

The Gothic Tradition in Literature 42.377
Fall 2012 Syllabus
Dr. Bridget Marshall
University of Massachusetts, Lowell

Class Meetings: Fridays 11 – 1:50

Office Hours: Wednesdays 11 – 12 and by appointment in O’Leary 461

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“The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear.” -- H.P. Lovecraft

Our course will explore how texts exploit this oldest and strongest emotion through well-known tropes of terror; haunted houses, monsters, ghosts, ghouls, madmen, madwomen, specters, vampires, werewolves, and a wide variety of other creepy, mysterious, and dark things will fill our semester’s texts. This course will consider works that fall under the very broad genre known as “The Gothic.” As this genre is one of highly contested boundaries, we will consider how to define the Gothic, and what exactly constitutes this form. Our six major novels are from both England and America, and span the late 18th to the 20th century. Our study will primarily focus on the form of the novel, with some readings from other Gothic documents, such as poetry, short stories, and essays. We will also read critical excerpts that have helped to define the genre in literary studies.

This is a 300-level English course with an ambitious reading list and several major writing assignments; you will need to keep up with the readings and be prepared for every class meeting. Take a look at your schedule and make sure that you have time to read all of our (quite long) novels. If you can’t commit to the reading, this is not the class for you.

Course Goals:

- 🏠 To become familiar with the history of the gothic genre, and its place in literary and cultural history
- 🏠 To make connections between the historical genre and modern day manifestations of it
- 🏠 To develop skills of close and careful reading
- 🏠 To enhance discussion skills by participating in classroom discussion
- 🏠 To practice self-directed reading by choosing one book outside of the syllabus
- 🏠 To improve presentation skills with an end-of semester paper presentation
- 🏠 To develop writing and research skills through developing a final paper

Your Course Goals:

This course relies upon a participatory, collaborative learning experience. While I have many goals for the course (specified above), hopefully you also have your own goals for this course, whether that’s focused on what you learn about the topic, what you do in the classroom, or what work you do outside the classroom. Take a moment right here at the beginning of the semester to write down **at least 3 goals you have for yourself in this course:**

1.

2.

3.

Instructional Resources and Disability Accommodations:

The Centers for Learning and Academic Support Services provide many resources, including tutoring in writing: <http://class.uml.edu/>. In accordance with University policy and the ADA, I will provide accommodation for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible. Their office is on North campus, in Cumnock Hall C6, phone: 978-934-4574, e-mail: Disability@uml.edu. This documentation is confidential.

A note on classroom conduct:

In this class, and in all classes at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, students are expected to exhibit professional and respectful behavior that is conducive to a mutually beneficial learning environment in the classroom. Examples of inappropriate behavior include: text messaging, listening to music, cell phone use (other than the campus alert system), late arrivals, early departures, use of laptops for other than class purposes, disrespectful comments or behavior, intentional disruptions, failure to follow faculty directives. Students in violation of these standards may be asked to leave class and/or be referred to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

University Cancellation Line: 978-934-2121

Course Requirements:

Attendance is required. This is not a correspondence course. You can fail the course for not attending class. Since we only have 13 (lucky!) class meetings, it's particularly essential that you be here and be prepared for our classroom work. You have one (1) "free" absence to use as you need. For every class beyond that one that you miss, your final grade for the class will be lowered one grade step. (I.e., if you have a "B" for the class, but have missed 4 classes, you will receive a "C" for your final grade.) Excessive or habitual lateness can also count as an absence.

Good classroom citizenship is required. Good classroom citizenship goes beyond just "participation" in the sense of raising your hand a lot. It includes sharing your thoughts and actively listening to the thoughts and comments of your peers. Please be considerate of your classmates and make the classroom a space where everyone can speak their mind. We will have both full-class discussions and small group work. If you are not particularly comfortable speaking in the full-class discussion, be sure you are making up for it in the smaller group discussions. Also, as a courtesy to everyone in the room, please turn off your cell phone before class begins. If you must eat or drink during class, please be respectful of those around you, and of those who come after you by cleaning up after yourself.

