

LIT2410: Issues in American Literature and Culture SPRING 2025

Instructor: Kaylee Lamb

Class No.: Matt 0118

Section No.: 9132

Class Time: T/R Period 5-6 & 6 (11:45-1:40 pm; 12:50-1:40 pm)

Instructor Email: Kaylee.lamb@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays after class, or by
appointment

Office Location: TUR 4415

Course Website: Canvas

Vangs for the Memories: The Everlasting Allure of Vampires

"Every age embraces the vampire it needs."—Nina Auerbach

This course introduces some of the most important issues that arise in the study of American literature and culture—namely the vampire. We will look at the monstrous body of the vampire through literature and film to understand how the vampire speaks to our social, political, and cultural values. We will explore questions like: How does the vampire function as a metaphor for our social fears and anxieties? How have various American cultures portrayed vampires? Do vampires challenge or reinforce traditional power structures? And how are issues of race, gender, and sexuality expressed through the vampire's body?

Historically, the vampire has evolved from the aristocratic, heterosexual European patriarch obsessed with reuniting with his lost love, to a more modern figure that encompasses moral ambiguity, fluid identity and sexuality, and a desire for a more egalitarian-like society. By tracing this evolution, we will uncover how the vampire has become a powerful symbol of humanity's deepest concerns and desires while remaining an adaptable figure for exploring personal and collective identity. Students will be asked to engage in a multimodal project, a film analysis, and a critical reading analysis using outside sources.

Texts: *Vampires of El Norte* (2023) by Isabel Cañas, *Eye Killers* (1995) by A.A. Carr, *The Gilda Stories* (1991) by Jewelle Gomez, *I Am Legend* (1954) by Richard Matheson, *Interview With a Vampire* (FILM) ; Comics [When I Arrived At the Castle \(2019\) | Read All Comics Online](#); [Tomb of Dracula v1 #10 | Read All Comics Online](#), "Bloodchild" by Octavia Butler

Learning Objectives



General Education Objectives

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) or Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- Composition courses provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage) and the

techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.

- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes, and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students maintain their writing fluency and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

General Education Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication, and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories, and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Major Assignments:

Short introductory Paper: To see how you are thinking about the monstrous body of the vampire, you will write a brief (300 words) paper exploring how you conceptionally understand (or don't understand!) how the vampire resonates with American history, pop culture, sociology, and American literature. How have you been exposed to the figure of the vampire? What do you expect to gain from this course in learning more about this figure? What questions do you have concerning the vampire? (300 words, 50 points)

Response Papers: You will write one response paper for each Unit [Unit 1, 2, 3, 4,] for a total of four. Each response paper operates as a close-reading of one of our primary or secondary sources from the unit and **MUST** be 500 words. As we read through more material and understand how the vampire has maintained its presence for so long, we will start to think critically about how our secondary and primary sources intersect. A close-reading is not meant to be a summary, but rather an analysis of the text. For example, with one of our primary texts (ie. novel, short story, poem, clip, comic) you may analyze a theme, motif, symbol, or idea that you believe resonates with the meaning of the novel or the figure of the vampire. This close-reading could include dissecting the setting that the vampire often emerges from, whether it be a coffin, ground, church, ship etc. However, the analysis should seek to answer some question of why such a theme, motif, symbol, or idea is important in the grand scheme of things. For example, considering the vampire's origins (whether they be tomb, coffin, church, or ship), why does it matter where this monstrous figure emerges from? Does it relay religious, sexual, or racial biases and prejudices? Remember, the aim is not a mere summary. (500 words each/2000 words total, 100 points each)

Film Analysis: Part of this course requires understanding and analyzing digital modes, thus we will engage with film analysis. Using one of the four types of film analyses [Semiotic, Mise-en-scène, Narrative, Contextual], you will dissect and critically analyze our course's chosen film through the aforementioned lenses. For example, if selecting a semiotic analysis, you will focus on major symbols and imagery repeatedly incorporated throughout the film. To not overwhelm oneself, it is strongly recommended to stick to one lens. (1000 words, 300 points)

In Class Presentation: Throughout the semester you will be responsible for giving a short 6-8-minute presentation on a legendary 'vampire' from either film, literature, video games, cartoons/anime, or reality TV. The purpose of the presentation is not only to introduce this figure to our class, putting into context how they fit (or don't fit!) the vampire mold, but also to answer the question of why we should care about this figure? In other words, how does the vampire character/figure serve as a metaphor for something greater than just a monster? This presentation is designed to encourage thinking about this figure more deeply as you prepare to write your longer paper and to sharpen public speaking skills. [200 points] [Each Tuesday these will commence]

