

EARLY AMERICAN HORRORS

ENGL 20602

MW 9:30 to 10:45

DeBartolo Hall 113

<https://notredame.zoom.us/j/4573259370>

INSTRUCTOR

Anton Povzner

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OFFICE HOURS

Via Zoom; MW 11-12:30

or by appointment

COURSE GOALS

- Develop an understanding of horror as a generic and political category
- Introduce a broad selection of early American texts and historical contexts
- Cultivate and practice college-level writing
- Familiarize tools and concepts of literary analysis
- Maintain the classroom as a supportive and open space where we can share our questions and respond to others'



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Horror is exciting and fun, easily evidenced by the offerings of the movie industry. Horror is also politically and historically impactful; consider the painful repercussions of 9/11 both within the US and across the globe. This course will address horror as a prominent generic category across literature and broader public discourses with a long history in America, from colonial arrival narratives, Indian captivities, and the Salem witch trials to the landmarks of Revolution, slavery and the Civil War. Anchoring our discussions in two film viewings throughout the semester, we will read literary works and other texts through figures such as Rowlandson, Mather, Hawthorne and Poe up to the mid-19th century—and conclude with a brief leap to Lovecraft as a bridge to present-day issues. The conceptual exploration of horror will be undergirded by the learning and practice of literary and rhetorical analysis in class discussion and multi-stage written assignments.

RESOURCES

Writing Center:

At Notre Dame we are fortunate to have an excellent writing center. I warmly recommend you to try it out—even the strongest of writers can benefit from its services. Writing tutors do not write or edit your papers for you. Rather, they help you develop effective strategies for your written work, from initial brainstorming to suggestions for revising a finished draft. You can find out more about the services offered at the writing center and schedule an appointment at

<http://writingcenter.nd.edu>

First Year Librarian:

The Hesburgh Libraries has dedicated a librarian, Melissa Harden, who helps first-year students navigate the vast information resources available through the Hesburgh Libraries and develop research strategies that will maximize the use of those resources. More information about the first-year librarian and her services can be found [here](#). Of course, other librarians will be happy to help you as well.

Disability Services:

I am committed to working with students to make this course accessible. It is the policy and practice of The University of Notre Dame to provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you have, or think you may have, a disability, you are encouraged to contact Sara Bea Disability Services at your earliest opportunity for a confidential discussion (<http://sarabea.disabilityservices.nd.edu/>). Once you have done that, please contact me, and we can make the necessary arrangements.

COURSE POLICIES

*Syllabus subject to change; consult Google Classroom for current version

Inclusivity:

We share a responsibility to maintain a campus free of discrimination, including any form of harassment. As your instructor, I will strive to create an environment in our classroom that welcomes all people regardless of sex, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, ability, or sexual orientation. If you feel this standard of welcome is not being met, please contact me.

Classroom Hospitality:

As your teacher, it is my goal to cultivate a classroom environment that is hospitable to all students and conducive to learning. I ask for your help in fulfilling this goal, as we are all responsible for the climate of our classroom. I ask that you actively listen to other members of our class, respond with civility, and look for instances to be generous and charitable to one another, especially when other students share their ideas. I also encourage you to voice your differences of opinion and experience with one another and with me, even though it may be more comfortable to remain silent. I welcome your suggestions for how to build and maintain a hospitable classroom climate.

Attendance:

To succeed in this course, you will be expected to arrive on time and prepared to engage enthusiastically in class activities and discussions. In addition to excused absences for reasons such as a documented illness, religious holy days, or university-authorized activities, you may miss three classes with no penalty. Each subsequent unexcused absence will cause one third of a letter grade to be deducted from your overall grade (e.g., A- becomes B+). Seven unexcused absences will be grounds for course failure. Your ability to benefit from attending the class will be impaired if you arrive late or unprepared, fall asleep, text or otherwise misuse technology, talk inappropriately, or markedly disengage from the learning process in the classroom; these will also damage the classroom environment for others. Such behaviors will count as half an unexcused absence. If you do miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to keep up with class materials and announcements.

RESOURCES

Mental Health & Well-Being:

College-level study is a stressful and challenging occupation. It is not unusual for students to struggle with their physical, mental, or emotional wellbeing. This is absolutely nothing to be ashamed of. Please be aware that there are many resources available to support you on campus. The University Counseling Center offers confidential crisis services, walk-in consultations, individual or group counseling sessions, and an Inner Resources Room that assists with stress management. Find out more at <http://ucc.nd.edu>. You can also find support through the McDonald Center for Student Well-Being at <http://mcwell.nd.edu>, or contact a Care Consultant for a broad range of concerns at <http://care.nd.edu>.