There is a (sometimes quite long) reading assignment due every day. You must keep up with the reading (and writing) assignments. I reserve the right to give reading quizzes as necessary to prod your reading, though I would rather not resort to such ploys.

Major Assignments & Graded Materials:

- Two "Discussion Starter" assignments. This is a brief (one page) write up that you will turn in at the beginning of class on your assigned days. The semester schedule includes notations of "Discussion Starter' Group X." You will be assigned to a group, but you do not need to work with the group – this is just a notation so that you know which day your individual assignment is due. See the handout for more details on the requirements for these assignments.
- Two "Aftermath" assignments. This is a brief (one page) write up that should follow up on issues raised in class discussion. This assignment is due via e-mail to me by midnight on the Wednesday following selected classes. The semester schedule includes notations of "Aftermath' assignment Group X." You will be assigned to a group, but you do not need to work with the group – this is just a notation so that

you know which day your individual assignment is due. See the handout for more details on the requirements for these assignments.

- Two short (4 page) papers. These short papers will be close readings of selected passages and will rely upon your careful reading of passages from the text; they do not require outside research. They are, however, formal papers, unlike the “Discussion Starter” and “Aftermath” assignments described above. See the assignment handouts for more details.
- Read one gothic novel not included on the syllabus. More on this later.
- Create a presentation for the last week of class on your chosen novel. Your presentation will be about 5 minutes long, and you must have a handout to share with the rest of the class. The presentation is a chance to share your ideas for the final paper and teach others in the class about a text outside of the regular reading list.
- Write a Final Paper (12 pages) on one gothic novel not on the syllabus. You should read the novel and connect it to the history of the gothic as we have explored it in the course. You’ll also need to do some outside research into scholarly sources and reviews. This paper is not a plot summary; it should focus on an analysis of the novel, including how it fits into the larger genre of the gothic.

Evaluation and Grading: Grading is my least favorite aspect of the course; however, grades are necessary, not only to the University, but also in many cases in order to motivate students.

Breakdown of points for the final grade:

Classroom Citizenship: 20%
Discussion Starter/Aftermath Assignments: 15%
Paper 1: 15%
Paper 2: 20%
Final Project presentation: 5%
Final Project paper: 25%

Final grade ranges:

A: 94 – 100
A-: 90 – 93
B+: 87 – 89
B: 83 – 86
B-: 80 – 82
C+: 77 – 79
C: 73 - 76
C-: 70 - 72
D: 61 – 69.....F: 60 & below

Please keep in mind the attendance policy (already detailed in the “Requirements” section above). Absenteeism is the leading cause of poor grades in my courses. Excellent attendance and participation will have a positive effect on your grade, particularly if you end up on a “borderline” between two grades.

You are responsible for completing all readings on the date they are due. It’s fairly easy to see who has and who hasn’t done the reading assignments (whether through quiz performance or by observing class participation). Completing the readings is part of your job as a member of our class. Your completion of the reading assignments, scores on quizzes, short take-home assignments, and in-class writing assignments, along with my evaluation of your participation in classroom discussion and activities, will be included in the “Classroom Citizenship” portion of your grade.

When I return papers and exams, they will indicate a number (points you earned out of total points possible for the assignment), which you can translate into a percentage and/or a grade. I record only the number in my book until the final grade tabulation. I also look favorably on improvement over the course of the semester.

If you have a concern about a grade or your standing in the class, I am quite happy to talk with you. This type of conversation is best suited to an individual conference. Please e-mail me to schedule an appointment.

