



Survey of American Literature: Gothic America

AML 2070-1623 | MWF Period 6 | MAT 0016 |

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In his essay, “Invention of the American Gothic,” scholar Leslie Fiedler described American Gothic as “a pathological symptom rather than a proper literary movement.” It is a fair comment, as Gothicism is not only threaded throughout multiple genres and modes of American media, but is, in fact, deeply embedded within the American Canon, having played an integral role in the rise of American literature. But if American Gothic is a symptom, then what is the illness that it belies?

This course will examine the prevalence and cultural work of American Gothic fiction and how/why so many American authors have chosen the genre as an outlet for expressions of anxiety, outrage, and suffering in a country ostensibly built upon the ideals of optimism and equality. By reading a selection of American Gothic texts, this course will unveil and interrogate the ghosts that haunt the American consciousness from the awe and terror of the wilderness to the specter of slavery to the darker aspects of the American Dream.

By the end of this course, students will arrive at a better understanding and appreciation of the social functions that the Gothic and horror serve as genres by engaging with American Gothic texts through a number of different critical lenses, including historical readings, feminist criticism, and critical race theory.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Recognize the literary significance of American horror/Gothic fiction
- Express critical viewpoints and engage in scholarly conversation about American literature, American culture, and horror/Gothic fiction
- Produce writing that is coherent, focused, and well-organized
- Display a command of grammar, punctuation, spelling, MLA citation, and research skills
- Understand key literary/theoretical concepts, including genre studies, feminist criticism, critical race theory, and catharsis

REQUIRED TEXTS

Required Texts to Purchase:

- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. Vintage (ISBN: 9781400033416)
- Capote, Truman. *Other Voices, Other Rooms*. Vintage (ISBN: 9780679745648)
- King, Stephen. *Night Shift*. Anchor. (ISBN: 9780307743640)
- Jackson, Shirley. *The Haunting of Hill House*. Penguin Classics (ISBN: 9780143039983)

Required Films*:

- *Silence of the Lambs* (1991)
- *Poltergeist* (1982)
- *Rosemary's Baby* (1968)
- *The Haunting* (1963)

* All films are available on DVD through the UF library system. Happily, these films are also widely available and may be rented or purchased on Amazon Prime, iTunes, or on DVD for only a few dollars (a fraction the cost of a textbook). *Rosemary's Baby* is available free with Amazon Prime and *Silence of the Lambs* is on Hulu.

Required Readings Available on Canvas**:

- The British Library, "Gothic Motifs"
- Brockden Brown, Charles. "Somnambulism"
- Irving, Washington. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "The Minister's Black Veil"
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. "Young Goodman Brown"
- King, Stephen. "The Man in the Black Suit"
- Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Fall of the House of Usher"
- Poe, Edgar Allan. "Berenice"
- Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Black Cat"
- Savoy, Eric. "The Rise of American Gothic"
- Dickinson, Emily. Poems 449, 465, 479, 670
- Jacobs, Harriet. Excerpts from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
- Faulkner, William. "A Rose for Emily"
- Capote, Truman. Excerpt from *In Cold Blood*
- King, Stephen. "Children of the Corn"
- Lovecraft, H.P. "The Rats in the Walls"
- Jackson, Shirley. "The Lottery"
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "The Giant Wisteria"
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "The Yellow Wallpaper"

**You should be able to access these in class either by printing them or by opening them on a digital device in the classroom.

Additional scholarly criticism or critical theory may be added throughout the course of the semester.

ASSIGNMENTS

Participation (200 points; 20% of grade):

- **In-class participation (100 points; 10%):** Students are expected to come to class prepared and willing to participate in in-class activities, including writing exercises, quizzes, discussions, group work, peer reviews, workshops, and more. Students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session.
- **Online participation (100 points; 10%):** Students are expected to participate in the discussion forums on Canvas by engaging in critical conversations about the texts we read. Students must complete 10 short response posts in the forums (minimum 100 words each) on some aspect of the chosen text that they found engaging or provoking. These responses will be due at **Noon** the day before our class is scheduled to discuss the chosen text in class. Students may choose any ten texts they prefer.

Close-reading Analysis (100 points; 10% of grade): Students will choose either a poem or a passage from a short story or novel we have read in class and analyze it closely. Close reading may include analysis of a passage/poem's syntax, rhyme, rhythm, meter, and imagery or a specific element of the text such as characters, setting, or motif. Students should not cite outside sources, but instead focus on supporting evidence in the text. Strong theses will consider how the chosen element of the work contributes to the major themes or effect of the work as a whole.

Deliverable: 800 - 1000 word Microsoft Word document on Canvas

Comparative Analysis 1 (200 points; 20% of grade): Students will analyze two of the texts we have read in class, bringing them into conversation with each other to demonstrate how they have reached an enlarged perspective on their chosen synthesis question. Students should focus their comparison to the most notable point or points to craft a strong, specific thesis and provide textual evidence. If students choose to work with much shorter works (poems, etc.), they may analyze three texts in conversation with one another, but I must approve this.

