

Engl 441
2007
School of English, Film, Theatre and Media Studies

Special Genre: American Gothic

Class Hours Monday 12-3.

Seminars: Von Zedlitz 701

Student Consultation Time: Students may make an appointment with either of the two lecturers to discuss any aspect of the course at any mutually convenient time.

Staff

Lecturers: Dr Charles Ferrall, VZ 904, Ext. 6804; Charles.Ferrall@vuw.ac.nz.
Dr Anna Jackson, VZ 918, Ext. 6840; Anna.Jackson@vuw.ac.nz

Course Aims

This course will familiarise students with a range of significant American Gothic novels and stories from the nineteenth century to the present. Students will situate these texts both within an American historical context and in relation to British gothic traditions. Some awareness of the theoretical issues relevant to the genre will be expected.

Set Texts

Edgar Allen Poe, *The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Writings*; Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*; Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*; William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*; Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood*; Truman Capote, *Other Voices, Other Rooms*; Ann Rice, *Interview with a Vampire*; Poppy Z. Brite, *Lost Souls*; Joyce Carol Oates (ed.), *American Gothic Tales*.

Assessment

There will be two essays set during the course worth 25% each and a final 3-hour examination worth 50%. Students will be expected to write exam questions on at least three of the writers on whom they have not written essays. The exam is open-book.

It is important that your essays are considered, well-planned pieces of writing, and not

drafts. You are assessed on your ability to control material, handle ideas, write concisely and directly, and relate your critical views to specific textual locations. Essays should be approximately 2500 words.

Essays

Students are expected to come up with their own essay topics in consultation with one of lecturers.

The first essay is due on Aug. 17, the second on Oct. 12.

Mandatory Requirements

The minimum course requirements that must be satisfied are submission of both essays, sitting the final examination and attendance at all of the seminars.

Workload

You should expect to spend, on **average**, about 15 hours per week on work for this course (**apart** from time in class). **Please note that this is a rough guideline only.** Some students might have to put in more time, others less. The time commitment will be greatest in the weeks immediately prior to essay submission dates.

Return of Written Work

Work that has been handed in on time will normally be marked within two weeks. Students need to make an appointment with the lecturers to receive their work back.

Attendance

Attendance at all of the seminars is mandatory. Students who need to miss a seminar for whatever reason will need to contact one of the lecturers in advance.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty - put simply it means no cheating. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria.

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea, even if it is presented in your own style. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff, information from the Internet, software programmes and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organization or structuring of any such material.

Plagiarism is not worth the risk.

Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct (www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct) and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- suspension from class or university
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course.

Find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, on the University's website at: www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html.

Students with Disabilities

The contact for students with disabilities enrolled in English courses is the English Department administrator, ext. 6800.

Statute on Conduct

If you have any problems with your course (such as too much work compared with other similar courses, poor teaching quality, unfair assessment, or poor feedback on assignments), you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned or, if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Departmental Chairperson or the Associate Dean (Students) for your faculty. The University has a well-developed, independent procedure for dealing with academic grievances and complaints of this nature. These procedures are set out in Part 5 of the Personal Courses of Study Statute in the Calendar.

More generally, the University is also concerned to ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an environment of safety and respect. To this end, it has put in place a comprehensive Statute on Conduct. This Statute is printed in the Calendar and contains information about what conduct is prohibited and what steps can be taken if there is a complaint. Persons with a complaint or grievance may seek

assistance or support from another member of the University community such as the Adviser on Grievance Resolution, Departmental Chairpersons, Counselling staff or Sexual Harassment Contact Support persons. They may also resolve disputes by making use of any of the other informal or formal procedures outlined in the Statute on Conduct.

Timetable

Week 1 (July 13): Introduction (AJ & CF)
Week 2 (July 20): Poe & Freud (AJ)
Week 3 (July 27): Hawthorne & Fiedler (AJ)
Week 4 (Aug 3): James & Felman (CF)
Week 5 (Aug 10): nineteenth century short stories (students)
Week 6 (Aug 17): Faulkner (CF)
Week 7 (Sept 7): O'Connor & Kristeva (CF)
Week 8 (Sept 14): Capote (CF)
Week 9 (Sept 21): twentieth century short stories (students)
Week 10 (Sept 28): Rice & Auerbach (AJ)
Week 11 (Oct 5): Brite & Edmundson/Veeder (AJ)
Week 12 (Oct 12): twentieth century short stories (students)

Students will be expected to divide into groups and run the discussion for weeks 5, 9 and 12.

Secondary Reading

The following texts are recommended and will be held on three day loan:

Nina Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves*
Neil Cornwell, *The Literary Fantastic*
Mark Edmundson, *Nightmare on Main Street: Angels, Sadomasochism and the Culture of Gothic*
Justin D. Edwards, *Gothic Passages: Racial Ambiguity and the American Gothic*
Markman Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction*
Shoshana Felman, "The turn of interpretation" *Literature and Psychoanalysis* (Yale French Studies 55/56)
Leslie Fiedler, "Charles Brockden Brown and the Invention of the American Gothic", in *Love and Death in the American Novel*
Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny", *Collected Papers*, Vol IV
Peter K. Garrett, *Gothic Reflections*
Teresa A. Goddu, *Gothic America*
Ken Gelder, *The Horror Reader & Reading the Vampire*

Richard Grey, *Life of William Faulkner*
James Grimshaw, *Flannery O'Connor Companion*
Jerrold E. Hogle (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*
Lisa Hopkins, *Screening the Gothic*
Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik, *Gothic and the Comic Turn*
Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*
Harry Levin, *Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe, Melville*
Robert K. Martin and Eric Savoy *American Gothic*
John P. Muller and William J. Richardson, *The Purloined Poe*
David Punter and Glennis Byron, *The Gothic*
David Punter, *The Literature of Terror*
Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny*
Donald Ringe, *American Gothic*
Julian Symons, *Tell Tale Heart: The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe*