

Fall 8-15-2018

ENG 4742-001: Studies in Genre

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English 4742: Studies in Genre -- Syllabus

*Vampires, and Zombies, and Fear – Oh My!:
What Trends in Horror Sub-Genres Reveal about Societal Concerns*

Meeting Time: TR – 12:30-1:45pm

Classroom: 3170 Coleman Hall

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Ames

Office: 3821 Coleman Hall

Office Hours: T: 11-12; 2-3:30

R: 11-12; 2-3:30

Or by Appointment

Email: mames@eiu.edu (please do not use the email provided by D2L)

Course Description: Scholars have long discussed the ways in which horror narratives embody and reflect on societal fears about a range of issues: race, gender, sexuality, disease, terrorism, capitalism, and more. Therefore, studying trends in horror sub-genres can provide great insight into the cultural climate that produced them. This course analyzes vampire and zombie narratives across genre and media attending to the social commentary contained within these fictional stories. From novels, films, and graphic novels to television, video games, and choose-your-own-adventures books, students will reflect on how these supernatural figures are much more than just narrative devices meant to trigger emotional responses. Through a series of presentations and projects (with options ranging from academic research papers to creative writing pieces), students will take a historical stroll through time looking at the evolution of these two horror sub-genres, focusing most heavily on their increasing popularity and proliferation in the 21st century.

Course Objectives: After the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Read fiction and nonfiction, expressing a wide range of cultural perspectives and values, and develop abilities to think critically and write analytically about them.
2. Engage in reading and writing experiences about literature and media in order to demonstrate an increased understanding or an appreciation for social, cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic ideas and their discovery.
3. Develop research skill, including effective use of source materials and the principles of documentation, and apply that skill to the study of literature and media analysis.
4. Understand the relationship that narratives have to one another (despite differences in media or genre) and to the cultural/social/historical time period in which they are created, produced, and consumed.
5. Study stylistic trends in narrative texts and form arguments for their popularity and effect on consumers.
6. Analyze thematic variations across media and genre in order to determine the effects of narrative format.
7. Apply research from outside disciplines (e.g. political science, history, art) to the study of literature, film, television, and other artifacts from popular culture.
8. Work collaboratively in order to explore ideas, formulate arguments, and present findings in a scholarly fashion.

Required Texts:

Grahame-Smith, Seth. *Pride & Prejudice & Zombies*. Nascorp, 2009.
Matheson, Richard. *I am Legend*. Nascorp, 1997.
Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. W.W. Norton, 1997.
Whitehead, Colston. *Zone One*. Random House, 2011.
Young, Matt. *Zombocalypse Now*. Chooseomatic Books, 2014.

[Note: Additional Readings Will Also Be Available Through Desire2Learn – noted on syllabus as (D2L)]

Materials: Writing instruments, paper, a storage system for assignment sheets/in-class work, USB-compatible device for saving documents (e.g. a jump drive), online storage system (e.g. Dropbox, Google Drive), access to word processing (typewriter or computer), and other appropriate supplies.

Course Requirements: This course consists of in-class writing activities, discussion of assigned readings, peer review sessions, out-of-class writing assignments of varying lengths, collaborative group work, presentations, and possible pop quizzes. Your grade will be based on a point system that factors in all scores you earn on all writing assignments and in-class work/participation. Attendance is mandatory and will be factored into your in-class grade. Active and constructive class participation will make a positive impact on your overall grade. Detailed assignment instructions and scoring rubrics will accompany all major assignments as the course progresses.

In-Class Work/Participation (200pts):

Daily work – includes in-class activities, writing, peer response, informal group work, and oral presentations.

Response Pieces – includes short formal or informal written responses to the required reading, the media critiques, and class discussion/debates.

Participation – **includes attendance**, participation in class activities, and course preparation. Points may be deducted due to tardiness/early departure, lack of participation, failure to bring texts and other needed materials to class, and/or behavior that distracts from class activities. As a 4000-level capstone course, active, prepared discussion of reading and media viewings is expected. This dialogue in this course will be student-led and, as such, engagement in these conversations is expected and will be recorded and factored into the course grade.