Deliverable: 1600 - 1800 word Microsoft Word document on Canvas

Comparative Analysis 2 (200 points; 20% of grade): For their second comparative analysis, students will put a text we have read together into a conversation with a horror/Gothic film of their choice. This film may be either an adaptation of that work or a film that the student thinks bears some thematic similarity or is doing similar cultural work to a text we have read. As with the first comparative analysis, students should focus on similar/contrasting elements from both works, including themes, motifs, symbolism, and characters. Students must clear their text-film pairing with me before proceeding.

Deliverable: 1600 - 1800 word Microsoft Word document on Canvas

Research Paper (300 points; 30% of grade): The final paper for this course will be a research paper related to one or more of the themes and texts that have been discussed throughout the semester. In this paper, students will make a clear, specific argument about a topic of their choosing that relates to the theme of the course. The argument must be supported with evidence from both the texts we shall read together in class and from outside academic/critical sources.

Deliverable: 2000 - 2400 word Microsoft Word document on Canvas

GRADING & COURSE CREDIT POLICIES

Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000		C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929		C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899		D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869		D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829		D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799		E	0.00	0-59	0-599

Course grades will be determined based on the following point system:

Final Grade	1000 points
In-class Participation	100 points
Online Participation	100 points
Close Reading Analysis	100 points
Comparative Analysis 1	200 points
Comparative Analysis 2	200 points
Research Paper	300 points

Assignments will have individual rubrics, but for a generalized grading rubric, please see below:

Grading Rubric

Grade	
A work	You have completed the assignment at a very high quality level. Content is complete, well-organized, pays special attention to genre and style, and is free of typos and grammatical errors. Work in this range demonstrates a high level of critical engagement. You have gone above and beyond what was expected of you.
B work	The assignment has been completed at a satisfactory level, but may still be in need of minor revisions. Content is complete and well-organized with special attention paid to style, genre, audience, grammar, and mechanics.
C work	The assignment is complete and logically organized, but is notably in need of revision. It may include multiple typos or grammatical errors that suggest a lack of proofreading. Additionally, style and level of critical engagement may be lacking. The bare minimum of what was required of you.
D work	You have mostly done what was asked of you, but at a very poor quality level. Little to no attention has been paid to style, grammar, and mechanics; the work is in need of significant revision. The work may also be missing some of the requirements of the assignment, incomplete, or poorly organized.
E work	An “E” is usually reserved for students who have failed to complete the assignment or have failed to meet the minimum word requirement for the assignment. However, an “E” may be given if the work in question blatantly fails to meet the aforementioned criteria for evaluation.

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 Writing Requirement:

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/gordon.aspx>

Note: To receive writing credit, you must receive a grade of C (2.0) or higher AND satisfactory completion of the writing component of 6000 words. This means that you must complete EVERY assignment.

Final Grade Appeals

In 1000- and 2000- level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant in the English Department. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance and participation in this class is required. You are permitted up to 6 absences in this class throughout the semester. Bear in mind that in-class work may be excused/made up only under the following circumstances:

- Student is absent for a religious holiday
- Student is absent for an athletic or other university-sponsored event (student athletes/students in band, theater, etc.) – documentation required
- Medical reasons - documentation required

For any of these instances, you are required to contact me and provide documentation as noted. In-class work missed for any other reason cannot be made up.

After your 6th absence, each additional absence will result in a deduction from your grade:

7 absences	- 10% of possible grade
8 absences	- 20% of possible grade
9 absences	AUTOMATIC FAILURE OF COURSE

Any assignment due on a day you are absent is still due.

Tardiness: If a student enters after roll has been called, they are late, which disrupts class. Two instances of tardiness count as one absence. Leaving class before dismissal will also count as tardiness.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code and carries suitably serious consequences. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

- Plagiarism: A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):
- a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
 - b. Submitting a document or assignment, which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.
- (University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 Aug. 2007)

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>

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code.

PLEASE NOTE: There is zero tolerance for plagiarism in this class. Plagiarized assignments will receive zero credit and will not count toward the 6,000-word requirement for the course. The Dean of Students Office will also be notified and further disciplinary actions made occur.

Classroom Behavior

Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions, so please keep in mind that a) students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds and b) it is vital that you demonstrate respect for ideas that differ from your own (with the exception of systemic forms of bigotry).

In addition, students will refrain from texting and other behaviors that distract classmates. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal from the class and will count as an absence from class. Disrespectful behaviors include: Phone calls, texting, checking Facebook, leaving class repeatedly, sleeping, failure to bring texts, disrespectful language, etc.

Sexual 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/>

Participation

Participation is a vital component to any classroom. Students will be expected to constructively contribute to each class session by participating in group discussions, writing workshops, peer reviews, and other in-class activities. Students must be present for all in-class activities to receive credit for them. In-class work cannot be made up.

