

English 104  
Introduction to Fiction: Southern Gothic  
Spring 2016, CRN 32049  
MW 4-5:20, Condon 260

Instructor: Kristy Kelly  
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Office: PLC 241  
Office Hours: T 10-12, W 3-4, and by appointment

### **Course Description**

In this class we will analyze literary texts filled with ghosts and monsters, gruesome secrets and haunted houses. Reading texts from the mid-Seventeenth century through to the contemporary era, we will look at the ways that American authors have used horror tropes to deal with cultural anxieties and historical traumas. We'll focus especially upon literature from the American South, reading Gothic texts as a response to, or a sublimation of, issues of race and the haunting legacies of slavery.

Along with unpacking and complicating the Gothic as a literary genre, this course provides the basic tools to understand and dissect a literary text. We will explore not simply *what* a text says but *how* it creates meaning. Our readings will cover a variety of literary forms, from the short story to the novella to the graphic novel. We will also read a small amount of literary criticism. Over the course of the term, you will learn key literary concepts that allow you to interpret a text's themes through its structural, symbolic, and stylistic choices. A primary skill you'll take from this class is the ability to closely read a text, making analytical claims about short passages by examining word choice, form, and symbolism. You will practice these skills throughout the term in the form of short essays, quizzes, informal writing assignments, and a midterm exam. By the end of the course, you will apply what you've learned in an original piece of literary analysis.

NOTE: This course satisfies the University Arts and Letters requirement. It does not count toward the English major.

### **Course Outcomes**

1. Read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions.
2. Draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts.
3. Perform critical, formal analyses of literary, cinematic, and other cultural texts.
4. Write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose.
5. Employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments.
6. Employ primary and/or secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay's thesis.

### **Required Texts**

*Black Hole*, Charles Burns (Pantheon 2008)  
*Bartleby and Benito Cereno*, Herman Melville (Dover 1990)  
*Beloved*, Toni Morrison (Vintage 2004)  
*Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison (Vintage 1993)

NOTE: All other texts will be linked through Canvas course site (abbreviated as CV)

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## Assignments

*Quizzes (10%):* There will be 1-2 unannounced quizzes per week. They will test your knowledge of key terms and central concepts from our readings. Quizzes cannot be made up.

*Close Reading Papers (2 at 15%):* You will complete two 2-page close reading papers in which you analyze a short passage of your choosing from one of our shared readings. The paper should have a specific thesis statement as its first sentence. This statement should make an original argument about the chosen text, and should support this argument with textual evidence and literary terminology from class. These will be due no later than the date stated in the schedule (you can complete them early). More details will follow.

*Short Writing Assignments and Participation (10%):* Your success in this class hinges on your active engagement with course content. Think of class as an ongoing conversation between our shared texts, your classmates, and your own ideas. We will often have short, informal writing assignments that invite you to practice skills, brainstorm ideas, and prepare for larger writing assignments. We will also hold small and large group discussions in which each student's participation is essential. These discussions allow you to test your ideas and think creatively with your classmates.

*Midterm Exam (20%):* This exam will test your comprehension of literary terminology, historical contexts, and thematic content of our shared texts. It will contain short answer and multiple choice questions. More details will follow.

*Literary Analysis Paper (30% Total):* This culminating project asks you to combine your knowledge of literary terms, close critical reading, and historical contexts with one of the shared texts to create an original piece of literary analysis. The paper should have a well-honed thesis defended with textual evidence and your own close reading. You may only use the secondary sources we've read in class.

Writing is a collaborative work-in-progress. As such, this project will contain proposal, peer review, and revision components as follows:

*Proposal (Full Completion or -5%):* You will propose a specific question that you want to pursue in the final paper, explaining which text(s) you want to work with, what analytical lens you will apply, and where you will turn for evidence. I will provide feedback prior to the first version of the final paper. More details will follow.

*First Version and Peer Review (10%):* You will compose a full version of your paper (NOT a rough, unfinished draft—your grade will suffer if the first version is incomplete) to share feedback from your classmates in peer review. You will read your peers' work and prepare written feedback outside of class. You will be scored based on the quality of attention you've paid to your peers' work. You will also submit a copy of your essay to me via Canvas. More details will follow.

*Final Version (20%):* This final version should be a polished intellectual product that reflects your engagement with course content, my guidance, and your classmates' feedback. More details will follow.

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## **Policies**

*Late Work:* All work is due at the beginning of class. I will provide instructions on how to submit work (hard copy, Canvas, etc.). Each day that a piece of work is late, the grade will drop by one letter. If you need to miss class on a day an assignment is due, you will need to make arrangements with me to turn in your work prior to the missed class. I assess the possibility of extensions on a case-to-case basis. Communicating with me is the first step!

*Absences:* Since this course relies so heavily on your active participation, I will take attendance at all class meetings. You are allowed to miss one week's worth of class (2 days) without penalty. After that, your grade will decrease by one-half letter grade per absence. Timeliness is also mandatory. Tardiness is extremely distracting to me and to your classmates, so three instances of tardiness will count as one absence. As with late work, arrangements can be made in extenuating circumstances; get in touch with me.

