



Horror and Terror: Variations on Gothic 2170 3.0A (fall 2019)

Course Director Dr. Natalie Neill
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 Office: 724 Atkinson
 Office hour: Fri., 2:30-3:30 (or via live chat, by appointment)

Lecture Fri., 10:30-12:30 (CLH H)

Tutorials

Tutorial 1	Fri., 12:30-1:30 (RN 201)	Natalie Neill
Tutorial 2	Fri., 1:30-2:30 (RN 201)	Clare Wall
Tutorial 3	Fri., 12:30-1:30 (MC 101)	Clare Wall

Description

This course provides an overview of the history, characteristics, and social function of the gothic through a survey of diverse texts, beginning with the first gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, and ending with a unit on 21st-century gothic literature and culture. We will read about ghosts, monsters, and survivors (and those who don't survive!) with an eye to understanding how the gothic taps into our deepest fears while also giving vent to social criticism and satire. Along the way, we will address the issue of reception and literary value by considering the complex and contradictory responses elicited by gothic texts. In lectures and tutorials, we will discuss the following questions (among others): What is the gothic? What makes a gothic text recognizable as such? Can we arrive at a definition that accommodates the varieties of gothic expression? How have the literary conventions that were established in early tales of supernaturalism been appropriated and reworked by later practitioners of this genre? How does gothic change when it is adapted to new forms and media? What accounts for the enduring popularity of the gothic? And, finally, why study the gothic at all? What can be learned from engaging with gothic texts?

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will understand the conventions of gothic fiction and the history of the genre. They will recognize and apply important gothic concepts (e.g., horror vs. terror, explained vs. unexplained supernatural, the uncanny, the grotesque, the shadow aspect, the sublime, abjection, alterity, the posthuman, hybridity, *doppelgängers*, revenants, taboos, etc.). Written assignments and discussions will allow students to exercise their skills in literary and popular culture analysis and develop their ability to express ideas and arguments effectively.

Required Texts (In reading order)

These required books are available for purchase at the York University Bookstore:

Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (Oxford)


J. S. LeFanu, “Carmilla” in *In a Glass Darkly* (Oxford)

Daphne Du Maurier, “The Birds” in *Don’t Look Now: Selected Stories of Daphne Du Maurier* (New York Review Books Classics)

Robert Kirkman and Tony Moore, *The Walking Dead*, Vol. 1: *Days Gone Bye* (Image Comics)

Additional required readings (excerpts, short stories, etc.) are available online and as PDFs. Links can be found on the course Moodle site and in the Weekly Schedule below under the appropriate week. Students will also be responsible for one horror film (to be determined by the class). The film will be screened in class and will be placed on reserve at York’s Sound and Moving Image Library (SMIL), which is located on the main floor of Scott Library.

Additional Resource (Optional)

 *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. All assignments in this course must conform to Modern Language Association style guidelines. The *MLA Handbook* includes all you need to know (and more) about formatting English essays correctly.

Evaluation

Assignment and weight	Due date
Essay 1 (In tutorial) (10%)	Fri., Oct. 4
Essay 2 (4-5 pages, excluding Works Cited) (20%)	Mon., Nov. 4 (via Turnitin)
Essay 3 (6-7 pages, excluding Works Cited) (30%)	Fri., Nov. 29 (via Turnitin)
Participation in tutorial group (including a conference-style presentation) (15%)	Weekly Various
Optional Experiential Activity (TBA) (Up to 5 bonus points)	Various
Final Test (25%)	To be held during the formal exam period

Full assignment instructions will be posted in the “Assignments” folder on our course website well in advance of the due dates.

Weekly Schedule

Please make every effort to have the weekly readings completed before lecture and tutorials.

- Week 1 (Sept. 6): What is gothic fiction?: Course overview and introduction
- Week 2 (Sept. 13): Unit 1: Gothic Origins
Reading: Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*
- Week 3 (Sept. 20): Readings: Coleridge, [“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”](#); Shelley, Excerpts from *Frankenstein*: [Chapter 5](#) (the creation scene) and [Chapter 10](#) (Victor Frankenstein and his creation meet on the summit of Montanvert)
- Week 4 (Sept. 27): Unit 2: Nineteenth-Century Gothic
Readings: Poe, [“The Black Cat”](#); Gaskell, [“The Old Nurse’s Story”](#); Gilman, [“The Yellow Wallpaper”](#)
- Week 5 (Oct. 4): Reading: Le Fanu, *Carmilla*
Essay 1 will be held in tutorial groups this week.
- Week 6 (Oct. 11): Unit 3: Twentieth-Century Gothic
Readings: Connell, [“The Most Dangerous Game”](#); Lovecraft, [“The Outsider”](#); Faulkner, [“A Rose for Emily”](#)
- Oct. 12-18 – Fall Reading Week (no classes, tutorials, or office hours will be held this week)
- Week 7 (Oct. 25): Reading: Du Maurier, *The Birds*
- Week 8 (Nov. 1): Readings: Fletcher, “The Hitchhiker” ([script](#) / [radio play](#)); Breece D’J Pancake, [“Time and Again”](#)
Essay 2 is due on Mon., Nov. 4 via the Turnitin link on Moodle.
- Week 9 (Nov. 8): Unit 4: Contemporary Gothic
Film Screening (TBA)
N.b.: Nov. 8 is the last date to drop the course without receiving a grade.
- Week 10 (Nov. 15): Readings: Baker, “Subsoil” (to be circulated); “Bedtime Story” (Episode 132 of *Welcome to Night Vale*) ([podcast](#) / [transcript](#))
- Week 11 (Nov. 22): Reading: Kirkman and Moore, *The Walking Dead: Days Gone Bye*
- Week 12 (Nov. 29): Course Wrap-Up and review
Essay 3 is due today via the Turnitin link on Moodle.
- Dec. 5-20 – Fall Exam Period (**The final test will be held during the formal exam period.**)

Additional Information

Turnitin

Students will submit all course assignments by uploading them to specific Turnitin links that will appear on our Moodle site before the assignment due dates. Turnitin.com is an Internet-based service that scans submitted works for similarity to material that may have been copied from public websites, including essays and assignments submitted previously to Turnitin. If you have questions or concerns about Turnitin, please speak with the course director.

Lateness Penalty and Extensions

Assignments received later than the specified due date will be penalized 2.5% per two working days late. An extension may be granted if there are extenuating circumstances. In order to request an extension, please contact your tutorial leader at least one week before the due date.

Academic Accommodations

If you need accommodations, please give the required form to your tutorial leader at the beginning of the term. For more information about Academic Support & Accommodations, follow this link: <https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/academic-support-accomodations>

The Writing Centre

Extra essay writing help is available at The Writing Centre. For contact information and a description of the services provided, follow this link: <http://writing-centre.writ.laps.yorku.ca/>

Academic Integrity

Always cite your sources. Information on the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty can be found here: <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69>

Student Counselling & Development

For personal counselling services and other supports, contact York University's Student Counselling & Development (SCD): <https://counselling.students.yorku.ca/>