanishing Point: Charles W. Chesnutt’s Short Stories and the Problem of American Historical Memory” in *Charles Chesnutt Reappraised* (2009)

→ *Note:* individual conferences this week to discuss partial draft feedback & next steps

UNIT 4: CITY & COUNTRY AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

In our final unit, we turn to several fictions that present visions of urban and rural life at the end of the nineteenth century. Taking the city as a Gothic site, we will read Laura Jean Libbey’s dime novel *Leonie Locke*, tracing the trials of its working-class heroine in late nineteenth-century New York; we will also read selections from George Lippard’s wildly popular novel *The Quaker City*, considering its lurid picture of mid-century Philadelphia. What do urban thrillers and “cheap” fictions have say about the dangers and excitements of life in a rapidly industrializing and increasingly crowded urban world? Turning from the city to the country, we will consider the supernatural fictions of two “regional” women writers at the turn of the twentieth century: Mary Wilkins Freeman and Sarah Orne Jewett, both best known for their realistic short stories depicting life in rural New England; we will also read Madeline Yale Wynne’s enigmatic story of domestic space, “The Little Room.” This unit closes with a spectral topic, to be decided based on the interests of the class.

WEEK 11 **Urban Gothic & The Dime Novel**

In Class Laura Jean Libbey, *Leonie Locke; or, The Romance of a Beautiful New York Working Girl* (1884)
 George Lippard, excerpts from *The Quaker City; or The Monks of Monk Hall* (1845)

- * Shelley Streeby, from *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (2002)
- * Michael Denning, from *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America* (1987)

Due **20-25 Page Full Draft of Junior Paper Due** (submit via email by midnight)

WEEK 12 **Regional Fictions, Rural Ghosts**

In Class Mary Wilkins Freeman, “Luella Miller” (1903), “The Shadows on the Wall” (1903), “The Wind in the Rose-Bush” (1903)
Sarah Orne Jewett, “Lady Ferry” (1879), “The Landscape Chamber” (1887)
Madeline Yale Wynne, “The Little Room” (1895)

* Jeffrey Weinstock, from *Scare Tactics: Supernatural Fiction by American Women* (2008)

→ *Note*: individual conferences this week to discuss final drafts; before your conference, please complete a reverse outline and email it to me

WEEK 13 **Spectral Topic (Topic of Choice) & Presentations**

In Class Readings to be determined based on interests of the class

* In-class presentations: practice runs for Junior Tutorial Conference

TBD **Reading Period Begins**

TBD **Departmental Deadline for Junior Papers (date and time TBD)**

TBD **Junior Tutorial Conference (time and location TBD)**

COURSE POLICIES

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 assignment to dismissal from the course to even more serious actions. You are responsible for understanding 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: I encourage you to talk with other students about the course and our readings, as well as to read one another's work. In individual assignments (including presentations and papers), academic collaboration and external sources should be always cited.

Office Hours & Conferences: In addition to regular office hours, I am always happy to schedule additional meetings to discuss readings and research. It's never too early to come talk to me about ideas for your junior paper. I'll also be scheduling individual check-ins with each of you across the semester to discuss the progress of your work. Expect to attend four conferences with me, the first after you submit your short paper, the second after you submit the prospectus, and the third & fourth after you submit the partial & full drafts of your junior paper.

Email & Course Website: I will communicate with you by email each week on relevant logistics and what to expect in the upcoming class session. In addition, you should always feel free to email me with any thoughts, questions, or suggestions you may have. Readings and other materials will be posted to our course site on Canvas; announcements will always be distributed by email.

Attendance: Attendance in tutorial is key to your own success and that of the class, as is attendance at Junior Tutorial General Meetings and other required events (research orientation, Junior Tutorial Conference, etc.). I will give each student one "free" absence in case of sickness, travel, etc.: no explanation necessary. Missing more than one class will impact your participation grade, and excessive absence could result in course failure. If you have extenuating circumstances, please speak with me as soon as possible so we can decide on a plan of action together.

Deadlines & Late Grades: Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due by 11:59 pm on the date listed in the schedule; late assignments will have one-third of a letter grade subtracted per day late. I am willing to grant extensions for exceptional circumstances: if you think you will need an extension on an assignment, please talk with me as soon as possible. Note that I cannot grant extensions for the final paper: students who fail to submit a final paper, or submit a final paper late without an official excuse, will fail the tutorial.

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."