

Universidad de Costa Rica
Sistema de Estudios de Posgrado
Maestría en Literatura Inglesa

SP-0294 Seminar of Various Authors in Gothic Literature: From Classical Tropes to Modern Revenants

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I Semester 2023

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Description

This is a specialty course that explores the nature and main characteristics of the Gothic genre in literature through the reading of novels. “Gothic” is a term that has been at times misused and often abused. Therefore, the logical path towards an understanding of this notion begins with a discussion of possible definitions, based on academic sources, as well as with a review of the historical and aesthetic context in which this tendency arose in Britain, specifically. Emphasis is placed on the Gothic as an aesthetic and not merely as a literary genre. Under this premise, the literary text will have a central role in the course, but in addressing it, other arts and disciplines will be considered, in order to formulate a more comprehensive description of the concept.

II. Objectives

A. General Objectives

Through the study and exploration of the Gothic, the students will:

1. Expand their skills in applying literary and aesthetic theory to a literary text.
2. Develop their ability to think critically and interpret literary texts.
3. Understand the appeal of the Gothic genre at the aesthetic and cultural levels.

B. Specific Objectives

By the end of the course the students will be able to:

1. Define the Gothic principally as a literary genre, but always within a broader aesthetic tradition.
2. Understand the socio-historical context in which this genre blossomed during the 18th century and later times.
3. Recognize the connections between the literary genre and other Gothic aesthetic manifestations.
4. Define some of the main characteristics of Victorian Gothic fiction, through the reading of novels, short stories and pertinent academic analyses.

5. Analyze fundamental topics related to the genre, such as haunting, transgression, and decadence.
6. Consider aesthetic and spatial implications of the Victorian Gothic setting *par excellence*, the middle-class household, as well as the different areas that composed it.
7. Identify the roles of women presented in 18th and 19th century Gothic literature.
8. Acknowledge the importance that is placed on the spatial within these literary texts and the Gothic genre in general.
9. Consider significant theoretical currents that have contributed greatly to the analysis of Gothic productions, such as Psychoanalysis and, more recently, Ecogothic.

III. Contents: Theoretical and Conceptual

- A. Defining Gothic
- B. Gothic Romanticism
- C. Victorian Gothic
- D. Gothic and Neo-Gothic Architecture
- E. Aesthetic and Spatial Possibilities of the Gothic
- F. Gender and Gothic
- G. Science, Nature and Degeneration in Late-Victorian texts
- H. Vampirism
- I. The Ghost Story
- J. Transgression and Sexuality
- K. The Sublime
- L. Psychoanalysis and the Gothic
- M. Ecogothic

IV. Methodology

Students are responsible for reading the assigned texts and preparing before class. The course develops through lectures on theory, class discussions, presentations in charge of the students, and group work. The students will be required to hand in written assignments, both informal/brief as well as more elaborate ones. They will also prepare a presentation and a final research project, which will be delivered in pairs/groups.

V. Evaluation

Ten entries in journal detailing weekly readings	20%
Student presentation in groups (15% written work, 15% oral pres.)	30%
One 15-20 page research paper	40%
One brief (3 pages) response on last film	10%

VI. Main Bibliography

A. Theory:

Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space* [*La poétique de l'espace*] (1958). Trans. Maria Jolas. Beacon Press, 1994.

Botting, Fred. *Gothic*. Routledge, 1996.

Davenport-Hines, Richard. *Gothic: Four-Hundred Years of Excess, Horror, Evil and Ruin*. North Point Press, 1999.

Dryden, Linda. *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde and Wells*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2003.

Eco, Humberto. *History of Beauty*. Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2004.

El gótico. Ed. Rolf Toman. Konemann, 2004.

Heller, Terry. *The Delights of Terror: An Aesthetics of the Tale of Terror*. The University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Joshi, S.T. *The Weird Tale: Arthur Machen, Lord Dunsany, Algernon Blackwood, M.R. James*. Wildside Press, 1990.

Mezei, Kathy and Chiara Briganti. "Reading the House: A Literary Perspective." *Signs* 27.3 (2002): 837-846.

Mighall, Robert. *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares*. Oxford U P, 1999.