Should you find that a special need or hardship is compromising your learning in the course, please be in contact with me. I am glad to refer you to on-campus resources and to discuss ways to accommodate your needs.

If you have any questions or concerns not discussed in class, do not hesitate to approach me after class, write me an email, or come to talk. You are always welcome to schedule an appointment—I'll be on campus most weekdays. I am happy to look at your drafts and any particular challenges you encounter.

Assessment and grading:

Your grade will be weighed towards the later submissions, leaving space for improvement throughout the semester. All major essays are due by 10 PM on the due date; late assignments will lose one third of a letter grade for each day late. **In most situations, a short extension without penalty will be possible, provided you contact me at least 48 hours before the assignment is due.** You will save yourself much grief by making a habit of backing up your files. Smaller assignments are due by 10 PM before class unless stated otherwise.

- Major Writing Submissions 70%
 - Textual analysis 15%; Historical comparison 20%; Scholarly argument 35%
- Participation & Informal Writing: 15%
- Research Process, Presentation, Final Reflection 15%

All assignments should be written in 12-point font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins; submitted through Google Classroom.

Revision: You are highly encouraged to revise your essays in line with the feedback received. Revisions should prioritize issues of argument and structure over stylistic and grammatical edits. Submit your revision within a week of receiving feedback; preface it with an explanation of your aims and process in revising and highlight the most substantially altered sections.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is completely unacceptable within the academic community and cannot be tolerated in this course. All written work must be your own, and you must make every effort to correctly acknowledge your sources. We will discuss proper citation and use of sources during the semester, and I am always happy to address any concerns or doubts you might have. In all things, we must strive to uphold the Notre Dame Academic Code of Honor, which you can find at <http://honorcode.nd.edu>. If you have any questions about plagiarism or the honor code, please come and speak with me.

Technology:

Computers in various forms have become inseparable from our daily life and study, for better and worse. Ample research as well as common experience show that such technologies can distract and interfere with student performance in class. That said, if you will rather do your reading and note-taking on a laptop, you may bring it to class—conditional on signing an express agreement to limit its use to class matters; failure to do so will reflect on your class attendance score. Smartphones are to be kept silent and out of sight throughout the class period.

ASSIGNMENTS

Journal entries

To get you into a comfortable habit of writing, you will write a total of 10 page-long informal reflections on the class materials: 3 on the first unit and the remaining 7 on later readings of your choice. The first 3 are due by the end of Tuesday, Feb 4; each of the latter 7 is due the night before class discussion of the text in question.

Textual analysis

3-page essay closely analyzing the workings of horror in one of the class texts.

Historical comparison

4-page essay situating the effect of horror in one of the class texts in its historical context through a comparison with a recent event or experience

Scholarly argument

8-page research project advancing an argumentative claim on horror in one of the class texts in relation to scholarly conversations. The project will be supported through multiple interim submissions.

Presentation

A short in-class presentation based on the research paper.

Final Reflection

1-page essay reflecting on your learning in the course and formulating goals for future study.

SCHEDULE

Date	Materials	Assignments & (topics)
01.15	Intro; class objectives & expectations; syllabus	
Witchcraft		
01.20	<i>The Witch</i> viewing	(What does horror do?)
01.22	<i>The Witch</i> discussion	
01.27	Hawthorne, 1835, Young Goodman Brown	(Close reading)
01.29	Chamberlain, 1698, Lithobolia	
02.03	Mather, 1689, Memorable Providences	Textual analysis
02.05	Wigglesworth, 1662, The Day of Doom	
Colonial arrival		
02.10	Las Casas, 1552, The Destruction of the Indies	(Historical context)
02.12	Bradford, 1630, Of Plymouth Plantation	
02.17	Rowlandson, 1682, Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration	
02.19	Church, 1716, Entertaining Passages	
Revolution		
02.24	Paine, 1776, Common Sense	Historical comparison
02.26	Crevecoeur, 1782, Letters from an American Farmer	
03.02	Hawthorne, 1832, My Kinsman, Major Molineux	(Narration)
03.04	Irving, 1819, 1820, Stories	
Mid-term Break		
Slavery and Civil War		
03.16 03.18	PLAGUE BREAK	Research question, Annotated bibliography
03.23 03.25	Finding & engaging secondary sources Civil War newspaper selections	
03.30 04.01	15. Dickinson 16. Poe	(Poetic devices) Outline
04.06 04.08	17. Lovecraft, 1919-1920, stories 18. Lovecraft, 1926, The Call of Cthulhu	Scholarly argument draft
04.13 04.15	(Easter) Effective presentation strategies	Scholarly argument
04.20 04.22	Presentations	
04.27 04.29	Presentations	Final Reflection