

## **Gothic Novel & Horror Fiction**

Engl 113 (Spring 2006)

Dr. Katherine D. Harris

### **Presentation Project & Short Essay**

There are two options for your Presentation Project and the Short Essay. By our second class meeting, you need to inform me of your selection. Stragglers will be assigned to whatever is left open.

#### **OPTION A: Group Presentation** (14 slots)

Each of the seven novels in this course is rich with historical, social, political and cultural references as well as being references themselves for later literature and film. For this option, students will work together in groups of 2 to present information on a chosen novel, its structure, its creation, its author, its characters, its later references in art – any information that the group finds interesting about its novel. It's the group's job to decide what is most important to show/tell the class, therefore be discerning about the information and dynamic about the presentation. Since a group will introduce each novel on the first day that it's scheduled, the presentation needs to inspire students to read, discuss and generally find out more about that novel. Choose from the novels below:

Matthew Lewis, <i>The Monk</i>	Present 9/5
Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i>	Present 9/26
Jane Austen, <i>Northanger Abbey</i>	Present 10/5
Emily Brontë, <i>Wuthering Heights</i>	Present 10/17
R.L. Stevenson, <i>Dr. Jekyll &amp; Mr. Hyde</i>	Present 10/24
Bram Stoker, <i>Dracula</i>	Present 10/31
Stephen King, <i>The Shining</i>	Present 11/16

#### **The Presentation** (15 min.)

During this 15 minute presentation, each student will present 5 minutes worth of information. The material should be presented cohesively; in other words, the presentation should clearly show that the group members have shared research, reviewed one another's work and integrated each other's presentations as seamlessly as possible. In the past students have used maps, film clips, songs, historical games, PowerPoint demonstrations and even websites to demonstrate and enhance their presentations and their grades. *If you need any audio/visual equipment, please ask me at least a week in advance.*

For the presentation's contents, first and foremost, each group needs to discuss how its novel fits into the Gothic tradition by using excerpts from the novel. Research on the production and reception history needs to be included also. For instance: How was it written? In what form was it originally published? Can you show us an example? What did critics say about it? Who read it? (These questions are provided to help you with your research; not all need to be answered.) This portion should give the class a sense of the novel when it was originally published. You may also provide historical information: What political, social or cultural events are referred to or inspired the novel? Did the novel influence any parodies? Did it inspire any artwork or films? Is the author's background important to know? Don't just recite summaries or information from the novel's introductory pages; tell us what you found out about this novel. Excite us with your presentation.

This presentation requires each group member to perform research either in the library or on the Web. Please be skeptical of any Web resources that are not included in our Online Resources. I have many background materials on these authors and novels; come see me about research and resources.

#### **The Short Essay** (4pp)

Each group member is individually responsible for turning in a 4-page (max) essay on the day the group is scheduled to present. The essay will contain all of the elements that you presented but in greater detail and in a formal style (MLA style, including a Works Cited). See below for details about formatting your essay.

### **OPTION B: Individual Reading Project** (14 slots)

If you choose Option B, you will work independently on short stories not assigned for class reading in *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*, edited by Chris Baldick, and *American Gothic Tales*, edited by Joyce Carol Oates, both assigned for this course. Choose any 4 stories from these anthologies, with one condition: at least one of the stories must be from the "Beginnings" section of *The Oxford Book*. The others may be drawn from any period (and nation or culture) that strikes your fancy.

#### **The Presentation** (10 min.)

Since so many of you wanted to work on the Option B short stories, we have scheduled dates for presentation. See the Reading Schedule for your date. Be ready to offer your classmates a brief oral synopsis of one or more of the stories that interested you, briefly tracing the plot and explaining what aspects of the story particularly intrigued you, and why.

The presentation should be only 10 minutes (please time it). Only one person per Tuesday class meeting will be allowed to give an Option B presentation and you may not give a presentation on a short story already presented on by a classmate, so don't wait until the last minute. If you know of a date that you would like to present, you may reserve it by emailing me the date and the stories that you would like to discuss. Option B presentations are allowed September 5 - December 5. Anyone not presenting by this date will receive a zero for the assignment.

#### **The Short Essay** (4pp)

On the day of your presentation, you will also turn in a 4-page essay with formal writing and in MLA style. (See below for format.) In the essay, assess the 4 stories you have chosen in terms of how they reflect, expand upon, differ from, or somehow add to what you understand to be the nature and substance of the Gothic, both in fiction and in the wider culture. I will be interested in seeing what you make of the Gothic as you have come to understand it, and how you apply that understanding to the examination of 4 varied stories. You do not need to treat each story at the same length, nor do I want you simply to summarize plots. Rather, compose an essay that reflects your sense of how the tales you choose connect to your evolving ideas about the nature, scope, and substance of the Gothic.

### **TURNING IN THE SHORT ESSAY**

Your essay needs to assess and analyze rather than simply summarize or describe. Using formal language, discuss your ideas and provide evidence through citation. Remember to look at the details: a character, image, scene, etc. Your critical voice is important here. Format requirements are below:

- 4 pages (max), typed and double-spaced in 12pt font with one inch margins
- Works Cited page (outside of the 4 pages) in MLA format
- In-text citations in MLA style (parenthetical citation)
- Name, date, course and section number typed at the top left corner of the first page
- Name and page number typed in upper right corner of every page following the first page
- Staple the pages together (DO NOT FOLD OR PAPERCLIP YOUR PAGES)
- Proofread everything before you turn it in; there should be no spelling or typographical errors
- Submit to Turnitin.com for verification

#### **Grading**

You will receive two grades for this assignment: *The first* will assess your Presentation, which will be based on its effectiveness (preparation, comprehension, depth). *A second grade* will be assigned to your written Essay, which will be based on your ability to communicate your ideas in a formal piece of writing (see the "Departmental Grading Policy" on the Greensheet). Option A presentations will be based on the group performance. Failure to follow the above formatting requirements will result in a lower grade. Late papers will receive the penalization indicated on our Greensheet.