

The Horror Story (English 42.217.201) Syllabus for Spring 2013

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Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2 – 3:15 in Coburn 200

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 11 – 12:15 and by appointment

Office Location: O’Leary 461

Office Phone: 978-934-4179

Our course will explore creepy tales – reading, enjoying, and learning about their history. We’ll focus mostly on the short story genre, with a few exceptions (including one novel, many critical essays, and occasional poems). The standard themes of horror -- madness, death, monsters, obsession, secret sins, and the supernatural -- will haunt our stories and our discussions. Along the way, you will be asked to think about, talk about, and write about the themes, forms, conventions, and styles that connect the broad diversity of texts we study. We’ll consider the questions of why we read and enjoy horror stories, and what makes for good ones.

Course Goals: At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- **Identify** the elements of horror stories, both historically and today.
- **Close read** a horror story, engaging with the text and context of the tale.
- **Compare** horror stories and ideas about the genre with those of others through critical readings and in-class discussion.
- **Evaluate** horror stories and theories of horror.
- **Apply** various theories of horror to particular texts.
- **Practice** skills of academic argument, in both written and oral form.
- **Demonstrate** mastery of a story and critical approaches through a class presentation.

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. 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.

Required Texts:

1. *The Dark Descent* Ed. David G. Hartwell ISBN-10: 0312862172 ISBN-13: 978-0312862176

You need this edition (electronic is fine). Note that you will need to have this text by our second class meeting.

2. *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James ISBN-10: 0486266842 ISBN-13: 978-0486266848

Any full-text edition of this book is fine.

Instructional Resources

The Centers for Learning and Academic Support Services provide many resources, including tutoring in writing: <http://class.uml.edu/>. I encourage you to seek assistance if you are struggling in this or any class here at UML. Their services are free to use (and paid for by your student fees!).

Disability Accommodations:

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:

This is a 3 credit course, as defined by federal regulation (I'm not kidding). You should expect to complete 6 hours of out of class work each week for approximately 15 weeks, for a total of 90 hours of outside-of-class work.

Attendance is required. This is not a correspondence course. You can fail the course for not attending class. You have two (2) "free" absences to use as you need. For every class beyond those two 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.

You are responsible for completing all readings on the dates they are due (and this is especially true on days when your peers are giving presentations). Sometimes I will also ask you to do a small amount of writing (a paragraph, a group of questions) before you arrive in class, so that we can get started right away with discussion. I reserve the right to give reading quizzes as necessary to prod your reading, though I would rather not resort to such ploys.

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. 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. Please be considerate of your classmates and make the classroom a space where everyone can speak their mind. 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.

I do not accept papers over e-mail or on electronic storage devices. If a paper is due, that means it is due in printed, hard-copy form, not electronically. Do not attach documents to e-mails that you send to me unless you check with me first.

Major Assignments & Graded Materials: (see semester schedule for specific due dates)

- **Two One-page “Discussion Starters”:** These should be focused responses of about 1- 2 pages, due on the day the reading is due, in which you show your engagement with the text. See the assignment sheet for details.
- **Two Exams:** There are two in-class exams covering the material in class. I’ll provide more details in class on the exam format prior to each exam.
- **Short “Theory of Horror” Paper.** This is a 3-page paper in which you engage with at least one critical theory of horror stories (as provided in reading handouts) and propose your own ideas about the genre and why we read it. See the assignment sheet for more details.
- **Group Presentation / Discussion-Framing:** Groups of 4 students will prepare a presentation and frame/direct the class discussion for our last 10 class meetings. Your group will need to provide some kind of visual material – whether that takes the form of a few powerpoint slides, a handout or some other creative format is up to you. You will need to consult with me about your presentation content at least one week prior to your presentation. The group presentations are meant to make sure that you are invested in the reading assignments; ideally they will encourage you to be more invested in the readings, and to take responsibility for the use of our classroom time. I have assigned stories already for these days, however, if your group finds another story that is not already on the syllabus – either in our book, or that you can distribute to the entire class – you are welcome to use that story, so long as you let me know well in advance so that I can check the material, approve it, and announce the change to the class. If you are even considering this, you should start early to identify the alternative story you’d like to do. I will provide more details on the presentation requirements as the presentation dates approach.
- **Choose-Your-Own-Horror-Story:** By the end of the semester, you must find (and read) one horror story that is not included on the syllabus. Your final paper assignment is to write 4 - 5 pages about how it fits with any other text we’ve read for class, how it relates to the theories of horror we’ve discussed, and describe how would you teach the text. You’ll also need to get me a copy of the story if it’s not in our course book. As an alternate, creative assignment, you may choose to write a horror story. See the assignment sheet for more details.

Evaluation and Grading:

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. Following is information on how final grades will be calculated:

Breakdown of points for the final grade:

Classroom Citizenship: 15%

Discussion Starter Assignments (2): 5%

Theory of Horror Paper: 15%

First Exam: 15%

Second Exam: 20%

Presentation (as part of a group): 15%

Final Choose-[or Write]-Your-Own-Horror: 15%

Final grade ranges:

94-100=A: Superior work, *highest quality*
90-93=A-: High Honors Quality
87-89 = B+: High Quality
83-86= B: Basic Honors Quality
80-82=B-: Below Honors Quality
77-79=C+: Above Satisfactory Quality
73-76=C: Satisfactory
70-72=C-: Below Satisfactory
67-69=D+: Above Minimum Passing
60-66=D: Minimum Passing
below 60=F: Failed

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.

