

**ENGL 1355:**  
**Film and Literature: Gothic and Horror**  
**Spring 2014**  
**Wednesdays 4:00-7:00**  
**EDGE@State Classroom**

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There's something inherently wrong with the human personality. There's an evil side to it. One of the things that horror stories can do is to show us the archetypes of the unconscious: we can see the dark side without having to confront it directly. I think the unconscious appeal of a ghost story, for instance, lies in its promise of immortality. If you can be frightened by a ghost story, then you must accept the probability that supernatural beings exist. If they do, then there is more than just oblivion waiting beyond the grave.

—Stanley Kubrick on *The Shining*

### **Course Description or "What is ENGL 1355?"**

According to the Undergraduate Bulletin, students in ENGL 1355 "will compare written and cinematic narrative forms by considering classic and modern literary texts through the medium of film." This semester we will be focusing on the gothic and horror tradition. This course satisfies the Humanities requirement in UCA's general education CORE.

### **Course Clarification or "What is a Residential College?"**

A Residential College is a living/learning community that provides students the opportunity to take classes with the same people who live in their residence hall. EDGE Residential College is specifically designed for students who share an interest in liberal arts, global education, and civic engagement. But beware. If we're actually characters in a horror film, most of you are going to die. Look around the room. Commit these faces to memory. It may be the last time you see them.

### **Course Rationale or "Why should I take this RC course?"**

Because it's the best damn class being offered this semester. What other class is giving you the opportunity to read books and watch movies about vampires, serial killers, cross dressers, and cannibals? Come on! It's really a no-brainer here.

### **Course Objectives or "What will I learn?"**

The primary objective of this course is to engage students with the literature and films of the gothic and horror tradition. Of all genres, gothic and horror are the most commonly dismissed as exploitative schlock with no artistic merit or value. But if the purpose of art is, as Oscar Wilde—author of the classic horror tale *The Picture of Dorian Gray*—states, "to create, from the rough material of actual existence, a new world that will be...more enduring," then horror succeeds as art because it endures. Frankenstein. Dracula. Jekyll and Hyde. We know these characters and these stories even if we have never read the books. They are a part of our collective consciousness. Add to this list Michael Myers, Jason Voorhees, and Freddy Krueger. They too have carved out a place for themselves in our culture. This course will examine this phenomenon by critically engaging with the books and films that created them. Objectives include:

- 👤 to learn introductory techniques of literary and film analysis and interpretation,
- 👤 to develop an understanding of gothic and horror aesthetic and history as reflected in representative novels and films,
- 👤 to see, discuss, and write about the use and adaptation of narrative and literary storytelling,
- 👤 to engage in critical dialogue with your classmates and instructor,
- 👤 to become better readers of the films you see for pleasure and far more conscious of the differences, similarities, and relationships between literature and film,
- 👤 to fundamentally improve writing and critical thinking skills, utilizing your growing understanding of film,

and a ton of other stuff. We'll be looking at the Gothic and horror chronologically, trying to grasp an understanding of their development. Along the way, we'll pick up a little literary and film theory and learn to talk like critics. We won't be able to cover *every* aspect of literature and film, but trust me, this class is going to rock!

# PARENTAL ADVISORY EXPLICIT CONTENT

**You've been warned. Some of the films and clips we will be viewing are rated R (or X) for unsettling moments, disturbing sequences of violence, scary images, frightening images, sometimes brutal and sadistic violence (including rape), torture, sexual content, nudity, strong language, and drug-related material. If you know that you will have issues watching, hearing and discussing certain images, words and topics, you need to drop the course now.**

## **Course Texts or "What do I have to buy?"**

This is a college class, so unfortunately you have to buy something. Fortunately for you, I myself know the woes of being a lowly (and broke) college student, so your texts are relatively inexpensive. The national average cost for a college textbook is \$175.00. The texts for this class can be purchased for less than half that. Though the films will either be viewed in class or be made available to you, **you are required to purchase, rent, or check out the book for this course.** They are available in the campus bookstore, the local textbook supply stores, all major bookshops, and online (amazon.com, etc.). Shop smart...shop S-Mart.

The primary texts for this class are:

- Blatty, William Peter. *The Exorcist*. (Harper: 978-0061007224)
- Bloch, Robert. *Psycho*. (Overlook: 978-1590203354)
- Jackson, Shirley. *The Haunting of Hill House* (Penguin: 978-0143039983)
- Levin, Ira. *Rosemary's Baby*. (Penguin: 978-0451210517)
- King, Stephen. *The Shining* (Pocket: 978-0743424424)
- Shelley, Stoker, & Stevenson. *Frankenstein; Dracula; Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Signet: 978-0451523631)

## **Course Requirements or "What do I have to do?"**

**Reading/Viewing quizzes:** Throughout the semester, you will be given quizzes that will test whether or not you have been reading the texts and watching the films closely. At the end of the semester, your two lowest quiz grades will be dropped. **(100 points)**

**Essay:** You will write one short essay for this class. For this essay, you must watch a remake of *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *The Haunting*, *Psycho*, or *The Shining* and write a comparative analysis about the two different versions of the film. A detailed assignment sheet will be given out later. **(100 points)**

**Semester Exams:** During the course of the semester there will be two exams. These exams will test your knowledge of terms, films, and literature covered up to the relevant point in the semester. These exams will have a combination of IDs and short answer. **(100 points each)**

**The ABC's of Horror:** This will be a small group project. You will be divided into five groups of 4 (or 5) and complete an ABC list for one of the films covered in class. An ABC list is a 26 item list of important elements in a film or text. So, each group will be assigned one film to watch in detail and compile this list. A detailed assignment sheet with examples will be given out later. The five films are *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *The Haunting*, and *Psycho*. **(300 points)**