Mode of Submission

All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc) documents to E-learning/Canvas, unless otherwise noted (blog posts, etc.). Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. **All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered.** Please do not email your paper to your instructor.

When submitting digital papers, please also include your last name in the file name. (Example: ElliottFilmReview.doc).

It is the student's responsibility to maintain copies of all work submitted in this course should the need arise for resubmission or review of submitted work.

Late Papers

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day indicated, unless otherwise noted on the syllabus. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** If you find yourself in a situation that requires an extension, you must contact me **before the due date** to discuss it.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <http://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>

University Writing Center

If you ever need help with any of your written assignments, tutors are available at the University Writing Center in 302 Tigert Hall. You can schedule an appointment ahead by calling (352) 846-1138 or by visiting <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-center/>

Students with Disabilities

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/>

Please schedule a meeting with me to discuss accommodations within the first week of class.

SCHEDULE

This schedule may be subject to change according to the needs of the course. Readings available on Canvas will be indicated as such. Readings and homework are due **on the day they are listed**, not the day after.

UNIT 1 American Romanticism and the Rise of American Gothic

Week 1

8/22 Syllabus and Introductions

8/24 What is the Gothic? / Read “Gothic Motifs” webpage

8/26 Read Brockden Brown’s “Somnambulism” / What is American Gothic?

Week 2

8/29 Read Irving’s “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”

8/31 Read Poe’s “The Fall of the House of Usher” and “Berenice”

9/2 Read Poe’s “The Black Cat” and excerpt of Eric Savoy’s “The Rise of American Gothic”

Week 3

9/5 No Class- University Holiday

9/7 Read Dickinson’s 479 “Because I could not stop for Death” and 465 “I heard a Fly buzz –”

9/9 Read Dickinson’s 449 “I died for Beauty – but was scarce” and 670 “One need not be a Chamber”

Week 4

9/12 Read Hawthorne’s “The Minister’s Black Veil” and “Young Goodman Brown”

9/14 Read King’s “The Man in the Black Suit”

9/16 **Close-reading Analysis Peer Review**

UNIT 2 American Gothic and the Specter of Slavery

Week 5

9/19 **Close-reading Analysis Due**; Abolition, Melville, and the Haitian Revolution

9/21 Read Melville’s *Benito Cereno* pgs. 1-34

9/23 Read Melville’s *Benito Cereno* pgs. 35 - end

Week 6

9/26 Read excerpts from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

9/28 Read excerpt from the trial of Margaret Garner and *Beloved* pgs. 1-51 (Ch. 1-3)

9/30 Read *Beloved* pgs. 52 – 100 (Ch. 4-8)

Week 7

10/3 Read Morrison’s *Beloved* pgs. 101-158 (Ch. 9 – 14)

10/5 Read Morrison’s *Beloved* pgs. 159 – 195 (Ch. 15 – 18)

10/7 Read Morrison’s *Beloved* pgs. 196 – 256 (Ch. 19 – 23)

Week 8

10/10 Read *Beloved* pgs. 257 – end (Ch. 24 – 28)

10/12 **Comparative Analysis 1 Peer Review**

10/14 **No class - Homecoming**

UNIT 3 Burning Down the Plantation: Southern Gothic

Week 9

10/17 **Comparative Analysis 1 DUE**; What is Southern Gothic?

10/19 Read Faulkner's "A Rose For Emily"

10/21 View "The Masks" (*The Twilight Zone* Episode 25, Season 5)

Week 10

10/24 Read Capote's *Other Voices, Other Rooms* Chapters 1 - 6

10/26 Read Capote's *Other Voices, Other Rooms* Chapters 7 - 12

10/28 View *Silence of the Lambs*

UNIT 4 American Nightmares: Violations of the American Idyll

Week 11

10/31 Read excerpt of Capote's *In Cold Blood*; Midwest Gothic

11/2 Read King's "Children of the Corn"

11/4 **NO CLASS – Instructor at Conference**

Week 12

11/7 Read Lovecraft's "The Rats in the Walls"

11/9 **Comparative Analysis 2 Peer Review** and view *Poltergeist*

11/11 **No Class – Veteran's Day**

UNIT 5 "This Nervous Condition:" American Female Gothic

Week 13

11/14 **Comparative Analysis 2 DUE**; What is female Gothic? / Read Gilman's "The Giant Wisteria"

11/16 Read Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper"

11/18 View *Rosemary's Baby*

Week 14

11/21 Read Jackson's "The Lottery"

11/23 No Class

11/25 No Class

Week 15

11/28 Read Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* Chapters 1-5

11/30 Read Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* Chapters 6 - 9

12/2 View *The Haunting*

Week 16

12/5 **Research Paper Peer Review**

12/7 Read King's Foreword for *Night Shift*; Closing Thoughts and Evaluations

12/12 Research Paper DUE by Midnight