

AML 4453

Beyond Death: Ghosts and Race in Multi-ethnic American Fiction

Fall 2015

Section: 07A6

Meeting Time: Tues., Periods 8-9 (3:00 - 4:55 pm)/Thurs., Period 9 (4:05 - 4:55 pm)

Meeting Location: NSC 227

Instructor: Yen Loh

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Office: TUR 4317

Office Hours: Thurs., 5:00 – 6:00 pm or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

The genre of the ghost story not only preoccupies the Asian American literary imagination, but also fuels much of the multiethnic literatures of the 20th century. The hauntings in key US literary works are not only personal, familial and intergenerational, but also historical, collective, and socio-political. Affected by the history of slavery and exclusionary immigration policies, for instance, American history is haunted by politics of empire that are ideologically gendered and racialized, making invisible or hypervisible the many histories and peoples that are involved in the making and imagining of an American landscape. In this course, we will therefore read texts that engage with hauntings in multiethnic American literary production – including Asian American, Haitian American, and African American literatures – to explore how writers utilize ghosts to critique and reinterpret the broader racialized, gendered, and sexualized contexts of American history.

This course seeks to understand the significance of representing history as haunting. Why are some people and places more haunted than others? Are phantoms those who were unjustly killed and so ghost stories always involve a question of justice? What kinds of histories of violence and oppression haunt these narratives? Is haunting a question of memory and trauma, of remembering and forgetting? How does the supernatural interrupt narratives of progress, reason, and science? Why are many multiethnic ghost stories articulated at the intersection of race and gender?

We will consider the various meanings of haunting and being haunted, including spectral notions of citizenship, rights, knowledge production, history, and so on, focusing on various themes and issues like national identity, racial difference, generational conflicts, and discursive and material violence, among others. Ultimately, this course stresses the importance of racial and gendered haunting in multiethnic American literature.

Required Texts

Chang, Lan Samantha. "Hunger." *Hunger: A Novella and Stories*. NY: W. W. Norton, 1998. ISBN: 0-393-04664-8.

Fenkl, Heinz Insu. *Memories of my Ghost Brother*. NY: Plume Books, 1996. ISBN: 0-452-27717-5.

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Calcutta Chromosome*. London: Picador, 1996. ISBN: 978-0380813940.

Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997. ISBN: 081662089X.

Kingston, Maxine Hong. *Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts*. NY: Vintage International, 1989. ISBN: 679-72188-6.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987. ISBN: 0-394-53597-9.

Yamanaka, Lois-Ann. *Blu's Hanging*. NY: Harper Perennial, 1997. ISBN: 0-380-73139-8.

Secondary Texts

Selections from (I will make these selections available via Sakai, course reserves or handouts. Please print them out and bring them to class on the day they are due):

Carpenter, Lynette and Wendy Kohmar. Eds. *Haunting the House of Fiction: Feminist Perspectives on Ghost*

Stories by American Women. U of Tennessee P, 1991.
 Danticat, Edwidge. "Ghosts." *Claire of the Sealight*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013. 63-83.
 Lim, Walter S. H. "Under Eastern Eyes: Ghosts and Cultural Hauntings in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and *China Men*." *Crossing Oceans : Reconfiguring American literary studies in the Pacific Rim*. Eds. Noelle Brada-Williams and Karen Chow. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004. 155-164.
 Moon, Katharine H.S. "Partners in Prostitution." *Sex Among Allies*. NY: Columbia UP, 1997.

Assignments and Grading

This course requires a substantial amount of reading—about 50-70 pages for each class period.

