



## ENGL-2753H-A: Horror, Terror, and the Gothic 2019WI - Peterborough Campus

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### Instructor:

Instructor: Brent Ryan Bellamy

Email Address: [bellamy@trentu.ca](mailto:bellamy@trentu.ca)

Phone Number: 705-748-1011 x6093

Office: WH 107

Office Hours: Tues 10:00AM-12:00PM or by appointment

### Meeting Times:

Lecture: Tues 07:00PM-08:50PM, CCS, Room 307

Seminar: Check your schedule for your seminar time and location.

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### Co-instructors and Teaching Assistants:

Christina Haddad-Lapointe

Email Address: [chaddadlapointe@trentu.ca](mailto:chaddadlapointe@trentu.ca)

Office: WH

Office Hours: by appointment

Aishwarya Javalgekar

Email Address: [ajavalgekar@trentu.ca](mailto:ajavalgekar@trentu.ca)

Office: WH

Office Hours: by appointment

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### Department:

Academic Administrative Assistant: Patricia Heffernan

Email Address: [english@trentu.ca](mailto:english@trentu.ca)

Phone Number: 7733

Office: Traill College, Wallis Hall, Room 134

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## Description:

This course tracks the historical roots of the gothic to their permutations in the present day. Is the gothic a collection of tropes and plots formed by readerly consensus or a manner of getting something done? If the latter, what is it that needs doing? Whether it is a marketing category or a critical tool, the gothic haunts and entices readers. As well as genre theory, this course will take a number of interpretive approaches to literature, including affect theory, feminist analysis, critical race theory, and psychoanalysis. The course examines the gothic as a historical category that deploys the abject, horror, and the unknown for varying tactical and strategic reasons. As a class, we will reflect on classic examples of the gothic and explore newer variants, including Victor LaValle's implicit critique and re-writing of H.P. Lovecraft, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* and Ahmed Saadawi's contemporary retelling *Frankenstein in Baghdad*.

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## Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and understand various genres and styles of gothic narrative;
  - Demonstrate understanding of the cultural, historical, and political contexts in which gothic narratives circulate;
  - Apply techniques of critical analysis as appropriate to gothic motifs, modes, and media;
  - Use literary and visual studies to develop skills for careful reading and clear writing;
  - Read and discuss gothic fiction on the levels of content, history, and politics.
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## Texts:

Victor LaValle *The Ballad of Black Tom* (2016)

Mary Shelley *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818)

Ahmed Saadawi *Frankenstein in Baghdad* (2013)

All other texts will be made available through Blackboard

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## Readings:

See schedule for readings

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## Assessments, Assignments and Tests:

Discussion Inaugurator | (500 words) | 10%

Annotated Bibliography | (500-750 words) | 10%

Essay Proposal | (750-1000 words) | 15%

Research Essay | (2500-3000 words) | 30%

Take-Home Exam | (1500-2000 words) | 20%

Seminar Participation | (n/a) | 15%

Discussion Inaugurator | 500 Words

Once during the course, each of you will be expected to inaugurate seminar discussion based on the assigned readings. The requirements for this are necessarily very loose, as each day of the course will have a very different type of text to be discussed; in general, however, the discussion inaugurator will be asked to articulate a critical response to the material. They will compose a script to read. This script is not to be handed in, but should be treated with as much care and consideration as any other written submission. A signup sheet for this role will be distributed in seminar.

Annotated Bibliography | 500-750 Words

You are to locate 3-5 suitable, critical sources (journal articles, book reviews, scholarly books, and so on) that engage with your primary text, the concepts you will be working with, or the generic fundamentals of horror, terror, and/or the gothic. For each source you will be required to paraphrase the central argument and explain how you find that source useful in your work. Some articles will be available for your consideration on Blackboard, and you are encouraged to seek out others through the library.

Essay Proposal | 500 Words

As you begin to devise the essay, you will be required to write an essay proposal. This proposal will not be a binding document; instead, it will offer the chance to put your ideas in writing. These essay proposals will be reviewed by your peers before they are submitted and graded by your seminar leader.

Research Essay | 2500-3000 Words

This student-directed research essay builds on the proposal and annotated bibliography to provide a critical analysis of a text that engages in the gothic or weird mode. The topic of your essay will be up to you—you can write on one of the texts that we've read in class, or on a text that we have not discussed. You will use readings from class as well as outside research for this paper. The final paper should be 8-10 pages in length and properly cite at least 3 critical sources.

Take-Home Exam | 1500-2000 Words

The exam will have a one-week window for completion after classes have ended. You will be given the option of responding to several essay prompts and you will be asked to write a critical, analytical essay that draws on course materials.