Critical Analysis Paper: For this essay, you will be expected to analyze a text carefully and develop an original argument regarding the whole of the text through close reading and critical thinking. You must have a clear thesis (main idea) that shows critical engagement with the text and must use evidence from the text to support your thesis. This essay also requires you to have at least two credible, academic sources to support your ideas and/or provide background. Remember to have in-text citations as well as a work-cited page in MLA format. [2100 words, 400 points]

Multi-Modal Project and Analysis: For this final assignment, you are required to go beyond writing by creating a multi-modal project that reveals your understanding of the vampire. Using digital media, print media [newspapers, books, magazines], and/or visual media, you are being asked to convey what the vampire means to you. This project is intended for an audience that likely has no familiarity with this monstrous figure, thus keep that in mind for how you convey its form and actions. Alongside this creation, you will give a critical analysis that

explains the choices you've made from audio and visual techniques to use of colors and symbols. Overall, the analysis should cover EVERY object/picture/text/audio that you implement and discuss its pertinence to the vampire's overall creation. [900-1200 words, 350 points]

Course Policies:

1. Assignments: You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.

2. Attendance: Like all lecture-discussion courses, this one needs you! Use your allotted absences wisely (for emergencies, major illness) as you would for any job. You will fail the course if you accrue four missed absences. As a general rule, let me know if you think you might miss class—we can move forward from there. Excused absences, such as athletic events, theater commitments, illnesses, family emergencies, etc. require appropriate documentation AND advance notice given to me. You will be responsible for meeting with me outside of class to make a plan for completing work missed due to absences. You will also be responsible for turning in any assignments regardless of whether you are in class or not. For UF's official attendance policy, you can visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

3. Tardiness: Be on time to show respect to your peers and me. Latecomers receive partial absences, and must see me after class so I know they attended.

4. Classroom Behavior: Please be respectful and attentive to your peers and to me when we are talking, whether during discussion of published texts or our own work. In particular, be respectful of your peers' diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and beliefs. Critique others as you would like to be critiqued—for me, that means substantive, actionable feedback that respects the intention and inherent validity of your peers' work and thought. You are also responsible for keeping up with your UF email/Canvas email, as this is how I will contact you outside of class. Feel free to reach out to me via UF email or Canvas messaging anytime—I'll try to respond within 24 hours.

5. UF's policy on Sexual Harassment: The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community:

<https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>

6. Formatting & Submission: All assignments should be in MLA 8 formatting and be submitted via Canvas as specified in each assignment's instructions.

7. Late Papers/Assignments: As with anything, sh*t happens, whether a dog ate your homework, your computer combusted, or you're experiencing a bad break-up. I will allow for



one crucial assignment to be 2 days late if such things occur, plus please reach out to me in advance so I know your paper will be running late. Communication is key in this class!

8. Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'" The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-codestudent-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. As specified by the current UF Student Honor Code: a Student must 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. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
- b. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
- c. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
- d. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.

In short, show respect to yourself, your colleagues, and me by submitting original work earnestly and honestly produced by you for all assignments.

10. Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>), which will provide appropriate documentation to give your instructor early in the semester.

11. Students who are in distress or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact <https://umatter.ufl.edu/> or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to you. UF's Counseling and Wellness Center offers additional support at (352) 392-1575. You can also contact them online at <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>

If you are experiencing unmanageable stress or other emotional or physical distress during the semester, please ask me for help finding resources. In addition to teaching you, I am committed to helping you succeed in a rigorous academic environment and to introducing you to the myriad resources for mental, physical, and emotional help and for time and stress-management available on campus.

12. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

13. Grade Appeals. In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount (cblount@ufl.edu), Program Assistant, in the

Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

14. Course Evaluations. Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages requesting that you do this online: <https://ufl.blueria.com/ufl/>


Grading Scale and General Rubric:

<p>A 4.0 94-100</p> <p>A- 3.67 90-93</p>	<p>"A"- A paper at this level is truly high quality. It demonstrates a clear understanding of critical concepts, creatively addresses the subject matter, and exceeds the expectations of critical analysis. A paper with this grade will be free of grammatical errors.</p>
<p>B+ 3.33 87-89</p> <p>B 3.00 84-86</p> <p>B- 2.67 80-83</p>	<p>Needs more attention to one or two of these areas: sophistication and nuance of arguments (a more arguable thesis statement, use of more evidence or analysis, qualification of arguments, etc.), prose style/formatting (sentence structure, diction, clarity), or organization (paragraph construction, flow of ideas).</p>
<p>C+ 2.33 77-79</p> <p>C 2.0 74-76</p> <p>C- 1.67 70-73</p>	<p>Needs to push further in order to go beyond a surface-level interpretation. Needs more textual evidence and analysis to support them. The overall argument might not be clearly or convincingly articulated. A 'C' paper also needs improvement in clarity of prose and/or organization.</p>
<p>D+ 1.33 67-69</p> <p>D 1.00 64-66</p> <p>D- .67 60-63</p>	<p>Indicates a superficial engagement with the text, and inattention to argument, prose style, and mechanics. The paper uses few or no examples, and the argument is unclear and unpersuasive. The organization is difficult to follow. The prose is unclear, and there are major errors in formatting, grammar, syntax, or spelling that impede comprehension.</p>
<p>E 0 0-59</p>	<p>Shows little understanding of the assignment, is turned in extremely late, and/</p>