Assignments:	%:
<p>One final essay [2100-3000 words/7-10 pages] Your essay will present a clear literary argument about a chosen text or texts from the course. The topic is open, but there should be some effort to engage with a theme or issue that we discuss in class. You may develop one of the Structured Response Papers into a longer essay, but in any case, the essay must articulate a thesis and defend the thesis with evidence from the text(s). Make sure that your paper is not a plot summary. You must also include relevant <i>scholarly</i> sources.</p>	35
<p>Four structured responses (SR) [each at 600 words/2 pages] These should be considered as practice for longer papers, and will develop your close reading skills. Developing any idea from class discussion (and not just summarizing it) is a good way to start thinking about these papers. They should be two pages each. For each of these papers, choose some element (a setting, passage, or character) from one of the assigned texts and analyze its significance with respect to the text as a whole or an issue that we discuss in class. What this means is you will have to perform a close reading of a particular section of the text in question and to argue for your interpretation of that section. We will be discussing further what "close reading" means in class, but for a general overview take a look at http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/s/a/sam50/closeread.htm. These papers are not journal entries. They must be well-organised and polished explications of a clearly articulated thesis.</p>	32 [8% each]
<p>Two summaries (S) [each at 300-600 words/1-2 pages] These are concise, one-to-two page summaries of the day's reading assignment intended to demonstrate reading comprehension.</p>	13 [6.5% each]
<p>Present/Lead on one text [300-600 words/1-2 pages each] Choose any critical essay and evaluate its main argument, its conclusions, and how it might apply to the creative text we are reading; OR choose from one of the creative/literary works and do a close reading to demonstrate how it illuminates central themes of the work as well as the historical/cultural/authorial context of its production. Each presentation should be about 10-15 minutes. A one- to two-page handout is required. Leads on critical/theoretical texts are due on the day they are assigned; those on primary, creative literature are due on the last day of readings for that novel/short story. Please see schedule of assignments for more information.</p>	10
<p>Class participation You will receive credit for participating if you contribute anything at all to the discussion</p>	10

on a given day: a complex thought, clarification, any kind of valid question related to the assignment, reading, etc. If you do not participate in the discussion, you will receive no credit. Attendance alone is insufficient.	
	Total: 100%

Assignment due dates can be found on the schedule of assignments below. Please feel free to discuss your class work with me. I am available after every class or by appointment. Writing help is also available at the Reading & Writing Center (www.at.ufl.edu/r&w/about.html). Other resources are noted on the University Writing Program's website (www.writing.ufl.edu).

Submission Protocol

- Papers must be typed and double-spaced with 1-inch margins and 12-point font.
- Sources, including primary, literary sources, must be documented according to MLA conventions (in-text, parenthetical citations and a Works Cited page).
- Papers must be stapled.
- I do not accept papers through email.
- I do accept late papers, but the grade will be reduced by 10%.

Grading Scale

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	81-82
C+	77-80
C	73-76
C-	71-72
D+	67-70
D	63-66
D-	61-62
E	60 or below

Grading Criteria: Expectations for individual assignments are briefly described under the descriptions of individual assignments above and will also be discussed further and more specifically as the semester progresses. In general, written assignments will be graded according to the following criteria: the successful demonstration of an understanding of literature and of the particular assignment; depth of critical insight; quality and originality of thought and expression; effective and/or correct employment of grammar, logic, and rhetoric; correct and/or effective mechanics, spelling, syntax, and usage; effective, sufficient, and proper use (and citation) of evidence; unity and coherence; and facility with situation-appropriate discourse conventions. Additionally,

1. An "A" paper makes a clear, focused argument and supports that argument throughout the paper with a range of recent, credible sources. The topic must be an arguable one. The introduction has a clearly identifiable thesis statement that is narrow and specific, and the paper then proves that thesis. The writer establishes ethos and logos with a thorough familiarity with the topic and thoughtfully engages in a substantive analysis of the claims presented. The writer uses a range of relevant, credible, and recent sources to support his/her point and analyzes the significance of the evidence provided. An "A" paper contains no logical fallacies. The paper is well organized and each paragraph has a clear topic sentence. The sentence structure is direct, active, and concise, with appropriate word choice. The tone and diction are formal, and the paper uses transitions effectively and has

few, if any, grammar or punctuation errors.

2. A “D” paper does not have an arguable topic and/or makes an overly broad claim that can’t be supported in the amount of pages required for the assignment. The writer does not use significant, scholarly, or credible sources and fails to prove the argument with evidence. A “D” paper is not based in logos and ethos but is pathos-based. It may be poorly organized and contain many distracting grammar and punctuation errors. A “D” paper has style problems: repetitive, passive, and choppy sentence structure and/or use of expletives. It will give the impression of having been written quickly with little revision or proofreading. A “D” paper fails to cite sources or fails to cite them correctly.

Again, if you have any questions about grading criteria or expectations for an assignment, please do not hesitate to ask me during conferences, office hours, or via email.

Attendance Policy:

You are allowed three unexcused absences during the semester. On the fourth unexcused absence your final grade will be lowered by one letter and on the seventh unexcused absence it will be lowered another letter. Ten or more unexcused absences will result in an automatic F. If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, it is considered an absence. Three tardies constitute one absence. Homework must be complete at the beginning of class and cannot be completed or turned in after. To excuse an absence for medical or other appropriate reasons, a student must provide documentation, such as a doctor’s note. However, prolonged absences due to illness will not be excused. If you have a prolonged absence, you will be encouraged to drop the class.