Formal Writing Assignments/Assessments/Projects (800pts):

Article Discussion Posts: An online discussion and application of theoretical concepts and academic arguments. Students will act as discussion leaders multiple times throughout the semester being responsible for crafting summaries for assigned scholarly articles and posing questions for their classmates to engage with the central ideas contained within these. The grade for this project will be based both on the material crafted on leadership threads and on posts made in response to their peer's threads. Posts, responses, and in-class follow-up discussions will document careful reading and literary analysis, as well as the attentive viewing of in-class films. This collection of online posts will assist students in completing other course work and spark dialogue about class texts, themes, and societal issues. (15-20 pages/3750-5000 words; 100pts)

Midterm Research & Analysis Essay: An analytic research paper focused on at least two texts studied (or related to the study) during the first half of the semester. (5-7 pages/1250-1750 words; 200pts)

Final Project & Presentation: A project – research or creative – that applies students' English Studies strengths and interests to our course study. This project will be showcased through a PechaKucha presentation and shared during class panel discussions. (10-15 pages/2500-3750 words; 300pts)

Group Presentation: A collaborative group project studying a selected text. This project will require out of class meetings, research compilation, and a formal group presentation. (5-10 pages/1250-2500 words; 200pts)

Course Grade: Your grade in this course will be calculated using a straight point system and standard grading scale. Your final grade will be determined by the following breakdown and grading scale:

Formal Writing Assignments/Essays:	800 pts
<u>In-Class Work/Participation:</u>	<u>200 pts</u>
Total Points Possible:	1000pts

A = 90% -100%	C = 70% - 79%	F = 0% - 59%
B = 80% - 89%	D = 60% - 69%	

Instructor Class Policies:

Submitted Assignments: All documents must be submitted on time and have a professional appearance. Every assignment should be formatted according to MLA guidelines and standards and submitted to D2L. (If you are unfamiliar with MLA 2016 guidelines please utilize Purdue’s Online Writing Lab at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>). For your own protection, keep copies of all completed work saved in two formats.

Assignment Due Dates: **LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AND WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF ZERO (0).** Assignments, including drafts, are due at the beginning of class. Computer and printer problems are not an excuse for turning in late work, so draft and print well in advance.

In-Class Work: In-class activities must be completed in the class period they are assigned. No make-ups will be given on any of these activities unless arrangements have been made with the instructor in advance.

Class Attendance: Because this course is discussion heavy and emphasizes writing as process and as collaborative activity, attendance is essential. During the projects, your classmates will rely on your feedback. Class exercises, peer responses, and group work cannot be made up and their lack of completion will negatively affect your in-class work/participation grade. Therefore, absences negatively affect your grade. For an absence to be excused it must be considered a legitimate and verifiable emergency and documentation must be provided. Legitimate and verifiable emergencies include those instances for which you can provide documentation for why you had to miss class. Acceptable documents include accident reports, doctors’ notes, hospital forms, and employer notices. Although these documents will be accepted, any pattern of documented absences will be questioned and addressed. If it is an excused absence, attending a pre-approved workshop or lecture appropriate to the course description, you can make up the time but not the work missed. **After three absences a student’s course grade drops one letter for each additional absence. Perfect attendance merits the addition of 25 extra-credit points to the in-class work/participation category.**

Proper Documentation of Emergency: Assignments may only be turned in late if the student provides documentation of an emergency that prevented him/her from attending class. Proper documentation must be an original document (no photocopies), containing the student’s name, and cover the date(s) in question, and be signed by a professional (i.e. doctor). An email is not proper documentation.

Presentations: Please be present when you are scheduled to give a presentation. **If you miss class on the day of a scheduled presentation and your absence is undocumented you will receive a zero and will not be able to make up the presentation.**

Plagiarism: In accordance with English Department and University policies, “Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author represented as one’s own - has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty up to an including immediate assignment of the grade of F for the assigned essay and

a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.” The best argument against plagiarism is that you cheat yourself out of the education you are here to obtain when you copy someone else’s work. If you believe that a specific instance in your writing might constitute plagiarism, please consult me prior to turning in the final draft.

Instructor Access and Response Time: Students are encouraged to make use of office hours or make an appointment to discuss anything about the class, the profession, etc. Communication via email is also welcome. (Please always follow professional email etiquette and include some kind of address and a signature in your emails (i.e., Dear Dr./Professor X, This is Y from [course name] and I have a follow-up question about [purpose of email]. I look forward to hearing from you. Sincerely, Y). Although I have a reputation for being a super speedy email responder, please allow up to **24 hours** for me to respond during normal business hours (M-F 9-5) and longer on nights, weekends, and holidays. Please note that you can expect feedback and assessment (i.e., comments and grades) to be returned within approximately one week. [In most cases I aim to return assignments the class period after they were submitted.] I will always email your school email addresses should school events, illness, emergencies, or other circumstances cause a change in class plans or a delay in feedback. Please wait 24 hours after receiving a grade to ask about that grade, and note that instructors are not allowed to discuss grades over email (make an appointment to talk to me in person).

Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

The Student Success Center & Writing Center: Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302. The Writing Center is also a resource that students can utilize to improve their performance in this course. For more information visit their website (<http://castle.eiu.edu/writing/>). To schedule an appointment, call 217-581-5929, or stop by Coleman Hall, Room 3110 during open hours.