	or shows extreme problems with argument and grammar. Or, you may have committed any one of the following failing errors: failure to meet the word count, plagiarism, or failure to address the prompt.
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More generally, work in this class will be graded on the earnestness with which you endeavor to undertake meaningful investigations of course material/related material, revise your work and adapt your practice based on feedback you receive, and adhere to the grammatical and artificial requirements of assignments. Your participation grade will depend on the preparation, thoughtfulness, respect, and professionalism you demonstrate in engaging with your peers as a member of an academic community.



Dates	Readings and assignments	
Week 1: January 14	Syllabus day; Ice-Breakers; Vampire Clip Homework: Short Introductory Paper [see syllabus assignments]	
January 16 Unit 1: 'Traditional Vampires'	Homework: <i>I am Legend</i> by Richard Mattheson Ch. 1-9 (41 pgs.) Richard Matheson - I Am Legend (weebly.com)	
Week 2: January 21	Presentation 1 Homework: <i>I am Legend</i> by Richard Mattheson Ch. 10-15 (42-69 pgs.)	
January 23	Homework: Finish <i>I am Legend</i> by Richard Mattheson	
Week 3: January 28	Presentation 2 Film: <i>Interview With The Vampire</i>	
January 30	<i>Interview With The Vampire</i> Homework: Read Scholarly Article in Canvas Files	
Week 4: February 4	Presentation 4 <i>Interview With The Vampire</i> Discussion and Film Analysis Terms	

February 6	Workshop w/ example film [<i>Twilight</i> Baseball scene <3] Homework: Film Analysis
Week 5: February 11 <i>Film Analysis Due BEFORE CLASS</i>	Presentation 5 In-Class Activity Homework: <i>The Gilda Stories</i> by Jewelle Gomez (Ch. 1-3)
February 13 <i>Unit 2: New Age Vampires</i>	Homework: <i>The Gilda Stories</i> by Jewelle Gomez (Ch. 4-6)
Week 6: February 18	Presentation 6 Homework: Finish <i>The Gilda Stories</i> by Jewelle Gomez
February 20	Homework: <i>Eye Killers</i> by A.A. Carr (Prologue-Ch.14)
Week 7: February 25	Presentation 7 Homework: <i>Eye Killers</i> by A.A. Carr (Ch. 15-Ch. 26)
February 27	Homework: <i>Eye Killers</i> by A.A. Carr (Ch. 27-Ch. 40)
Week 8: March 4	Presentation 8 Homework: <i>Eye Killers</i> by A.A. Carr (Ch. 41-Ch. 48)
March 6	Homework: <i>Eye Killers</i> by A.A. Carr (Ch. 49-Ch. 62)
Week 9: March 11	Presentation 9 Homework: Finish <i>Eye Killers</i> by A.A. Carr & Scholarly Article in Canvas Files
March 13 <i>Unit 3: Monstrous Vampires</i>	Discussion and Student Example Homework: Critical Analysis Paper
SPRING BREAK	
Week 11: March 25	Presentation 10 Homework: Critical Analysis Paper and Read <i>When I Arrived at the Castle</i> by E.M. Carroll
March 27 <i>[Critical Analysis Due BEFORE CLASS]</i>	Discussion Homework: "Bloodchild" by Octavia Butler Microsoft Word - bloodchild.doc (squarespace.com)
Week 12: April 1	Presentation 11 Homework: "The Cloak" by Robert Bloch Tales of Mystery and Imagination: Robert Bloch: The cloak (talesofmystery.blogspot.com)

April 3 <i>Unit 4: The Vampires We Need</i>	Homework: <i>Vampires of El Norte</i> by Isabel Cañas (Ch. 1-6)
Week 13: April 8	Presentation 12 Homework: <i>Vampires of El Norte</i> by Isabel Cañas (Ch. 7-13)
April 10	Homework: <i>Vampires of El Norte</i> by Isabel Cañas (Ch. 14-20)
Week 14: April 15	Presentation 13 Introduction to Multi-Modality Homework: <i>Vampires of El Norte</i> by Isabel Cañas (Ch. 21-28)
April 17	Homework: <i>Vampires of El Norte</i> by Isabel Cañas (Ch. 29-34)
Week 15: April 22	Presentation 14 Last Discussion and Workshop <i>Final Assignment Due April 28</i>