*Please note: if you are determined to do only the minimal amount of work and get the minimum passing grade, this much is **nonnegotiable**: you are not eligible for a passing grade of D unless you have attended at least 8 out of 13 class meetings, and completed 90% of the assignments.*

About Academic Honesty:

All University policies on academic dishonesty apply to all assignments in this course. The information below comes from the University's official policy, which can be found online:

http://www.uml.edu/catalog/undergraduate/policies/academic_dishonesty.htm

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

- *Cheating* - use, or attempted use, of trickery, artifice, deception, breach of confidence, fraud, or misrepresentation of one's academic work.
- *Fabrication* - falsification or invention of any information or citation in any academic exercise.
- *Plagiarism* - representing the words or ideas of another as one's own work in any academic exercise.
- *Facilitating dishonesty* - helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty, including substituting for another in an examination, misrepresenting oneself, or allowing others to represent as their own one's papers, reports, or academic works.

If you plagiarize or cheat on an assignment in this course, you will receive an "F" for this course, and you are subject to other discipline (including expulsion from the University) at the discretion of the instructor and the University. Please keep in mind that even if you write some part or even "most" of the paper, if some portion of the paper is copied from another source without proper attribution, (i.e., if you "only plagiarize a little") you will still get an "F" for the course. Don't plagiarize at all.

Unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism. You must cite all sources that you use, including online sources. Also, remember that "using" a source includes directly quoting, paraphrasing, and using ideas from any source. There is nothing wrong with "getting help" from other writers, just be sure to acknowledge it by using quotation marks or author/page citation appropriately. Please take the time to give proper credit to the work of other authors. It is a matter of respect – for yourself, for other authors, for your classmates, and for me.

I know that it is easy to find information and indeed whole papers on the internet. You should know that it is also easy for me to find these sources. If I suspect you've done this, I will take the time to find the source, and there is every likelihood you will be caught. Please don't waste your time or mine by plagiarizing a paper. If you're having difficulty with a writing assignment, please talk to me before the day it is due.

Required Texts:

Horace Walpole: *The Castle of Otranto*
Dover Thrift Edition \$2.50
ISBN-13: 978-0486434124

Matthew Lewis: *The Monk*
Dover Thrift Edition \$3.50
ISBN-13: 978-0486432144

Charles Brockden Brown: *Edgar Huntly*
Penguin Classics: \$11.95
ISBN-13: 978-0140390629

Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein*
Bantam Classic: \$4.95
ISBN-13: 978-0553212471

Robert L. Stevenson: *Jekyll and Hyde*
Bantam Classics \$3.95
ISBN-13: 978-0553212778

Henry James: *The Turn of the Screw*
Dover Thrift Editions \$1.50
ISBN-13: 978-0486266848

Stephen King: *The Shining*
Pocket Books: \$8.99
ISBN-13: 978-0743424424

PLUS one additional novel of your choice (further info TBA).

There are numerous editions of many of these books; I have tried to order the cheapest editions available. If you already own an alternate edition, or you find another cheap edition, you can continue to use it. However, please make sure that your edition is UNABRIDGED (there are many shortened, edited, and expurgated versions of these books out there).

Semester Schedule

If you miss a class, you are still responsible for what was due on the day(s) you missed and on the day you return. If the University closes, upon return to class, the items for both the missed class and the day of return class are due. In the case of a paper due on a day the University closes, the paper is due on the day we return to class. Please e-mail me if you have questions about assignments due for missed classes.

The “Group” assignments are not group work – you just need to know the “Group” you’re in so that you know when your own individual assignments are due.

