

Gothic Novel & Horror Fiction

Engl. 113, Spring 2010, San José State University

T/R 12-1:15pm, Clark Hall 111

Dr. Katherine D. Harris

Email: katherine.harris@sjsu.edu

Website: www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris

Discussion Forum: <http://ic.sjsu.edu/moodle>

Office: FO 220

Phone: (408) 924-4475

Office Hours: W 11:30-1:30 & via online tools

See schedule for my furlough days

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Slasher films used to be a great way to spend "date night." However, we've become so jaded about horror films (and the girl who always falls during the chase scene) that we are amused by them instead of genuinely terrified and awe-struck. These movies were inspired by horror fiction, including Stephen King's *The Shining* and multiple incarnations of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. All of these literary texts originate from the Gothic novel tradition, where psychological disintegration is quelled by sweeping landscapes. In this course, we'll establish the definition of "gothic" by reading Matthew Lewis' *The Monk*. Moving through the nineteenth century, we'll explore monsters, landscapes and female victims as they appear in Gothic novels. In the twentieth century, we'll discover that "gothic" becomes synonymous with "horror," very similar to King's *The Shining* and Stanley Kubrick's film version. Students will bring in horror films and media (e.g., video games, novels, etc.) from the last 10 years to finish off our semester.
Prerequisite: Passing WST score

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To recognize and appreciate the importance of the Gothic novel and horror fiction as major literary genres 1765 to present in both England and America.
- To strengthen our abilities to engage literary text and to analyze both its form and content as well as its historical contexts.

REQUIRED BOOKS & MATERIALS (most on Reserve in King Library)

Beckett, Samuel. *Nohow On: Company, Ill Seen Ill Said, Westward Ho: Three Novels*. New York: Grove Press, 1995. (ISBN 978-0802134264)

Ellis, Bret Easton. *American Psycho*. New York: Vintage, 1991. (ISBN 978-0679735779)

King, Stephen. *The Shining*. New York: Pocket, 2002. (ISBN 978-0743437493)

Lee, Vernon. *Hauntings & Other Fantastic Tales*. 1890. Ed. Catherine Maxwell. New York: Broadview, 2006. (ISBN 978-1551115788)

Lewis, Matthew. *The Monk*. 1794. Ed. Emma McEvoy. New York: Oxford World Classic, 2008. (ISBN 978-0199535682)

Oates, Joyce Carol, ed. *American Gothic Tales*. New York: Plume, 1996. (ISBN 978-0452274891)

Polidori, John William. *The Vampyre and Ernestus Berchtold; or The Modern Oedipus*. 1819. Eds. D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf. New York: Broadview, 2007. (ISBN 978-1551117454)

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*. 1886. New York: Oxford UP, 2008. (ISBN 978-0199536221)

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. 1897. Ed. Nina Auerbach. New York: Norton, 1996. (ISBN 978-0393970128)

Suggested (most on Reserve in King Library):

A Research Guide for Undergraduates in English & American Literature. MLA, 2006. (ISBN 9780873529242)

Harmon, William and C. Hugh Holman. *A Handbook to Literature*. 11th ed. Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2008. (ISBN 9780136014393)

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7th ed. New York: MLA, 2009. (ISBN 9781603290241)

Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference* (or other writing handbook)

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

10%	Class Discussion & Participation
10%	Discussion Forum Posts (10pts each)
15%	Group Presentation & Timeline
15%	Glossary Entries (20pts each)
15%	Mid-Term Exam
15%	Final Essay
20%	Final Exam

Graduate students see additional requirements for projects

Class Discussion & Participation

This course studies the evolution of a particular genre. Since we will build on our definition of “gothic” and “horror” from the first day of class, your participation in each class meeting is imperative. Since this class is largely discussion-based, arrive to class prepared with the proper readings. Our meeting space is the technology-rich environment of the Incubator Classroom where we will respond to each other in online forums, evaluate electronic resources and share strategies, successes and failures in our scholarly adventures. The technology, though sometimes daunting, will actually enhance our discussions and has the capability to improve research as well as writing skills. It requires a commitment to participating, though. Media experimentation is welcome, encouraged even (Twitter, anyone?). If you find something relevant to our readings, please bring it in or put it on the screen at the beginning of class. This type of engagement will only enhance your participation grade. For further tips on performing well in class, see below.

A student’s participation is assessed by his/her contribution throughout the semester. Use the following as guidelines for this portion of your final grade:

- To earn a "C," do the minimum: read and prepare assigned readings so you are never at a loss if you are asked a question, but speak only when called upon, do "ordinary," plain-vanilla presentations and responses. This is the "bottom line" for getting a "C" in this part of the course.
- To earn a "B," prepare assigned readings thoroughly, initiate discussions about them by asking good questions or suggesting ways to interpret readings, do presentations that reveal that you have done good additional work that you can make both interesting and meaningful to our discussions, and participate actively in those discussions.
- For an "A," take it up another level entirely: prepare readings thoroughly, find and talk about connections among them and among other aspects of culture (then and now), take a real leadership role in class discussions, including working actively to get others involved in the talk, make your presentations and responses "sparkle" by bringing to them something really special in terms of your own contributions, interests, skills, and abilities to think in broad even interdisciplinary terms. Most of all, remember that an "A" indicates the very best grade a person can get; that should tell you what sort of work you need to do to earn the grade of "A."