Themes: The English Department has recently identified a set of themes that students may choose to explore across multiple courses with the same theme. In each course, the theme may be explored differently. In this course, you will complete work that engages one of the following three themes: (1) *Genre, Form & Poetics*; (2) *Education & Society*; (3) *Media, Technology & Popular Culture*.

English 4742 - Lecture Notes

Unit I. Vampire Narratives & Societal Fears

Week #1

T 8/21 – Course Introduction & Overview / Vampire Mythology

Pre-Class Reading: begin *Dracula*

R 8/23 – Historical Vampires & Social Commentary

Assigned Reading: *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (excerpt, D2L); continue *Dracula*

Preferences for Presentation Texts Due

Week #2

T 8/28 – Reviving Vampire Studies / Buffy the Vampire Slayer & Academia

Assigned Reading: Continue *Dracula*

Optional Reading: “Feminism & the Ethics of Violence: Why Buffy Kicks Ass,” Marinucci (D2L); “My Emotions Give me Power: The Containment of Girls’ Anger in Buffy,” Helford (D2L); “I am Buffy, and... You’re History: The Postmodern Politics of Buffy,” Pender (D2L); “To be a Vampire on Buffy, The Vampire Slayer: Race and (Other) Socially Marginalizing Positions on Horror TV,” Ono (D2L)

Guest Lecture: Dr. Terri Fredrick

In-Class Viewing: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

Article Discussion Posts (Marinucci, Helford, Pender, Ono)

R 8/30 – The Vampire & Canonical Literature/ Discussion of *Dracula*

Assigned Reading: Finish *Dracula*

Optional Reading: “Feminism, Sex Role Exchanges, and Other Subliminal Fantasies,” Demetrakopoulos (D2L); “Dracula: Stoker’s Response to the New Woman,” Senf (D2L); “Blood, Lust, and the Fe/Male Narrative in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*,” Nystrom (D2L) & “Suddenly Sexual Women in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*,” Roth (D2L)

Article Discussion Posts (Nystrom, Demetrakopoulos, Roth, Senf)

Week #3

T 9/4 – Vampires on the Big Screen / Adaptations of Anne Rice’s Novel Series

Assigned Reading: *Interview with a Vampire* (excerpt, D2L)

Optional Reading: “When Hollywood Sucks, or, Hungry Girls, Lost Boys, & Vampirism in the Age of Reagan,” Nixon (D2L)

In-Class Viewing: *Interview with a Vampire*

R 9/6 – (Anti)Feminism & Vampire Narratives / Discussion of *Interview with a Vampire*

Assigned Reading: Begin *Dead Until Dark* (D2L)

Optional Reading: “Undoing Feminism: From the Preoedipal to Postfeminism in Anne Rice’s *Vampire Chronicles*,” Doane & Hodges (D2L) & “A Vampiric Relationship to Feminism: The Monstrous-Feminine in Whitley Strieber’s & Anne Rice’s Gothic Fiction,” Antoni (D2L)

In-Class Viewing: *Interview with a Vampire*

Article Discussion Posts (Nixon, Doane/Hodges, Antoni)

Week #4

T 9/11 – Vampires, Race, Place, & Class

Assigned Reading: Continue *Dead Until Dark* (D2L)

Optional Reading: Reading Supernatural Fiction as Regional Fiction,” Kindinger (D2L); “Blacks & Whites: Trash & Good Country People in *True Blood*,” Amador (D2L)

Group Presentation 1

R 9/13 – Vampires on the Small Screen

Assigned Reading: *The Vampire Diaries* (excerpt, D2L); continue *Dead Until Dark* (D2L)

Optional Reading: “A Country (Still) Divided: How Recent Vampire Series Critique Contemporary Cultural Concerns & Express Nostalgia for the Past,” Ames “Vampire Fantasy: Neoliberalism & the Undead in Post 9/11 Popular Culture,” Westengard (chapter five of *Queer Monsters*, D2L)

In-Class Viewing: *The Vampire Diaries*

Article Discussion Post (Ames, “Country Divided” & Westengard)

Week #5

T 9/18 – Vampire Serialization / Discussion of *Dead Until Dark*

Assigned Reading: Finish *Dead Until Dark* (D2L)

Optional Reading: “Coming out of the Coffin & Coming out of the Closet,” Brace & Arp (D2L)

Proposal for Final Project

Article Discussion Post (Amador, Kindinger, Brace/Arp)

R 9/20 – Vampires on Premium Primetime Channels / Vampire & Political Commentary

Optional Reading: “True Blood: The Vampire as Multiracial Critique on Post-Race Ideology,” Rabin (D2L); “Thou Shalt Not Crave Thy Neighbor: True Blood, Abjection, & Otherness,” Boyer (D2L)

In-Class Viewing: *True Blood*

Article Discussion Post (Rabin, Boyer)