Seminar Participation

Seminars will focus on group discussions of gothic fiction and its culture, history, and politics. You are encouraged to come to class prepared with questions and observations. Seminar leaders and discussion inaugurators will facilitate discussion, but the onus will be on you to engage with your classmates. To facilitate seminar participation, each student will be responsible for submitting a question about the assigned readings once during the term. In order to track attendance in a fair and equitable way, a sign-in sheet will be presented in class.

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## Grading:

EXTRAORDINARY (A+ range: 90%-100%)

An 'A+' paper is everything that an 'A' paper is (see below) with the addition of content and reasoning that would still be excellent in an assignment two or three years more advanced. On

the evidence of this paper, the student will do very well in an Honours program in English Literature.

EXCELLENT (A range: 80% - 89%) On the evidence of this paper, the student will do very well in an Honours program in English Literature.

- *Content*: The essay is interesting, well-supported and original. The student demonstrates an excellent understanding of the relevance of the literary device or theory under discussion to an analysis of the work.
- *Reasoning*: The essay is logically argued, showing an awareness of other possible perspectives. Supporting evidence is well chosen. Secondary sources, when appropriate, are used with a good understanding of the arguments which they are presenting. They are used without overwhelming the writer's argument and are properly acknowledged.
- *Organization*: The organization is clear and effective. The reader is never in doubt as to where the essay is heading and the argument seems to flow naturally.
- *Style*: Paragraphs are unified and well organized and clearly related to what precedes and follows them. Sentences are clear and varied in structure. Words are used correctly, precisely and imaginatively.
- *Grammar*: There are no errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar.
- *Format*: There are no errors in format (title page, footnotes and quotations, margins, page numbering, bibliography).

VERY GOOD (B+: 77% - 79%) On the evidence of this paper, the student will do well in an Honours program in English Literature. The essay is almost, but not quite, an 'A' paper. It may be generally free of errors but somewhat lacking in originality or style; or it may be original and stylish but sloppy; or it may be something in between.

GOOD (B-/B: 70% - 76%) A solid paper. On the evidence of this paper, the student will do well in the General program in English literature and is capable of handling the Honours concentration.

- *Content*: The ideas make good sense but are somewhat lacking in originality or are not well supported. The student demonstrates a good understanding of the relevance of the literary device or theory under discussion to an analysis of the work.
- *Reasoning*: The essay is logically argued but without much awareness of alternatives. Logical connections could be better developed. Supporting evidence is well-chosen and properly acknowledged, but not as well integrated into the argument of the essay as possible. There is less evidence than in an A essay that the student has grasped the arguments of the sources he is citing.
- *Organization*: The organization is clear and effective. However, development is somewhat mechanical.
- *Style*: Paragraphs are unified and well organized and clearly related to what precedes and follows them. Sentences are clear and varied in structure. Words are used correctly but not particularly imaginatively.
- *Grammar*: There are a few minor errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar.
- *Format*: There are no errors in format.

FAIR/SATISFACTORY (C range: 60% - 69%) An acceptable paper. On the evidence of this paper, the student will be capable of satisfying the requirements of a minor concentration in English Literature or the General degree program.

- *Content*: The ideas generally make sense but are lacking in originality. The writer avoids making inaccurate points but the points made are mostly obvious. The student demonstrates some understanding of the relevance of the literary device or theory under discussion to an analysis of the work.
- *Reasoning*: The argument is logical for the most part, but may break down at crucial points. Supporting evidence is usually adequate, but does not show a thorough knowledge or understanding of the primary sources. In assignments where secondary sources are to be used, the student does not show an understanding of the arguments of those sources and they are not well-integrated into the essay. They are sometimes used as a substitute for a clearly formulated argument.
- *Organization*: Organization is evident in most parts of the essay. The main idea is clear from the outset. However its development is not particularly effective.
- *Style*: Paragraphs are generally coherent, but individual paragraphs may be either loosely organized or loosely connected to each other. Sentence structure is usually clear, with some attempt at variation. Transitions between sentences are sometimes missing or are obvious or repetitious. Words are used correctly in most cases, but often imprecisely.
- *Grammar*: There are a few major errors in grammar, and some minor errors.
- *Format*: It is generally correct, but there is some evidence of carelessness.

MARGINAL (D range: 50% -59%) The essay satisfies the minimal requirements of the assignment, but on the evidence of this paper, the student is not capable of handling the requirements of a Minor concentration in English Literature or the General degree program in English Literature.

