ENG 451/551. Victorian Gothic Fiction

MWF 11-11:50 a.m. in 301 Gerlinger
Professor: Deborah Shapple
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Office Hours: MWF 12-1 p.m. in 365 PLC & by appointment

Course Description

Gothic fiction, with its secret passageways and restless spirits, has piqued the curiosity of its readers since the Enlightenment, while engaging in debates on power, sexuality, education, and justice. Leaving behind the medieval monasteries and southern ancestral homes that served as sites of displaced social critique in the narratives of its eighteenth- and turn-of-the-century predecessors, Victorian gothic fiction focuses its tales of terror predominately on the horrors of contemporary England. Whether addressing the promise and threat of scientific discovery or the sanctity and violence of domestic life, the Victorian gothic challenges its readers to question familiar social mores, as well as the borders of reason and the human, and to view themselves and their world “in a glass darkly.”

Books available at the UO Bookstore, 895 E. 13th Avenue at Kincaid, 346-4331

Brontë, Emily
Eliot, George
Le Fanu, Sheridan
Shelley, Mary
Stoker, Bram

Wuthering Heights
The Lifted Veil
In a Glass Darkly
Frankenstein (1818 Text)
Dracula

Films on reserve in Knight Library

Cukor, George
Hitchcock, Alfred
Coppola, Francis Ford

Gaslight
Rebecca
Bram Stoker’s Dracula

Course Requirements and Information

Reading: All required assignments should be completed before class by the dates listed below. In addition to the required texts listed above, there will also be a selection of essays made available on Blackboard under the link “Course Documents.” Please read each assignment carefully, with an eye toward ideas or issues you would like to introduce to class discussion.

Essays: Undergraduate participants in this course will have the option of writing 2 short critical essays (each approximately 4-5 pp. in length) or one longer research essay (approximately 8-10 pages) preceded by an abstract of about 150 words and a brief bibliography. Graduate students will have the same option, although these essays should be longer in length (either two 5-6 pp. essays or one 12-15 pp. research paper). All essays will address a topic of your own design, which I invite you to discuss with me in advance. Late essays will not be accepted without penalty, although I will consider special situations that are brought to my attention -- preferably 24 hours or more before an assignment is due. Each of the two shorter essays would comprise 30% of the final grade; the research essay would count for 50% of the final, with the abstract and bibliography each contributing an additional 5%.

In-class Responses: Throughout the term, I will ask you to write a paragraph or two in response to a question concerning the readings for that day. Sometimes you will complete these quiz-like assignments with a peer, and sometimes by yourself. The questions will generally be more interpretive than factual, as they’re intended less to terrorize you than to generate subsequent class discussion. These responses will form 20% of the final grade.
Gothic Blog: Since this is a larger class, and you may feel that there isn’t always enough time to discuss all of the points that interest you, the Gothic Blog will provide you with an additional forum for sharing thoughts and posing questions. These out-of-class discussions will, in turn, help to shape the focus of our in-class agendas. Your contributions may be short, ranging from several sentences to a paragraph or two in length, and I encourage you to read and respond to the posts of your classmates as well. Your Blog contributions and your participation in class will count collectively for 20% of your final grade.

Participation: Please come prepared to join in our discussion. Remember that each of your contributions to class may enhance your own experience as well as that of your fellow classmates.

Attendance: Your ability to participate, of course, depends on your arrival to class in a timely fashion. Recurring lateness may lower your class participation grade; contact me early in the term if you foresee a regular problem in getting to class on time. Regular attendance will also be crucial for completing this course successfully. After 3 absences, your final grade will drop by 1/3 of a point (e.g., A- to B+) for each subsequent absence.

Academic Integrity: All work should be your own; any borrowed ideas, paraphrases, or quotations from outside sources must be properly documented in your writing. One act of plagiarism will result in automatic failure for the entire course. For further advice, please select the link “Course Information” from our Blackboard menu, click on the link “UO General Information,” then “Course Policies,” and then refer to the section entitled “Academic honesty – avoiding plagiarism.” If you are uncertain about how or whether to document a particular passage, don’t hesitate to ask me. Please be advised that the English Department supports the use of anti-plagiarism software and is required to report all cases to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs.

Tutoring: Each of you will bring your own strengths and experiences to this course; however, if you find yourself struggling to complete the writing assignments with the desired results, you may wish to seek additional advice and assistance. Free writing tutoring is available through Academic Learning Services, located in 68 PLC. For further information, call 346-3226 or consult the website at http://als.uoregon.edu. I would also be happy to discuss your work or any related issues with you during office hours or by appointment.

Course Calendar

Week 1
26 September. Introduction
Suggested reading: “History as Nightmare” by Robert Mighall
(you don’t need to read this before class)

28 September. Frankenstein, Volume I, Chapters I – V

30 September. Frankenstein, Volume I, Chapters VI – Volume II, Chapter V

Week 2
3 October. Frankenstein, Volume II, Chapter VI – Volume III, Chapter III

5 October. Frankenstein, Volume III, Chapter IV – End

7 October. Anne K. Mellor, “Possessing Nature: The Female in Frankenstein”
Marylin Butler, “Frankenstein and Radical Science”

Week 3
10 October. Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny”

12 October. Gastight

Week 4
17 October.  *Wuthering Heights*, Volume I, Chapters VIII – XII
19 October.  *Wuthering Heights*, Volume I, Chapter XIII – Volume II, Chapter V

Week 5
24 October.  *Wuthering Heights*, Chapter XIV – End
26 October.  “‘Your Father Was Emperor of China, and Your Mother an Indian Queen’: Reverse Imperialism in *Wuthering Heights*” by Susan Meyer
28 October.  *Rebecca*

*First short essay due in class (for those writing 2 essays)*

Week 6
31 October.  *The Lifted Veil*

2 November.  Kate Flint, “Blood, Bodies, and *The Lifted Veil*”
4 November.  “Green Tea” from *In a Glass Darkly*

Week 7
7 November.  “The FAMILIAR” from *In a Glass Darkly*
9 November.  “Carmilla” from *In a Glass Darkly*
11 November.  Signorotti, Elizabeth, “Repossessing the Body: Transgressive Desire in ‘Carmilla’ and *Dracula*”

*Abstract and bibliography due in class (for those writing research papers)*

Week 8
14 November.  *Dracula*, Chapters I – V
16 November.  *Dracula*, Chapters VI - X
18 November.  *Dracula*, Chapters XI - XIV

Week 9
21 November.  *Dracula*, Chapters XV – XIX
23 November.  *Dracula*, Chapters XX – XXIV
25 November.  THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 10
28 November.  *Dracula*, Chapter XXV – End
30 November.  Franco Moretti, “A Capital Dracula”
2 December.  *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*

*Final essays due on Tuesday, 6 December by 5 p.m.*