

Gothic Novel & Horror Fiction
Engl. 113, Fall 2011, San José State University
T/R 12-1:15pm, Sweeney Hall 229

Dr. Katherine D. Harris
Email: katherine.harris@sjsu.edu
Website: www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris
Office: FO 220

Phone: (408) 924-4475
Office Hours: W 11:30-1:30 + online tools
Twitter: @triproftri
Google Chat: dr.katherine.harris

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.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students shall achieve the ability to write complete essays that demonstrate advanced proficiency in *all* of the following:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

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)

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Ed. J. Paul Hunter. Norton, 1996. – **FREE BOOK! Print or e-copy**

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, 1997. (ISBN 978-0393970128)

Email & Turnitin Accounts

Suggested (most on Reserve in King Library):

A Research Guide for Undergraduates in English & American Literature. MLA, 2006.

Harmon, William and C. Hugh Holman. *A Handbook to Literature*.

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

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

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

10% Class Discussion & Participation (SLO 1)

10% In-Class/Out-of-Class Essays (SLO 3,4,5)

20% Group Presentation (SLO1,2,3,4,5)

20% Final Project (SLO 3,4,5)

20% Mid-Term Exam (SLO 1,2)

20% Final Exam (SLO 1,2)

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. This class is largely discussion-based; arrive to class prepared with the proper readings. Our meeting space is the technology-rich environment of a Smart Classroom complete with Smart Board, video projector, sound system, VCR, and DVD player. 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, better yet, check our Course Website.

In-Class Essays (ICE) & Out-of-Class Emailed Essays (OCE)

Each week we will write essay responses to an assigned question about the current reading assignment or the previous meeting’s lecture. As the semester progresses, this essay may turn into an out-of-class emailed essay of approximately 300-500 words. Your understanding of that week’s keywords, concepts and class discussion are imperative to produce a sufficient piece of writing. Each OCE/ICE will receive a grade based on the *quality* of your response. This weekly writing will also allow you to practice your in-class writing skills. We will discuss what makes an effective response. The OCE is formal writing that

should conform to MLA style with proper citation format and should be edited for grammar and typographical mistakes. Sloppy writing will be penalized by a letter grade.

There are no make-ups for an ICE/OCE; you simply receive a zero for that essay. An OCE needs to be emailed by the date and time specified in order to receive credit; a late OCE will receive a zero. Please be aware that missing even a few of these essays will cause your final grade to drop significantly. The lowest grade in this entire group of essays will be dropped.

Group Presentation

For the Group Presentation, a group of students will research the production, illustrations, reviews, etc. of a novel and present those findings on that novel's first day (20 mins). A brief piece of writing (300 words) will be submitted to mark the group's presentation. 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 will be distributed.

Final Project

Though we begin our Gothic journal in the 18th Century, we will discover that the genre continues well into the 20th and 21st-centuries. Since we have been discussing various media forms of the Gothic and Horror, you have wide latitude for your final project. The project will be delivered in three phases: The proposal will deliver your initial thoughts on the topic and argument; the final draft represents a full, complete argument that uses evidence effectively and discusses both the content and structural details from primary texts; and the class presentation allows you to share your project with your classmates. Further instructions will be distributed.

Mid-term and Final Exams

Each exam will consist of definitions, short answer and essay questions. Portions of the Final Exam will be comprehensive. Keywords defined in lectures and a study guide will aid in studying for these exams.

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.

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

Late Assignments/Essays

If you cannot meet an essay deadline, you must contact me *at least 48 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. Unless you have prior permission or the assignment specifically requests it, *absolutely no assignment will be accepted via email.*

Classroom & Online Environment

Respect your fellow students and I: Arrive on time (excessive tardiness will effect your participation grade) and do not partake in disruptive behavior. We will all be respectful of each other in both our face-to-face and online communications. 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. You are

welcome to use your laptop with the caveat that it is used to enhance our discussions.

Email Protocols, Office Hours & Online Contact

Email is the best possible way to contact me (9am-5pm) and has the added bonus of recording our conversations. When emailing me, please consider it a formal communication: include the appropriate salutation, your name, your question/comment, and be aware of tone. Know that long conversations over email are not fruitful merely because of the limitations of technology. If you have an extended question or dilemma that cannot be answered by our online materials, please visit me during office hours, schedule a phone conference, or arrange for an online chat/video chat. If I'm in my office, I will usually turn on Google Chat. You might also be able to get my attention on Twitter. 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.*

Google Chat ID: drkatherineharris

Skype ID: katherinedharris

Twitter ID: triproftri

GENERAL INFORMATION

Course Website

As we move along in the semester, course materials will be posted on the course website. After you have entered, simply click on our class title to print the current schedule or handouts, visit online resources, print copies of lost documents, find the SJSU Writing Center, check my office hours, find writing help, or double-check the meaning of "plagiarism."

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center, located in Room 126 in Clark Hall, is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/>.

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>.

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. Computers and laptops are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. 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.

ACADEMIC POLICIES - GENERAL INFORMATION

Academic Integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University's Academic Integrity policy, located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>, requires 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 Student Conduct and Ethical Development website 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 your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

A Word about Plagiarism & Turnitin

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 4254840 and Password goth11.** You may see your Turnitin report when you submit your assignment; if there are any discrepancies, I will request a meeting with you; if plagiarism is indicated, there is a possibility that you could fail the course.

Campus Policy in Compliance with American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make 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 requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/> to establish a record of their disability.

Dr. Katherine D. Harris
Gothic Novel (Engl 113)
Fall 2011

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

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. **Briefly** summarize the important policies presented on this syllabus.
5. Write one or two sentences defining "plagiarism."
6. Write a **brief** paragraph explaining what "literature" means to you.
7. Write a **brief** paragraph defining "gothic" or "horror."
8. 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: _____