*Academic Honesty:* All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please consult *The Purdue Owl* for a definition of plagiarism and information on documentation, and refer to the *Student Conduct Code* on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. You may also contact me with any questions.

*Access:* If you have a disability (physical or learning) which you think may affect your performance in this class, please see me during the first week of the term so we can make arrangements, if necessary, for your full access to all classroom activities.

*Accessing Readings:* Several of our readings are in the public domain, which means they are widely available on the internet through such resources as Project Gutenberg (Gutenberg.org). I will link all of our course readings through Canvas; I prefer that you use the linked version of each text, so that everyone is using the same version. You are required to bring hard copies of each reading to class with you. Failure to do so will adversely impact your participation score.

*Technology in the Classroom:* Texting, Snapchat, Facebook, YikYak: these are all very fun. The classroom is NOT the place, however. Let's view class as a time to disconnect from social media for an hour and twenty minutes twice a week. If I see you on your phone (under the desk, during small group work, while another classmate is talking), I will mark you absent without alerting you. Laptops are also not allowed unless I ask you to bring them for an activity or you have approval to use it for note-taking.

*Canvas and Email:* I will use Canvas regularly to make announcements, distribute documents, and post readings. Make sure your settings are adjusted so that you receive important announcements. You will also need to check your Webmail account regularly, as this is the primary way I communicate with students. NOTE: While the Canvas gradebook should give you a relatively accurate view of your "running total" score in the class, you should not rely on it as a concrete reflection of your grade. See me if you have questions about this.

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*Literary Glossary:* You will find a link to the digital version of the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* on Canvas. This is a helpful resource if you need a quick and straightforward definition of a term. This is only intended as a supplement; class lectures will provide fuller definitions more suited to our contexts.

*Outside Research and Secondary Sources:* We will read a limited amount of literary criticism to enrich our understanding of the shared texts. These will also model rigorous literary analysis. You are not required to use secondary sources in your work, however. In this class, *your* analysis is the priority. As such, you will need pre-approval from me to use secondary sources beyond the ones assigned.

Course Schedule

NOTE: This schedule is tentative and subject to change.

<b>Week 1: Introduction to Gothic Fiction</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
M 3/28	Welcome! Intro to Fiction		
W 3/30	What is Gothic Fiction	“Young Goodman Brown,” Hawthorne (CV).	

<b>Week 2: Early American Gothic</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
M 4/4	Old World Anxieties; Close Reading Exercise	“The Fall of the House of Usher,” Poe (CV)	
W 4/6	Horror, “Hysteria,” and the Uncanny	“The Yellow Wallpaper,” Gilman; “The Uncanny,” Freud (CV).	

<b>Week 3: Southern Gothic</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
M 4/11	Secrets of the Antebellum South	“A Rose for Emily,” Faulkner (CV)	
W 4/13	Southern Grotesque	“A Good Man is Hard to Find,” O’Connor (CV).	Close Reading 1 (Latest Due Date)

<b>Week 4: Race and the Gothic</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
M 4/18	Africanist Presence in the Gothic	<i>Benito Cereno</i> 37-61; <i>Playing in the Dark</i> 3-17	
W 4/20	Discussion	<i>Benito Cereno</i> 61-84; <i>Playing in the Dark</i> 31-44	

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<b>Week 5: Race and the Gothic Continued</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
M 4/25	Discussion	<i>Benito Cereno</i> 84-104; <i>Playing in the Dark</i> 44-59	
W 4/27	<b>Midterm Exam</b>		

<b>Week 6: Slavery's Ghosts</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
M 5/2	Morrison Intro	<i>Beloved</i> 3-86	
W 5/4	Discussion	<i>Beloved</i> 87-138	Close Reading 2 (Latest Due Date)

<b>Week 7: Morrison Continued</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
M 5/9	Discussion	<i>Beloved</i> 138-195	Paper Proposal Due
W 5/11	Discussion	<i>Beloved</i> 199-256	

<b>Week 8: From Magical Realism to Zombies: Gothic Forms</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
M 5/16	Discussion	<i>Beloved</i> 257-324	
W 5/18	Pop Gothic Writing Workshop	"Thriller," Jackson (CV), <i>Black Hole</i> Sections 1-6	

<b>Week 9: Burns' Monstrous Bodies</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
M 5/23	Monstrous Bodies	<i>Black Hole</i> Sections 7-12	First Version of Literary Analysis Paper Due (Hard Copy and Canvas)
W 5/25	Discussion Writing Workshop	<i>Black Hole</i> Sections 13-17	Peer Review Feedback to Canvas <b>by Friday at Noon</b>

<b>Week 10: Burns Continued</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
M 5/30	No Class: Memorial Day Weekend!		
W 6/1	Discussion and Wrap-Up	<i>Black Hole</i> Sections 18-20	

**Final Paper Due to Canvas by 2:45 pm on Wednesday, June 8.**