

Time: T/TR→ Tuesdays 11:45 AM-1:40 PM; Thursdays 12:50-1:40 PM

Place: MAT0113

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## **AML 4170: American Gothic**

“Fear ... is the relinquishment of logic, the willing relinquishing of reasonable patterns. We yield to it or we fight it, but we cannot meet it halfway.”—Shirley Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House*

Arguably, the Gothic and its many forms (horror, romance, thriller) are more popular than ever before. From Robert Eggers's remake of *Nosferatu* (2024) to the upcoming release of Guillermo del Toro's *Frankenstein* (2025), the Gothic is being revived—but was it ever really dead to begin with? In this course, we will look briefly at Gothic literary origins within Europe before diving into what the Gothic entails within North American literature. While the course schedule is organized by region (Southern Gothic, New England Gothic, Midwest, and Southwestern Gothic), the goals of this course are as follows: What defines Gothic literature? How has it transformed from its eighteenth-century European origins? How is Gothic literature being reappropriated and/or remaining culturally specific for Black, Indigenous, and Mexican authors? What is the value of studying the Gothic as an aesthetic, mode, and identity? Can studying Gothic literature wake us up to the **true** horrors prevailing in our society?

In this course, we will engage in lively discussions, delve into literary analyses, and explore the historical and cultural contexts of the works in class. By engaging with these texts, we will be better equipped to understand Gothic literature as going beyond the realms of the classroom and instead critique our social and political atmosphere.

### **Course Objectives:**

- Identify key themes, tropes, and stylistic elements of the Gothic tradition as they manifest in American literature.
- Compare American Gothic with its European predecessors and contemporaries to establish its distinct characteristics.
- Investigate how American Gothic literature reflects and critiques historical events, social anxieties, and cultural tensions, including slavery, colonialism, industrialization, and race relations.
- Explore the role of the Gothic in shaping American identity, particularly through narratives of fear, repression, and the supernatural.

- Conduct close readings of primary texts to develop original interpretations.

**Prerequisite: 3 credits of ENC, CRW, AML, ENG, or ENL.**

### **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**

- Identify and define key tropes and characteristics
- Analyze texts using close reading and literary theory.
- Compare and contrast works from different cultural contexts.
- Compose critical arguments while developing creative projects.

**Critical Dates: Oct 14 Proposal for Final Project; Individual Discussion presentations TBA;  
Nov 6 (Lit Analysis); Dec 6 (Final Project: Mapping)**

### **Required Texts and Materials:**

#### **New England Gothic**

*Wieland, or the Transformation* by Charles Brockden Brown (1798)

Free copy: [Wieland; or, The transformation](#)

“Berenice” by Edgar Allan Poe (1835; short story)

Free Copy: [Berenice](#)

“Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne (1853; short story)

Free copy: [Young Goodman Brown.PDF](#)

“The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1892; short story)

Free Copy: [The Yellow Wallpaper | Project Gutenberg](#)

#### **Southern Gothic:**

“A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner (1930; short story)

Free Copy: [A Rose for Emily.pdf](#)

“A Good Man is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor (1953; short story)

*Beloved* by Toni Morrison (1987)

Free Copy: [Beloved](#)

#### **MidWest Gothic**

“Snow” by Dale Bailey (2015; short story)

Free Copy: [Snow - Nightmare Magazine](#)

*Ghost Singer* by Anna Lee Walters (1988)

Selected Poems from *Ancestral Demon of a Grieving Bride* by Sy Hoahwah (2021) (Poems on Canvas)

## South Western Gothic

“Night of the Living Dead Chola” by V Castro (Short story on Canvas)

"Calaveras Enamoradas" (Skeletons in Love) by Héctor González (Poems on Canvas)

*Mexican Gothic* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia (2020)

### Assignments & Grading:

Refer to the university grading policy for overarching information:

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

### Quizzes: (10%)

At the beginning of each course, one can expect to find either an open-ended question from the readings or a simple 2-3 multiple choice quiz on Canvas. [Paper and pen or computer may be used]

### Participation: (15%, all semester)

You will be assessed based on your contributions to class discussion and completion of in-class assignments, such as impromptu freewriting exercises, large group discussions, and peer conversations (2-3 people), etc. You will assess your participation according to a rubric at multiple points throughout the semester and receive feedback.