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: This much is **nonnegotiable**: you are not eligible for a passing grade of D unless you have attended at least 11 of 14 weeks worth of classes, and completed 90% of the assignments.*

Academic Integrity

Please review the Undergraduate Academic Integrity Policy:

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

*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. 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 and 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. Don’t waste your time or mine by plagiarizing a paper. If you’re having difficulty with a writing assignment, talk to me before the day it is due.

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, so always consult the syllabus (or a classmate, or me) in the case of an absence.

DATE	DUE IN CLASS ON THIS DATE
Tuesday 22 January	First day of class introductions, discussions and such
Thursday 24 January	Read: This whole syllabus Introduction: <i>The Dark Descent</i> (DD 1 – 11) Collier: “Bird of Prey” (handout)
Tuesday 29 January	Read: E.A. Poe: “The Fall of the House of Usher” (DD 368 – 381) Wisker: “What is Horror Fiction?” (handout) Zinoman: “Critique of Pure Horror” (handout) Write: Response Group 1 Discussion Starter Paper
Thursday 31 January	Read: H. P. Lovecraft: “The Call of Cthulhu” (DD 85-107) Jarrett: “The Lure of Horror” (handout) Write: Response Group 2 Discussion Starter Paper
Tuesday 5 February	Read: King: “Crouch End” (DD 690 - 711) King: “Why We Crave Horror Movies” Huet: “Introduction to Monstrous Imagination” (handout) Write: Response Group 3 Discussion Starter Paper
Thursday 7 February	Read: H. P. Lovecraft: “The Rats in the Walls” (DD 431-444) Goddu: “Intro to American Gothic” (handout) Write: Response Group 4 Discussion Starter Paper
Tuesday 12 February	Read: Charlotte Perkins Gilman: “The Yellow Wallpaper” (DD 460-471) Todorov: “Definition of the Fantastic” (handout) Write: Response Group 1 Discussion Starter Paper
Thursday 14 February	Read: William Faulkner: “A Rose for Emily” (DD 472-479) Write: Response Group 2 Discussion Starter Paper
Tuesday 19 February	NO CLASS – UNIVERSITY MONDAY SCHEDULE
Thursday 21 February	Exam 1 in class today
Tuesday 26 February	Read: Blackwood: “The Willows” (DD 909 – 943) Write: Response Group 3 Discussion Starter Paper
Thursday 28 February	Read: O’Brien: “What Was It?” (DD 864 – 873) Ambrose Bierce: “The Damned Thing” (DD 880-886) Write: Response Group 4 Discussion Starter Paper
Tuesday 5 March	Due: Theory of Horror Paper Must be in hard copy at the start of class meeting
Thursday 7 March	Read: James: <i>Turn of the Screw</i> beginning to end of chapter IV (p. 1 – 21) Wisker: “Key Questions” and “Horror Criticism and Ways in” (handout)
March 10-16	Spring Break (no class)
Tuesday 19 March	Read: James: <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> (finish it) Write: All: One page response (as assigned in class)

*Important Note: The reading assignments listed below are subject to change, as the presentation groups have the option of choosing an alternate story. Groups that wish to choose an alternate story should do so ASAP, so that revisions to the reading assignment can be announced at least one full week prior to the due date.	
*Thursday 21 March	Read: "The Summer People" (DD 108 – 117) Read: "Belsen Express" (DD 245 – 254) Presentation Group 1
*Tuesday 26 March	Read: Aickman: "The Hospice" (DD 970 – 994) Presentation Group 2
*Thursday 28 March	Read: "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper" (DD 255 – 267) Atwood: "Murder in the Dark" (handout) Presentation Group 3
*Tuesday 2 April	Read: "Dread" (DD 339 – 367) Presentation Group 4
*Thursday 4 April	Read: "Smoke Ghost" (DD 629 – 640) Presentation Group 5
*Tuesday 9 April	Read: "The Monkey" (DD 382 – 409) Presentation Group 6
Thursday 11 April	Exam 2 in class today
*Tuesday 16 April	Read: "Night-Side" (DD 712 – 730) Matheson: "Born of Man and Woman" (DD 513 – 515) Presentation Group 7
*Thursday 18 April	Read: Chambers: "The Repairer of Reputations" (DD 793 – 816) Presentation Group 8
*Tuesday 23 April	Read: James: "The Ash-Tree" (DD 40 – 50) Jackson: "The Beautiful Stranger" (DD 874 – 879) Presentation Group 9
*Thursday 25 April	Read: de la Mare: "Seaton's Aunt" DD 731 - 752 Presentation Group 10
Tuesday 30 April	Last Day of class wrap-up Assignment TBA
Tuesday 7 May	Final Paper/Project Due

Some other General Advice:

Check your UML e-mail regularly for important updates from the University and from me.

Come to class prepared to work. Bring the text we're reading to class every day. Join the conversation, which means both listening to others and contributing your own ideas.

If you need extra time for an assignment, for whatever reason, ask (preferably early). In general, I would rather have a late paper than no paper at all; I would rather have no paper at all than a plagiarized paper. Late papers are subject to a grade reduction at my discretion, and I do not provide comments on late papers.