

The Gothic Tradition in Literature 42.337
Spring 2015 Syllabus
Dr. Bridget Marshall
University of Massachusetts, Lowell

Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursday 9:30 – 10:45

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursday 10:45 - 12 and by appointment in O'Leary 469

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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 through the 19th century. Our study will primarily focus on the form of the novel, with some readings from other Gothic documents and some critical excerpts that have helped to define the genre in literary studies.

Warning: 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 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.

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.

Instructional Resources

The Writing Center, located on the third floor of O’Leary Library, offers free writing tutoring. You can meet with a tutor about any writing assignment in any class. Check it out: www.uml.edu/Writing-Center. The Centers for Learning and Academic Support Services provide many tutoring resources; more details are available here: <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 in University Crossing, 220 Pawtucket Street, Suite #300, phone: 978-934-4574, e-mail: Disability@uml.edu. Documentation of disability is confidential.

University Cancellation Information: 978-934-2121, or check uml.edu. 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 an assignment due on a day the University closes, the assignment is due on the day we return to class.

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 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. To be an active class participant, you need to do more than just raise your hand and talk about what you liked. Engage with your peers. Ask questions. Listen to the insights that others have, and engage with the arguments going on around you. Class discussions should be a conversation among the class members, not a series of individual monologues. 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:

- Four 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 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 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 some kind of visual (handout, powerpoint, etc.) for your presentation. 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 Starters (4): 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, 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: 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-Integrity.aspx>

*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. 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.

Required Texts:

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

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

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

Louisa May Alcott: *A Long Fatal Love Chase*
Bantam Dell: \$7.99
ISBN-13: 978-0440223016

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

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

PLUS one additional novel of your choice for your final project. More info TBA, but be on the lookout for one more Gothic novel.

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). Also, if you are using a different edition, you should talk to me about your pagination and make sure that you are still doing the complete reading assignment. In some cases, I do assign introductions and other material from our editions, so if you are using a different edition, make sure you acquire those pages (for instance, photocopy a classmate's copy of the introduction, etc.).

Semester Schedule

In most cases, I have tried to make the assignments due on Tuesdays longer than assignments due on Thursdays (working on the assumption that you have more time between Thursday and Tuesday than you do between Tuesday and Thursday). Please come to class having completed the assigned reading (or writing or viewing) for the day. We need everyone to be prepared and ready to join the discussion.

Date	Readings that should be completed/assignments due
Tuesday 20 January	First Day of Class Introductions and such
Thursday 22 January	<i>The Castle of Otranto</i> ***SKIP the edition introduction and “Sir Walter Scott’s Introduction.” START with the “Preface to the First Edition” (page 17 – 19 of our edition) SKIP the Preface to the second edition (21 – 25) and then continue with the story 27 – 61 (end of chapter 2)
Tuesday 27 January	<i>The Castle of Otranto</i> ***Read page 61 – end; finish the novel, then go back and read both Introductions and the Second Preface. Discussion Starter Group 1
Thursday 29 January	<i>The Monk</i> SKIP the Introduction! START on page xiii – 58 (through the end of chapter 2) Discussion Starter Group 2
Tuesday 3 February	<i>The Monk</i> pages 58 – 124 (through end of chapter 5) Discussion Starter Group 3
Thursday 5 February	<i>The Monk</i> 124-167 (end chapter 6) Discussion Starter Group 4
Tuesday 10 February	<i>The Monk</i> 167 -247(end of chapter 10) Discussion Starter Group 1
Thursday 12 February	<i>The Monk</i> 247 -end Discussion Starter Group 2
Tuesday 17 February	NO CLASS FOR US: MONDAY CLASSES MEET TODAY (psssst...you might want to start reading <i>Edgar Huntly</i> !)
Thursday 19 February	First paper due [also: start reading <i>Edgar Huntly</i> – it’s long!]
Tuesday 24 February	<i>Edgar Huntly</i> SKIP Introduction; START at “To the Public” through chapter 10 (inclusive) pages 1 – 103 Discussion Starter Group 3

Thursday 26 February	<i>Edgar Huntly</i> Chapter 11 – 15 (inclusive) [pages 104 – 150] Discussion Starter Group 4
Tuesday 3 March	<i>Edgar Huntly</i> Chapter 16 – 24 (inclusive) [pages 151 – 241] Discussion Starter Group 1
Thursday 5 March	<i>Edgar Huntly</i> Chapter 25 through end [pages 242 – 285] Discussion Starter Group 2
Tuesday 10 March	Gothic Documents: Critics and Theories (handouts)
Thursday 12 March	<i>Frankenstein</i> START with 1818 Preface, read Letters I – IV and Chapters I – III; specific pages depend on edition (talk to me about yours!) Discussion Starter Group 3
March 16 - 22	Spring Break! (You might want to start <i>A Long Fatal Love Chase</i> now!)
Tuesday 24 March	<i>Frankenstein</i> Chapters IV - XIX; specific pages depend on edition (talk to me about yours!) Discussion Starter Group 4
Thursday 26 March	<i>Frankenstein</i> Chapters XX – XXIV (end) & read 1831 Introduction; specific pages depend on edition (talk to me about yours!) Discussion Starter Group 1
Tuesday 31 March	Second Paper Due
Thursday 2 April	<i>A Long Fatal Love Chase</i> pages 1 - 73 Discussion Starter Group 2
Tuesday 7 April	<i>A Long Fatal Love Chase</i> pages 75 - 183 Discussion Starter Group 3
Thursday 9 April	<i>A Long Fatal Love Chase</i> pages 185 - 258 Discussion Starter Group 4
Tuesday 14 April	<i>A Long Fatal Love Chase</i> pages 259 - 346
Thursday 16 April	<i>Jekyll and Hyde</i> “Incident at the Window” (inclusive) [pages 1 – 40] Discussion Starter one chance to do a make-up
Tuesday 21 April	<i>Jekyll and Hyde</i> “The Last Night” – end [pages 41 – 84] Discussion Starter last chance to do a make-up
Thursday 23 April	Review/Catch-up Day!
Tuesday 28 April	PRESENTATIONS on Final Projects
Thursday 30 April	Last Day of Class PRESENTATIONS on Final Projects

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.