### Discussion Presentation Group 2-3: (15%, due Weeks 3-15)

In groups of 2-3, you will collaborate to present a **critical analysis** of either a specific text we've discussed in class or a particular **trope/convention** in **American Gothic literature**. Your goal is to demonstrate an understanding of the key themes, literary techniques, and historical context of the American Gothic genre that you as a group, find most interesting and paramount to its conception.

Each group should contribute equally to the analysis, with each member playing an integral part in the presentation. The use of a **visual aid** is required to support your analysis (e.g., a PowerPoint, Prezi, or a poster).

Depending on the date your group is assigned, you will either dive deeper into the text to provide a historical and social context (if the instructor has not already covered it) or analyze key passages to give your peers a deeper understanding of its significance. Your presentation should incorporate images, direct quotes, and open-ended questions to encourage class engagement, rather than just a lecture. Alternatively, you may choose to focus on a key trope or convention within American Gothic literature, exploring its use and significance across multiple texts, films, or other media. Both options will require research on your part, but the goal is to foster meaningful discussion and analysis.

### Literary Analysis: (30%)

Students will write an academic paper of 1,800 to 2,400 words. This paper is intended to engage with one of the texts we have discussed and to extract some analytical interpretation. Not only are students required to submit their own interpretation of the text, but they also must use three scholarly, peer-reviewed articles to substantiate their main argument. This is not a synopsis of the text; rather, it should be a polemical assertion that they intend to defend with direct quotations from the novel, short story, or poem, as well as various direct quotes and paraphrasing from the sources they've researched in the UF library database.

Papers will be graded holistically based on the following criteria, in general order of emphasis:

- Argumentation: Clear thesis, logical sequence of argument, logical conclusions.
- Evidence: Use of appropriate evidence from the texts and scholarly sources.
- The "So What?": Demonstrated understanding of contextual issues related to the works discussed (accurate explication of concepts and arguments).
- Terminology and Discourse: Accurate use of terminology and historical information (accurate application to texts).
- Mechanics: Punctuation, spelling, word choice and usage, sentence construction, and paragraphing.
- Proofreading and MLA 8 citations.

### **Final Project: Mapping the American Gothic – A Haunted Fieldwork Project: (30%)**

#### **Objective:**

Students will engage with the American Gothic beyond the classroom by exploring local spaces, folklore, and cultural narratives that align with the Gothic themes discussed in class. They will conduct field research, document their findings, and creatively interpret their discoveries through a multi-modal project.

#### **Step 1: The Real Deal**

Students must select a real-world location or local legend that embodies the American Gothic aesthetic. This can include:

- Allegedly haunted houses or buildings
- Sites tied to historical violence, injustice, or eerie folklore
- Abandoned spaces with Gothic resonance
- Cemeteries, battlegrounds, or ruins with a haunting past (We are in the South, thus take advantage of your location 😊 )
- Environmental decay

Alternatively, students can investigate a Gothic 'event' or tale from their region or hometown, whether that be outside of Florida or outside of the US (e.g., ghost stories, urban legends, or cryptid lore)

You will submit this proposal in October that identifies your chosen Gothic project. While your project may tentatively change, the proposal guarantees that you are thinking about the next steps and allows ample time for instructor feedback. This will be 500 words and must adhere to MLA 8 guidelines. You will consider questions like: What makes the location, event, or legend Gothic? How are aesthetics used? What is the importance of this “map” in the grand scheme of things or the “so what?” How has the location, event, and/or legend changed throughout time or been influenced by outside forces? Who is most affected by this history? How can one denote respect and awareness to sites with historical injustices?