Classroom Behavior

Students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diverse student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. For clear definitions and penalties of harassment, see:

<http://www.aa.ufl.edu/aa/affact/harass/>.

Cell phones and headphones must be turned off and properly stored before class begins. No texting.

Reading newspapers or other materials not related to class and surfing the web are prohibited.

Students must bring the assigned books to class.

Students who violate these rules will be asked to leave and will incur an absence.

Statement of Composition (C) and Humanities (H) credit

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

Statement of Student Disability Services

[The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office](#) provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Statement on Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

Statement on Academic Honesty

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

English Department Procedures for Grade Appeals

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant. A committee of faculty members will review each student’s work and determine the final grade. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade; the decision is final.

Schedule of Assignments

*This schedule may change and is not a complete list of assignments.

*Assignments must be completed *before* the class period for which they are assigned.

Date	Topic	Assignment
T 8/25	Introduction to course	
R 8/27	Haunting and Slavery	Morrison. <i>Beloved</i> . Pp 1-49
T 9/1		Morrison. <i>Beloved</i> . Pp 50-147
R 9/3		Morrison. <i>Beloved</i> . Pp 148-199
T 9/8		Morrison. <i>Beloved</i> . Pp 200- 275 (Presentation) * Presentation hereafter (P) Rigney. “A Story to Pass on’: Ghosts and the Significance of History in Toni Morrison’s <i>Beloved</i> .” <i>Haunting the House of Fiction</i> . Pp 229-235 (P) Structured Response (SR) 1 due on Morrison
R 9/10	Theorizing Haunting	Gordon. Pp 1-28 (P)
T 9/15		Gordon. Pp 137-151; 164-190 (P) Summary (S) 1 on Gordon due
R 9/17	Gendered Haunting and Chinese American Identity	Kingston. <i>Woman Warrior</i> . Pp 1-45
T 9/22		Kingston. <i>Woman Warrior</i> . Pp 45-109
R 9/24		Kingston. <i>Woman Warrior</i> . Pp 110-160
T 9/29		Kingston. <i>Woman Warrior</i> . Pp 161-209 (P) Lim, Walter S. H. “Under Eastern Eyes: Ghosts and Cultural Hauntings in Maxine Hong Kingston’s <i>The Woman Warrior and China Men</i> .” (P)
R 10/1		Chang. <i>Hunger</i> . Pp 11-49
T 10/6		Chang. <i>Hunger</i> . Pp 49-114 (P) SR 2 due on either Kingston or Chang
R 10/8	Sexual Politics: Haunting the Korean Diaspora	Fenkl. <i>Memories of my Ghost Brother</i> . Pp 3-57
T 10/13		Fenkl. <i>Memories of my Ghost Brother</i> . Pp 58-133
R 10/15		Fenkl. <i>Memories of my Ghost Brother</i> . Pp 134-173
T 10/20		Fenkl. <i>Memories of my Ghost Brother</i> . Pp 174-271 (P)

R 10/22		Moon, Katharine H.S. "Partners in Prostitution." <i>Sex Among Allies</i> . (P) Malini 1 S2 on Moon due
T 10/27	Hawaii: Settlers of Color and Leper Ghosts	Yamanaka. <i>Blu's Hanging</i> . Pp 3-101
R 10/29		Yamanaka. <i>Blu's Hanging</i> . Pp 102-162
T 11/3		Yamanaka. <i>Blu's Hanging</i> . Pp 163-260 (P) SR 3 due on either Fenkl or Yamanaka
R 11/5	Vodou: Haitian American Haunting	Danticat. "Ghosts." Pp 63-83 (P)
T 11/10	Postcolonial Pandemic: Ethical Spectrality	Ghosh. <i>The Calcutta Chromosome</i> . Pp 3-94
R 11/12		Ghosh. <i>The Calcutta Chromosome</i> . Pp 95-134
T 11/17		Ghosh. <i>The Calcutta Chromosome</i> . Pp 135-201
R 11/19		Ghosh. <i>The Calcutta Chromosome</i> . Pp 202-254
T 11/24		Ghosh. <i>The Calcutta Chromosome</i> . Pp 255-308 (P) SR 4 due on either Danticat or Ghosh
R 11/26	No class: Thanksgiving	
T 12/1	Conferences	Meet at my office to discuss final paper
R 12/3	Writing Day	Work on papers
T 12/8		Final Paper Due