Punter, David and Glennis Byron. *The Gothic*. Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Smith, Andrew. *Gothic Literature*. Edinburgh U P, 2007.

----- *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity and the Gothic at the Fin-de-Siècle*. Manchester U P, 2004.

B. Literary Texts:

Bulwer-Lytton, Edward. "The Haunted and the Haunters or the House and the Brain." *Tales of Terror and the Supernatural*. Bracken Books, 1994.

Collins, Wilkie. *The Dead Secret*. Dover Publications, Inc., 1979.

----- "A Terribly Strange Bed." *Tales of Terror and the Supernatural*. Bracken Books,

1994.

Gaskell, Elizabeth. "The Old Nurse's Story." (1852). *Classic Tales of the Supernatural*. Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2000.

Haining, Peter, ed. *The Mammoth Book of Haunted House Stories*. Robinson, 2005.

Jacobs, W.W. "The Toll-House." (1909). *The Mammoth Book of Haunted House Stories*. Ed. Peter Haining. Robinson, 2005.

James, Henry. "The Romance of Some Old Cloths." *Classic Tales of the Supernatural*. Arcturus, 2000.

James, M.R. "The Ash-Tree." *Collected Ghost Stories*. Wordsworth Classics, 1992.

----- "Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad." *Classic Tales of the Supernatural*. Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2000.

----- "Number 13." *Collected Ghost Stories*. Wordsworth Classics, 1992.

Le Fanu, Sheridan. *Carmilla. In a Glass Darkly*. Wordsworth Classics Series, 2007.

----- "An Account of the Strange Disturbances at Aungier Street." *Classic Tales of the Supernatural*. Arcturus, 2000.

Machen, Arthur. *The Great God Pan. Classic Tales of the Supernatural*. Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2000.

Marsh, Richard. *The Beetle*. (1897). Wordsworth Editions, 2007.

Polidori, John. "The Vampyre." (1818). *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre*. Oxford U P, 1997.

Riddell, Charlotte. "The Open Door." (1882). *Weird Stories*. Victorian Secrets Limited, 2009.

Saki (H.H. Munro). "The Open Window." *Classic Tales of the Supernatural*. Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2000.

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Signet Classics, 1992.

*References for the articles and other theory-related texts are indicated on the copies.

TIMETABLE & CONTENTS

Week 1 (March 9)

Introduction

In-class research, using databases

Week 2 (March 16)

Lecture: 18th Century Gothic and
The Sublime

The Monk (1-94)

Week 3 (March 23)

The Monk (95-222)

***Student pres.: "Painted Nails"**

Week 4 (March 30) Easter

The Monk (222-322)

Week 5 (April 6)

The Monk (323-442)

Week 6 (April 13)

Lecture: "Complicit Bodies"

"The Rose Garden"

"Oh Whistle"

***Student pres.: "The Ghost Story"**

Week 7 (April 20)

Lecture: "Sequestered Spaces"

"The Ash-Tree"

The Haunted Doll's House"

***Student pres.: "House and Home"**

***Student pres.: "On the Parapets"**

Week 8 (April 27)

Carmilla

Film: *Only Lovers Left Alive*

Week 9 (May 4)

Dracula: 1-126

***Student pres.: "Dark Ladies"**

Week 10 (May 11)

No Zoom

Dracula: 126-264

***Student pres.: "The Occidental"**

Week 11 (May 18)

Dracula: 264-380

***Student pres.: "Race and the..."**

Week 12 (May 25)

No Zoom

Finishing *Dracula*

On your own: material for research paper,
rough outline, work on questions

Week 13 (June 1)

Lecture: Degeneration

The Great God Pan

Week 14 (June 8)

The Great God Pan

***Student pres.: "A Slight Lesion"**

Week 15 (June 15)

Lecture: Psychoanalysis and the Gothic

Turn of the Screw

***Picture journal due**

Week 16 (June 22)

Turn of the Screw

***Student pres.: "Almost a Sense of**

Property"

***June 23-June 27: Research Paper**

Week 17 (June 29)

***Students briefly discuss their research p.**

Film: *Hereditary*: please watch on your own

FRIDAY July 6

***Short film response** (on *Hereditary*)