- *Content*: The essay either lacks a clear and adequate central idea, or has a potentially good idea which has not been sufficiently developed. If there are interesting points they are lost in irrelevant detail. The student demonstrates little understanding of the relevance of the literary device or theory under discussion to an analysis of the work.
- *Organization*: There is some attempt at logical thinking, but it is inconsistent. Supporting evidence is insufficient or erratically chosen. In use of secondary sources, borrowings (although acknowledged) are often substantial and undigested. organization breaks down in several places.
- *Style*: There are serious problems with paragraphing and paragraph development. Sentence structure is often awkward. Words are often imprecise and sometimes incorrect.
- *Grammar*: There are several errors in grammar, both major and minor.
- *Format*: There are several errors in format.

FAILURE/UNSATISFACTORY (F range: 49% or below) On the evidence of this work, the student is not capable of writing to a university standard.

- *Content*: The essay lacks clear ideas. The student demonstrates no understanding of the relevance of the literary device or theory under discussion to an analysis of the work.
- *Reasoning*: It is inconsistent. Supporting evidence is missing or irrelevant.
- *Organization*: The essay is poorly organized or lacking entirely in organization. There is no clearly stated argument.
- *Style*: There are serious problems with paragraph organization and sentence structure. Logical links between sentences and between paragraphs are missing and words are often used incorrectly.
- *Grammar*: There are many errors in grammar, both major and minor.
- *Format*: There are many errors in format.

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## Grade Total by Withdrawal Date:

25-35% by 08 March 2019

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## Schedule:

January 8: Bisson "They're Made out of Meat"

January 15: Gillman "The Yellow Wallpaper" and Rampo "The Human Chair"  
Academic Skills: Annotated Bibliography and finding sources

January 22: Poe "A Cask of Amontillado" and Jackson "The Lottery"

### **Annotated Bibliography Due**

January 29: Lovecraft "The Horror at Red Hook"

February 5: LaValle **The Ballad of Black Tom**

February 12: Essay Proposal Peer-Review Workshop  
Academic Skills: Writing a strong essay proposal

February 19: Reading Week

### **Essay Proposal Due**

February 26: Shelley *Frankenstein*

March 5: Shelley *Frankenstein*

March 12: Essay-Revision Workshop  
Academic Skills: How to revise your own work, how to revise others work

March 19: Saadawi *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

### **Essays Due**

March 26: Saadawi *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

April 2: Course Review

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## Course Guidelines:

Email: Students in this class are required to check their official university email account at least once a day, in case there are any last-minute announcements or disruptions.

Laptop Policy: In-class use of laptops, Kindles, iPads, etc. is permitted for access to electronic versions of our texts, for notetaking, and for in-class research. However, students must refrain from non-class related computer use, including email, instant messaging, Facebook, Twitter, and the like.

Academic Skills Centre: Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the Academic Skills Centre at any stage of the course or writing process. Please visit their website:

<http://www.trentu.ca/academicskills/>.

Flexibility: If it will benefit the class, changes may be made to the above after an in-class discussion.

Accommodations: Students with disabilities who believe they will require accommodations in this course should contact me early in the semester so your learning needs can be appropriately met. If you are unsure of what you need to do to qualify for services, you can begin by visiting the Student Accessibility Services in Suite 132, Blackburn Hall, or by visiting their website at <https://www.trentu.ca/wellness/sas>

Academic Integrity: The university expects that all students will be held to the highest level of academic integrity. The university's standards for academic integrity are outlined in the [Undergraduate Academic Integrity Policy](#). For questions, please consult the Academic Integrity [FAQ](#).

Academic Freedom: We all enter this classroom with pre-existing political, ethical, philosophical, and intellectual commitments. You are all required to engage the material—but you are absolutely not required to agree either with any of the writers we will discuss in whole or in part.

Respect: This classroom is a community. It is crucial that we treat each other with the appropriate level of courtesy and respect. No one should be made to feel unwelcome here. Failure to treat other students with the respect they deserve will severely negatively impact your class participation grade.

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## University Policies:

### Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from failure on an assignment to expulsion from the University. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in Trent University's *Academic Integrity Policy*. You have a responsibility to educate yourself – unfamiliarity with the policy is not an excuse. You are strongly encouraged to visit Trent's Academic Integrity website to learn more: [www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity).

### Access to Instruction

It is Trent University's intent to create an inclusive learning environment. If a student has a disability and documentation from a regulated health care practitioner and feels that they may need accommodations to succeed in a course, the student should contact the Student Accessibility Services Office (SAS) at the respective campus as soon as possible.

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