If you miss class, contact a classmate for notes, reading assignments and handouts – or check our Course Website. (Please do not email me to ask “Did I miss anything important?”)

Discussion Forum Posts

Over the semester, you will produce various types of weekly responses: some prepared outside of class and others prepared in class. For Reading Responses, you will produce 300-500 words for the assigned reading for that week and post this entry to the proper Moodle Discussion Forum by 10am on the due

date. These will be used to stimulate your thoughts on the texts and to serve as ideas for your essays. To begin, choose a quote (if one has not been provided) from the week’s reading assignment and place it at the top of your post (properly formatted). Skip a line and begin writing about the significance of that quote to your thoughts about the literary text. Absolutely avoid using “I” in these writings.

Each Reading Response is worth 10 points (total of 10). After each forum post is submitted, I will email the points that you earned for that entry; on the Moodle entry, I will make suggestions for improving your score. Students who write nothing or who write frivolously will not receive credit for the exercise. Because these Reading Responses pertain to that week’s readings and are not useful after the discussion has been completed, late Reading Responses will not be accepted. (See Writing Tips handout.)

Group Presentation

For the Group Presentation, students will research the historical context, production, illustrations, reviews, etc., of a novel and present those findings on that novel’s first day (20 mins). A brief piece of writing will be submitted to mark the group’s presentation. In addition, each group will be responsible for filling in the Google Docs spreadsheet for our online timeline prior to their presentation day. Each Research Presentation will be graded on its effectiveness and clarity. To enhance your presentation, you may use handouts, digital information or dramatic performance. Further instructions and a tutorial on the timeline will be distributed on the second day of class.

Glossary Entries on Moodle

Often, I will highlight literary terms specific to gothic or horror literary during my opening lectures. Because these terms are important to the evolving definition of our course work, it’s important to know their meaning as fully as possible. Each student is responsible for writing 5 glossary entries in Moodle. Each entry should be 200-400 words and properly cited. Choose the terms yourself, but please note that you may not duplicate any existing entries. Two entries are due before the mid-term exam, and three entries are due before the final exam. Since each entry is worth 20 points, the writing needs to be immaculate and the content needs to be interesting and extensive, including any links to images or other outside sources. (Please do not simply copy the entire *OED* definition.) You are strongly encouraged to further enhance the definitions beyond what we discuss in class but be sure that everything is in your own words.

Final Essay

Though we begin our Gothic journal in 1765, we will discover that the genre continues well into the 20th and 21st-centuries. For the Final Essay, each student will write on gothic or horror media that has been published/created in the last 10 years. Pair a literary text (not on our syllabus) with another form of media (role playing game, video game, movie, graphic novel, TV show, etc.) and compare/contrast the gothic or horror elements. You will need to discuss movement between media and literary elements – this is where the Glossary becomes helpful! Further instructions will be distributed later.

Graduate Students Only

Graduate students will perform all of the same assignments as undergraduate students. Your Final Essay will be appropriate to graduate-level work (10-15 pages) with research into secondary criticism. Plan to meet with me at least twice throughout the semester to discuss your progress and submit a project proposal. Further details will be discussed later.

Mid-term and Final Exams

Each exam will consist of definitions, short answer and essay questions. Portions of the Final Exam will be comprehensive. The Moodle Glossary will be invaluable to keep track of literary terms and key words.

GRADING POLICY

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU *Catalog* (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure. Courses graded according to the A,B,C,NoCredit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC, for NoCredit, shall replace D or F. In A,B,C,NoCredit courses NC shall also substitute for W (for Withdrawl) because neither NC nor W affects students’ grade point averages.

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of the ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

For your final grades, 100-90 is an A, 89-80 is a B, 79-70 is a C, 69-60 is a D, and below 60 is an F. Pluses and minuses are the middle of each range. In calculating the final grade, a set number will represent each letter grade; for example, B+ is 87.5, B is 85, and B- is 82.5.

COURSE POLICIES

Course Moodle (ic.sjsu.edu/moodle) & Course Website

(www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris/GothicNovelS10/Eng113_Frame.htm)

Moodle is the our central location for the blog and discussion forum. The site is accessible by registered users with an enrollment key. We will have a tutorial from the Incubator Classroom staff on the second day of class to help acclimate to all of this technology. If you run into any technical problems while logging into Moodle from home, please contact the IC staff. Our Course Website will contain all handouts, references made during lectures and interesting things that you would like to add. Google Docs will be used to create our timeline. Google Docs contains programs that are similar to Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and FrontPage, but with less bugs. In addition, this atmosphere resides completely on Google’s server – this means that you can access our course documents from anywhere. Registering for and using Google Docs requires very little technical expertise; in fact, if you already have an email address, then you are qualified to use Google Docs. We will go through all of this on our second day of class.