## **Step 2: Field Research & Documentation (INCLUDE IN FINAL SUBMISSION)**

Students must visit the site (if possible) or conduct archival/online research. They will:

- Take photographs, sketches, or video footage (if the site allows)
- Collect historical context via interviewing locals and historians about the legend or significance of the site and/or doing their own scholarly research through the UF library database
- Take notes on the atmosphere, sensory details, and personal reactions

**Be sure your Gothic undertaking has enough material for you to present on.**

## **Step 3: Creative Interpretation**

Students will translate their research into a creative project that reflects the American Gothic themes we’ve explored. Options include:

- **A short Gothic story** inspired by the site’s history
- **A creative non-fiction essay** blending fact and eerie storytelling
- **A podcast episode or video documentary** narrating their findings
- **A multimedia digital map (Story Maps)** pinpointing local Gothic sites with descriptions and analysis
- **A series of poems or a photo essay** exploring the location’s atmosphere
- **A collage** that reinforces the aesthetics alongside a short analysis that touches on the chosen images, text, and/or colors.

Their work must incorporate Gothic elements such as haunting, repression, decay, monstrosity, historical trauma, or any of the major themes we’ve discussed through the semester.

## **Step 4: Critical Reflection**

Alongside the creative piece, students will submit a **2-3 page reflection** connecting their findings to **at least one** class reading and analyzing how their location/story embodies American Gothic themes (drawing comparisons with text(s) discussed in class is necessary for this).

## **Step 5: Class Presentation & Discussion**

To bring their work back into the classroom, students will present their projects in a **mini-conference format** (5-7 minutes) where they guide their classmates through their findings and explain the significance of their work with how it relates to American Gothic.

**Grading Scale:**

<b><u>Letter Grade</u></b>	<b><u>Number Grade</u></b>
<b><u>A</u></b>	<b><u>100-92.5</u></b>
<b><u>A-</u></b>	<b><u>92.4-89.5</u></b>
<b><u>B+</u></b>	<b><u>89.4-86.5</u></b>
<b><u>B</u></b>	<b><u>86.4-82.5</u></b>
<b><u>B-</u></b>	<b><u>82.4-79.5</u></b>
<b><u>C+</u></b>	<b><u>79.4-76.5</u></b>
<b><u>C</u></b>	<b><u>76.4-72.5</u></b>
<b><u>C-</u></b>	<b><u>72.4-69.5</u></b>
<b><u>D+</u></b>	<b><u>69.4-66.5</u></b>
<b><u>D</u></b>	<b><u>66.4-62.5</u></b>
<b><u>D-</u></b>	<b><u>62.4-59.5</u></b>
<b><u>E</u></b>	<b><u>59.4-0</u></b>

**Assignments Format & Due Dates:**

You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course. Aside from multimodal and creative work, assignments should be typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, with page numbers and 1-inch margins. They should adhere to MLA 8 format, contain a works cited page, and be submitted via Canvas by the beginning of class. Digital posts are due online the day **before** a given class, as stated here and in the assignment sheet. Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade for each week late. No extensions will be granted the day before an assignment is due.

**Academic Honesty & Definition of Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism of a draft or final version of any assignment will be reported to the Dean of Students. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, refer to the Student Conduct and Honor Codes:  
<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>

### **Attendance, Participation, & Engagement:**

In this upper-division course, all members of the class will participate in actively discussing each other's insights about course texts. To do well in this class you must be present and prepared. Much of our foundational learning will happen in classroom conversations and activities. Be conscious of how you can facilitate discussion and engagement through your contributions to the course. Lateness is not tolerated. If you are having scheduling problems, see me as soon as possible. Your course grade drops by one full letter for each "unacceptable" absence after 4 **TUESDAY ABSENCES COUNT AS 2**. Please see this link for details: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

### **Course Format:**

At the beginning of every session, you will answer a writing prompt through timed freewriting, which you will later draw upon in guided discussion. We will also discuss and review any upcoming assignments or course matters in the beginning portion of the course. Then, we will discuss the text in small groups and in full-class discussions, which will be guided by students' digital posts and discussion questions. Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief.