Date	Readings that should be completed/assignments due
Friday 7 September	First Day of Class Introductions and such
Friday 14 September	<i>The Castle of Otranto</i> “Discussion Starter” Group 1
Group 2: “Aftermath” assignment due via e-mail by midnight, Wednesday, September 19	
Friday 21 September	<i>The Monk</i> Volumes I & II (this is a very long assignment!) “Discussion Starter” Group 3
Group 4: “Aftermath” assignment due via e-mail by midnight, Wednesday, September 26	
Friday 28 September	<i>The Monk</i> Volume 3 “Discussion Starter” Group 2
Group 1: “Aftermath” assignment due via e-mail by midnight, Wednesday, October 3	
Friday 5 October	First paper due [also: start reading <i>Edgar Huntly</i> – it’s long!]
Friday 12 October	<i>Edgar Huntly</i> “Discussion Starter” Group 4
Group 3: “Aftermath” assignment due via e-mail by midnight, Wednesday, October 17	
Friday 19 October	<i>Frankenstein</i> “Discussion Starter” Group 1
Group 2: “Aftermath” assignment due via e-mail by midnight, Wednesday, October 24	
Friday 26 October	<i>Jekyll and Hyde</i> “Discussion Starter” Group 3
Group 4: “Aftermath” assignment due via e-mail by midnight, Wednesday, October 31	
Friday 2 November	Second Paper Due
Friday 9 November	Other Gothic Documents (handouts) Also note: you should have found your outside novel for the final by now!
Group 1: “Aftermath” assignment due via e-mail by midnight, Wednesday, November 14	
Friday 16 November	<i>The Turn of the Screw</i> “Discussion Starter” Group 2
Group 3: “Aftermath” assignment due via e-mail by midnight, Wednesday, November 21	
Friday 30 November	<i>The Shining</i> (the book, not the movie) “Discussion Starter” Group 4
Friday 7 December	PRESENTATIONS on Final Projects

Friday 14 December	Final Project Due
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General Advice & Information:

Come to class prepared to work. This means several things:

- 1) You should have completed the assigned readings, and any associated writing. You might even have notes in your book, underlining of passages, or page markers for interesting spots in the reading.
- 2) You should be prepared to listen and talk in discussion. This means you shouldn't come to our class and take a nap, or sit sullenly, or play Words with Friends, or complete your calculus homework.
- 3) You should avoid distractions during class. Distractions include things like small pets, cell phones and text messaging devices, notes to classmates, i-pods, personal robot assistants, or any other gadget that will engage your brain in something other than the academic discussion in the classroom. While you may think I don't notice, I do, and so do your classmates. It's distracting for you, but also for those around you.

When you don't come to class (for whatever reason) it is your responsibility to find out the work that you missed, including any handouts, in-class activities, or changes to the syllabus. If you can do this via e-mail before the next class meeting, that's great. If you can't, you should definitely come speak with me before class, after class, or in my office hours. In any case, don't try to avoid me, hoping that I didn't notice you were absent. I definitely noticed. Like a gothic villain, I am always paying attention to your every move. Well, not really, but I was wondering if anyone was actually going to read the syllabus this closely all the way to the end. But seriously, if you've missed a class, see me to get any missed materials.

If you need extra time for an assignment, for whatever reason, it is better to ask early. I do not automatically give extensions; however, I am a reasonable person, and you should ask for help or time if you need it. An "extension" is something you ask for BEFORE a paper is due. When you ask for extra time on the day a paper is due (or in the days after it was due), that is called "late." Late papers are subject to a grade reduction at my discretion, and I do not provide comments on late papers.

A few Special Warnings regarding the Gothic:

The reading assignments for this course are long, partly because this is an upper-level English course, but also due to the nature of Gothic novels (which, as you will soon learn, tend towards the thick side). If you cannot commit to reading the assignments, please drop the course. While the assignments are long and may make you miserable, you (and your classmates, and your professor) will be much more miserable if you stay in the class and can't keep up with the assignments. If this semester is a heavy load for you (either in your other courses or your personal life), take a close look at the syllabus and the book list; you might want to consider another class. If you're just here because you like scary stories, you might be better off in a 200-level course such as "The Horror Story," where I (and other professors too) teach similar texts but at a less crazy pace.

Finally, our texts are, for some, an acquired taste. If you don't like scary, you might not like this class. Then again, if you do like scary (like *Saw* or *Human Centipede* scary) you might not like this class. Review the book list (but don't read too many spoilers!) and make sure you want to do this.