Late Assignments/Essays

Any late Reading Responses will not be accepted. For all other assignments: If you cannot meet a deadline, you must contact me *at least 72 hours prior* to our class meeting to discuss the situation. If this is not done, for *every day* that an essay is late, you will be penalized one grade step: A becomes A-, A- becomes a B+, etc. The weekend will count as one day. If you miss your group presentation date, it is simply a zero (*and unconscionable*). Unless you have prior permission, do not email your assignment to me in lieu of attending class.

SJSU Academic Integrity Policy

Students should know that the University’s Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy

F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of somebody else's words or ideas and is considered an instance of academic dishonesty that instructors must report. You commit plagiarism by

- buying, stealing, or borrowing a paper;
- hiring someone to write a paper;
- building on someone's ideas without providing a citation;
- or copying from another source or using a source too closely when paraphrasing.

In other words, submit only your own work. To learn how to cite sources accurately and forthrightly, consult your handbook. If you have any questions about when or how to document a source, do not hesitate to ask me for clarification. Turning in plagiarized work may result in immediate failure in the course and could result in dismissal from San José State University. See King Library's definition, the University policy and a plagiarism tutorial:

www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/plagiarism.htm

Plagiarism checks will be performed by asking students to submit various written exercises or essays to Turnitin.com, a service which scans documents for all references to Web sources and other essays. **To sign up for Turnitin use the Class ID 3097410 and Password eek2010.** The instructor reserves the right to revise the requirements and to notify students of such revision in a timely manner.

Classroom Environment

Respect your fellow students and I: Arrive on time (excessive tardiness will effect your participation grade) and do not partake in disruptive behavior. If possible, try to arrive early to obtain and set up your laptop. If you are late, wait for an appropriate moment to enter so you do not disturb the class. Turn off cell phones or put them on silent mode during the class period.

Email Protocols

Email is the best possible way to contact me (9am-5pm) and has the added bonus of recording our conversations. *Please note that I will be unable to respond to emails on furlough days.* When emailing me, please consider it a formal communication: include the appropriate salutation, your name, your question/comment. Know that long conversations over email are not fruitful merely because of the limitations of technology. If you have an extended question or dilemma, please visit me during office hours, schedule a phone conference or arrange for an online chat. I will amass a class email list and will occasionally send out information regarding our meetings or the readings. *Please provide an email address that you check daily.*

GENERAL INFORMATION

SJSU Writing Center

Visit me during office hours for help with your writing. For even further help, go to the Writing Center located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:30-5:30 and Friday 9-12. Call for appointments at 924-2308 or go online at www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter. Work with tutors in a one-on-one environment.

Library Liaison

For library research questions, contact Toby Matoush, the English Department's Library Liaison: (408) 808-2096 or toby.matoush@sjsu.edu. King Library has created an extensive and very useful list of the library's resources specifically for English majors: <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/english>.

Peer Mentor Center

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering "roadside assistance" to peers who feel a bit lost or

simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. The Peer Mentor Center website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/> .

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers and laptops are also available in the Martin Luther King Library (<http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/computers/laptop.htm>). A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

Dropping and Adding Courses

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Because of the budget cuts, please check with your advisor early and often. Much information is available online at the Advising Hub: <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>

Campus Policy on Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with DRC to establish a record of their disability. The DRC website is <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu>.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please respond using complete sentences

1. Indicate if you are an English major, minor or other. Are you a sophomore, junior or senior?
2. Have you taken any pre-1900 literature courses or post-1900 literature courses? Have you taken Engl. 56A (British Survey to 1800), Engl. 56B (1800 to Present) or Engl. 144 (Shakespeare)?
3. Do you have access to a computer at home? Yes No
(If not, become familiar with SJSU's computer labs.)
4. Have you ever blogged, posted to an online forum or used text messaging?
(I'm assuming you've written emails, yes?)
How much time do you spend on the Web? Have you ever created your own website?
Have you ever taken a course with an online or technology component?
5. **Briefly** summarize the important policies presented on this syllabus.
6. Write one or two sentences defining "plagiarism."
7. Write a **brief** paragraph explaining what "literature" means to you.
8. Write a **brief** paragraph defining "gothic" or "horror."
9. What's the scariest item you have ever read?

By signing below, the individual acknowledges receiving (and reading) a copy of the class syllabus that details the schedule of work, participation requirements, grading criteria and other important information. The individual also acknowledges understanding of plagiarism and its consequences.

Name: _____

Signature: _____