Computers in the Classroom: You may use a laptop or tablet for note-taking, in-class work, or referring to classroom materials. Phone usage is **NOT** acceptable, and you will be asked to leave if you are continually using it.

**Accommodations:** Any student requesting academic accommodations based on disability is required to register with the Disability Resource Center, 352-392-8565. More information can be found here: <https://disability.ufl.edu/>

### **Policy on Harassment:**

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/laws-policies/>

### **Counseling and Wellness:**

Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling & Wellness Center, 352-392-1575 or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>

### **Requesting Recommendations:**

If you plan to request a recommendation letter from me, read this guide before doing so: <http://margaregalvan.org/pedagogy/recommendation-letter-guidelines/>

### **Course Evaluations:**

You are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing end-of-semester course evaluations via GatorEvals. You will be

notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email received from GatorEvals or in the Canvas course menu under GatorEvals.

### **COVID-19:**

In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit [one.ufl.edu/screening/testing](https://one.ufl.edu/screening-testing) and vaccination opportunities.
- If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated. ● As with any excused absence, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work

### **In-Class Recording:**

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.



Date	In-Class	Homework [The Homework is due the following class period. For example, read <i>Wieland</i> Ch. 1-6 BEFORE August 26]
August 21	Syllabus: Icebreaker “Where have you encountered the Gothic?”	Homework: <i>Wieland</i> Ch. 1-6
August 26	Discussion	Homework: <i>Wieland</i> Ch. 7-11
August 28	Discussion	Homework: <i>Wieland</i> Ch. 12-17
September 2	Discussion	Homework: <i>Wieland</i> Ch. 18-22
September 4	Discussion	Homework: <i>Wieland</i> Finish
September 9	Discussion	Homework: “Berenice” and Scholarly Article TBA
September 11	Discussion	Homework: “Young Goodman Brown” and “The Yellow Wallpaper”
September 16	Discussion	Homework: “A Rose for Emily” and “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”
September 18	Discussion	Homework: and <i>Beloved</i> Ch. 1-6 and scholarly article
September 23	Discussion	Homework: <i>Beloved</i> 7-11
September 25	Discussion	Homework: <i>Beloved</i> 12-17
September 30	Discussion	Homework: <i>Beloved</i> 18-22
October 2	Discussion	Homework: <i>Beloved</i> Finish
October 7	Discussion	Homework: Homework: <i>Ghost Singer</i> 1-9
October 9	Discussion	Homework: <i>Ghost Singer</i> 10-19 and Homework: <b>Proposal for Final Project Due Oct 14</b>

October 14	Discussion	Homework: <i>Ghost Singer</i> 20-25
October 16	Discussion	Homework: Finish <i>Ghost Singer</i> and scholarly article
October 21	Discussion	
October 23	TBA	Homework: Selected Poems from <i>Ancestral Demon of a Grieving Bride</i>
October 28	Discussion and In-Class Video	Homework: <i>Mexican Gothic</i> 1-5 and <a href="#">Bonus - What's So Gothic About the Southwest? — Southwest Gothic</a>
October 30	Discussion	Homework: <i>Mexican Gothic</i> 6-11
November 4	Discussion	Homework: <i>Mexican Gothic</i> 12-17
November 6	Discussion	Homework: <i>Mexican Gothic</i> 18-24 Homework: <b>Literary Analysis Due Before Midnight</b>
<b>November 13</b>	Discussion	Homework: Finish <i>Mexican Gothic</i> and scholarly article
November 18	LAST Discussion	
November 21	Presentations	
December 2	Presentations	Homework: <b>Final Project Due December 7 before MIDNIGHT</b>