**Stephen King's Dollar Baby Project:** According to Stephen King, "Around 1977 or so, when I started having some popular success, I saw a way to give back a little of the joy the movies had given me... I established a policy which still holds today. I will grant any student filmmaker the right to make a movie out of any short story I have written...so long as the film rights are still mine to assign. I ask them to sign a paper promising that no resulting film will be exhibited commercially without approval, and that they send me a videotape of the finished work. For this one-time right I ask a dollar." For this project, you will work as a group to compete a "Dollar Baby." The list of available stories can be found at <http://www.stephenking.com/dollarbabies.php>. We will discuss this project in more detailed throughout the semester, but until then, start checking out the stories and try to decide which one we should shoot. **(300 points)**

## Dire warnings and other non-negotiables, or “How do I stay on your good side?”

1. **You are in college. Act like it.** Be considerate of your classmates and the instructor.
2. **Come to class.** According to the UCA *Handbook*, “students are expected to attend all class meetings,” therefore regular attendance is essential. “Attendance” in this class is defined as being present, engaged, and alert the entire class period unless previous arrangements have been made.
3. **If you must be absent**, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from a classmate. Missing four classes will result in having your final grade lowered by one letter grade. Missing five classes will result in a drop for non-attendance or a failing grade.
4. **READ!** The single most effective strategy to success in a college course is to read the assigned material. The *Student Handbook* “suggests a minimum of two hours preparation on the part of the student” for each credit hour taken. This means a class worth three hours of credit requires six hours of preparation per week. In general, you should read the entire work before class discussion and re-read passages as necessary.
5. **Turn off cell phones before** entering the classroom. “Off” means off, not on vibrate. Your phones must be switched off and out of site in your book bag, purse, etc. This is your only warning or strike one. The first time you are caught texting, placing a call, or receiving a call or text—even if you simply forgot to turn off your phone—will be strike two. You will be asked to leave the class and will be counted absent for the day. The second time any of the previous offenses occur will be strike three. You will be dropped from the course with a WF. I’m serious.
6. **No laptops, e-readers** (e.g. Kindle, iPad), **or other electronic devices** will be allowed unless internet capabilities have been disabled. This is your only warning or strike one. The first time you are caught surfing the net, Facebooking, etc. will be strike two. You will be asked to leave the class and will be counted absent for the day. The second time any of these offenses occur will be strike three. You will be dropped from the course with a WF. Again, I’m serious.
7. **Grades are earned not given.** You are responsible for your grade, not me. This means you must work to earn the grade you want, not attempt to negotiate it after the fact. Additionally, **do not ask for extra credit**. The assignments outlined above are adequate to assess your performance in the class.
8. **Keep up with your grade.** Though my office will be open to discuss grade issues, it is your responsibility to keep up with your current grade in the course based on graded assignments. Don’t constantly ask me to figure it for you.
9. **Use of open-access Internet resources** (e.g. SparkNotes, Wikipedia) **is forbidden** and may result in failure. When conducting work for this course, do not consult resources other than the assigned texts.
10. **You will be treated as students not customers.** Simply because you paid tuition does not mean you dictate the terms of service.

## University Policies or The Fine Print

The university’s two academic bulletins – the University of Central Arkansas *Undergraduate Bulletin* and *Graduate Bulletin* – are the official publications for all academic programs and policies. Students are urged to study these bulletins. In addition, students should familiarize themselves with the various policies in the *Student Handbook*, some of which are outlined below. The *Handbook* may be accessed online at <http://uca.edu/student/files/2011/06/Student-Handbook-2013-2014.pdf>.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism.** (*Student Handbook* 37-42) “The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university’s Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the *Student Handbook*. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student’s acceptance of this university policy.” For this course, the first offense will result in an F on the assignment. The second offense will result in an automatic F in the course.

**Sexual Harassment.** (*Student Handbook* 115) Sexual harassment by any faculty member, staff member, or student is a violation of both law and university policy and will not be tolerated at the University of Central Arkansas. Sexual harassment of employees is prohibited under Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and sexual harassment of students may constitute discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

**Americans with Disabilities Act.** The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services, 450-3613.

**Emergency Procedures.** An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

**Course Evaluations.** Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the thirteenth week of instruction, November 25, through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

### Semester Breakdown

The following is a tentative schedule. We will adjust as necessary to cover as much of the material as possible. This course only meets one day a week, so the typical class breakdown will involve providing background material that will help inform discussion of the novels and clips of representative films from the respective era so that you have a better understanding of the development of the horror genre.

To help you pace yourself, the number of pages per reading assignment is in parentheses. For example, if you read 32 pages of *Frankenstein* tonight and every night for the next six days, you'll be reading for next week's discussion.

1/15 – Intro to course, syllabus, policies; Introduction to “The Gothic,” terms, and the beginning of the horror film.

1/22 – Shelley, *Frankenstein* (220) / *Frankenstein* – In-Class Film

1/29 – Stoker, *Dracula* (417) / *Dracula* – In-Class Film

2/5 – Stevenson, *Jekyll & Hyde* (75) / *Jekyll & Hyde* – In-Class Film

2/12 – Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House* (182)

2/19 – *The Haunting* – In-Class Film

2/26 – **Exam #1** / Bloch, *Psycho* (166)

3/5 – *Psycho* – In-Class Film

3/12 – Levin, *Rosemary's Baby* (299)

3/19 – *Rosemary's Baby* – In-Class Film / **Essay Due**

3/26 – **Spring Break**

4/2 – Blatty, *The Exorcist* (381) / **The ABC's of Horror Due**

4/9 – *The Exorcist* – In-Class Film

4/16 – King, *The Shining* (502)

4/23 – *The Shining* – In-Class Film

\*4/30 – **Exam #2 and Dollar Baby Viewing**