

English 218: The Gothic Tradition

Instructor: Dr. Justin Pfefferle
Bishop's University, Department of English
www.justinpfefferle.com

Office: Mackinnon 115A
Phone: TBA

Office Hours: Mondays, 10:00-11:00
jpfeffer@ubishops.ca

Course Description:

It's 2019, and in popular and high culture, the Gothic tradition is alive and well. Over the past decade, we have witnessed the pop-culture sensation that is Stephanie Meyers' YA vampire-romance series, *Twilight*, Robert Eggers' moody, atmospheric film, *The Witch*, and, only months ago, the release of the Netflix original series *The Haunting of Hill House*, a ripe-for-binge-viewing adaptation of Shirley Jackson's bone-chilling novel. As readers, viewers, and consumers, we gravitate to the Gothic; in this, are we so different from the characters within Gothic narratives who cannot help themselves but traverse the weeded-over, labyrinthine grounds and approach that gloomy, decaying mansion where some of them meet their doom?

Students who take this course will make a similar approach to the edifice of the Gothic Tradition. We will spend the term following the twists and turns of the social, cultural, and historical grounds within which the tradition developed. We will enter the corridors of an expansive survey of texts and excavate their deepest, darkest mysteries. We begin our journey with what is arguably the first Gothic novel, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. From here, we move on to the canonical Gothic novels of Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein*) and Charlotte Brontë (*Jane Eyre*), before we uncannily re-encounter Jane in Daphne du Maurier's perverse Gothic romance, *Rebecca*. We round out our course with two stylistically similar but conceptually different representations of the Southern Gothic tradition, William Faulkner's modernist *As I Lay Dying* and Toni Morrison's dark, difficult novel about the legacies of American slavery, *Beloved*.

Required Texts:

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847)
Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca* (1938)
William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (1930)
Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987)
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)
Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1774)

Assignments and Distribution of Grades

Class Engagement: 10%
Reading Quizzes (Beginning of Class, Random): 15%
Short Scene Analysis: 20%
Final Paper (8-9 pages, 2,000-2,500 words): 30%
Final Exam: 25%

Course Schedule

****Subject to change, depending on pace****

Week One: Introduction

- Wednesday (9 January): Introduction to “The Gothic Tradition”

Week Two: Freud, the Uncanny, and the Beginnings of the Gothic Tradition

- Monday (14 January): E.T.A. Hoffman, “The Sandman”; Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny”
- Wednesday (16 January) Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, Chapter 1-3; Anna Laetitia Aikin, “On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror”

Week Three: Romance, Romanticism, and the Gothic Tradition

- Monday (21 January): Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, Chapter 4-5
- Wednesday (23 January): Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Preface-Volume 1, Chapter 7

Week Four: Dismembering History

- Monday (28 January): Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Volume 2, Chapter 1-Volume 2, Chapter 9
- Wednesday (30 January): Shelly, *Frankenstein*, Volume 3, Chapter 1-Volume 3, Chapter 4

Week Five: The Gothic Imagination

- Monday (4 February): Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Volume 3, Chapter 5-Volume 3, Chapter 7 and Shelley, “Introduction to *Frankenstein*, Third Edition”
- Wednesday (6 February): Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, Chapter 1-10

Week Six: The Madwoman in the Attic

- Monday (11 February): Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, Chapter 11-17
- Wednesday (13 February): Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, Chapter 18-25

Week Seven: Gothic Inscriptions

- Monday (18 February): Brontë: *Jane Eyre*, Chapter 26-38
- Wednesday (20 February): Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca*, Chapter 1-7

Week Eight: The Uncanny Return of *Jane Eyre*

- Monday (25 February): du Maurier, *Rebecca*, Chapter 8-12
- Wednesday (27 February): du Maurier, *Rebecca*, Chapter 13-18

*****Reading Week: No Class on March 4 and 6 *****

Week Nine: The Southern Gothic

- Monday (11 March): du Maurier, *Rebecca*, Chapter 19-27; Viewing (outside class): Alfred Hitchcock, *Rebecca* (1940)
- Wednesday (13 March): William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, Darl-Vardaman (67)

Week Ten: Modernism and the Gothic Tradition

- Monday (18 March): Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, Tull-Darl (136)
- Wednesday (20 March): Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, Tull-Darl (181)

Week Eleven: Re-membering History

- Monday (25 March): Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, Armstid-Cash (261)
- Wednesday (27 March) Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, 3-63

Week Twelve: The Return of the Repressed

- Monday (1 April) Morrison, *Beloved*, 64-124
- Wednesday (3 April): Morrison, *Beloved*, 125-199

Final Class: The Legacies of the Gothic Tradition

- Monday (8 April): Morrison, *Beloved*, 200-273

Course Policies and Statements

Statement on Course Material:

This is a course on Gothic fiction. As such, we will be encountering representations of violence, particularly violence against women, that many of us may find difficult to deal with. The texts that we will be studying this term may also represent abhorrent ideas, including racism, sexism, and homophobia. It is everyone's job in this class to figure out how we can discuss these issues respectfully, tactfully, and with intellectual rigour. Whenever necessary, please do not hesitate to discuss with me potential strategies we might employ to fulfill this important mandate for the course.

Anti-Discrimination Policy:

I am committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming environment for all students. This class will be free of white supremacy, racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, or any related expressions of bigotry and intolerance.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory. **If you miss more than 5 classes (whether excused or unexcused) you will not be eligible for a passing grade in this course.**

Technology Policy:

A 2011 study at the University of Michigan found that 75% of students reported "using a laptop during class increased the amount of time they spent on non-course work." 35% of students reported having spent "more than ten minutes per class using social media sites and email." In light of this study, I have a strict ban on digital/communications technologies in class, including e-books. Without exception, laptops, tablets, and cell-phones must be stowed away in bags for the duration of class time. **Failure to observe this policy on three occasions will result in a forfeit of the 15% allotment for class engagement.**

Policy on Submissions:

All assignments must be submitted to me in hard-copy, in class on the due date. All assignments must be completed in order to be eligible for a passing grade in this course. **Requests for extensions must be made to me in writing (via email) at least one week prior to the due date. Late submissions will receive a penalty of 10% per day late.**

Learning Assistance:

Accommodations and support for students with disabilities is a shared responsibility between the students, the Student Accessibility & Accommodation Services, faculty and all University personnel. Students requesting accommodations are responsible for providing the appropriate documentation which supports their requests. Students are also responsible for communicating requests as early as possible to allow the service provider adequate time to respond. For more information, please consult the Student Accessibility and Accommodation Services website: <http://www.ubishops.ca/future-current-students/student-campus-life/student-services/student-accessibility-accommodation-services/>

Statement on Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism is a major academic offence and tough penalties apply (see the section “Academic Integrity” in the Academic Calendar). Make sure you know what plagiarism is. Ignorance is no defence. The Dean of Arts and Science will be notified about all cases of plagiarism and a note will be made in the student’s personal file.

If a student has any question about what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, it is that student’s responsibility to clarify the matter by conferring with the instructor and to seek out other resources available on the campus. **Any assignment deemed to have been plagiarized will receive a grade of zero.**