Week #6

T 9/25 – Vampires as the Other in Pop Culture

Optional Reading: Civilized Vampires Versus Savage Werewolves: Race & Ethnicity in the Twilight Series,” Wilson (D2L); “Transnationalism in Twilight & Sookie Stackhouse,” Mutch (D2L)

Group Presentation 2

R 9/27 – The Young Adult Vampire / Gender & Sexuality in Vampire Narratives

Assigned Reading: *Twilight* (excerpt, D2L)

Optional Reading: “*Twilight* Follows Tradition: Analyzing Biting Critiques of Vampire Narratives for their Portrayal of Gender & Sexuality,” Ames (D2L)

In-Class Viewing: *Twilight*

Article Discussion Posts (Wilson, Mutch, Ames “Twilight Follows Tradition”)

Week #7

T 10/2 – Audience Studies & Vampire Scholarship

Assigned Reading: Begin *I Am Legend*

Optional Reading: “Relating to Twilight Fans’ Responses to Love & Romance in the Vampire Franchise,” Behm-Morawitz, Click & Aubrey (D2L); “Biting Back: Twilight Anti-Fandom & the Rhetoric of Superiority,” Sheffield & Merlo (D2L)

In-Class Viewing: *Twilight*

Article Discussion Posts (Behm-Morawitz/Click/Audrey, Sheffield/Merlo)

R 10/4 – Vampire Parodies / The History of Zombies / Workshop for Midterm Essay

Assigned Reading: “They’re Us: Zombies, Humans/Humans, Zombies,” Rushtown & Moreman (D2L); “The History of Zombies”: <https://www.history.com/topics/history-of-zombies>; & “The Tragic Forgotten History of Zombies”:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/10/how-america-erased-the-tragic-history-of-the-zombie/412264/>

Bring Laptop/Computer

Group Presentation 3

Unit II. Zombie Narratives & Cultural Commentary

Week #8

T 10/9 – Zombies in Graphic Novels, Choose Your Own Adventure Books, & TV Dramas

Assigned Reading: *Zombocalypse Now*; CDC’s Zombie Preparedness Website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/phpr/zombie/index.htm>; Continue *I Am Legend*

Optional Reading: “The Trauma of (Post-Apocalyptic) Motherhood: *The Walking Dead*’s

Social Commentary on Contemporary Gender Roles,” Ames (D2L); “*The Walking Dead* & Gothic Excess,” Baker (D2L)

In-Class Viewing: *The Walking Dead*

Article Discussion Post (Baker, Ames “The Trauma”)

R 10/11 – Zombies & Medical Fears / Workshop for Midterm Essay

Assigned Reading: Continue *I Am Legend*

Optional Reading: “Some Kind of Virus: The Zombie as Body & Trope,” Webb & Byrmand (D2L) & “Infection, Media & Capitalism: From Early Modern Plagues to Postmodern Zombies,” Boluk & Lentz (D2L)

Bring Laptop/Computer

Group Presentation 4

Article Discussion Post (Webb/Byrmand, Boluk/Lentz)

Week #9:

T 10/16 – Zombies & Eco-Criticism / *I Am Legend* Discussion / Peer Editing

Assigned Reading: Finish *I Am Legend*

Optional Reading: “Undead is the New Green: Zombies & Political Ecology,” Pollock (D2L)

Rough Draft of Midterm Essay Due

Article Discussion Post (Pollock)

R 10/18 – Zombies and/in Classic Horror Films

Assigned Reading: Begin *Zone One*; “Brief History of Zombies in Pop Culture”:

<https://www.rollingstone.com/movies/news/from-romero-to-walking-dead-a-brief-history-of-pop-culture-zombies-20150819>

In-Class Viewing: *Night of the Living Dead*

Midterm Essay Due

Week #10

T 10/23 – Cultural Climate & Zombie Trends

Assigned Reading: Continue *Zone One*

In-Class Viewing: *Night of the Living Dead*

Optional Reading: “Plans are Pointless; Staying Alive is as Good as it Gets: Zombie Sociology & the Politics of Survival,” Sutler-Cohen (D2L)

Presentation Group 5

Article Discussion Post (Sutler-Cohen)

R 10/25 – No Class – Workshop Day for Final Project

Assigned Reading: Continue *Zone One*

Week #11

T 10/30 – Post-9/11 Zombie Narratives / Discussion of *Zone One*

Assigned Reading: Finish *Zone One*

Optional Reading: “Zombie Trouble: Zombie Texts, Bare life, & Displaced People,” Stratton (D2L)

In-Class Viewing: *World War Z*

Article Discussion Post (Stratton)

R 11/1 – Hollywood Blockbusters, Merchandising & Contemporary Zombies

Assigned Reading: Begin *Pride & Prejudice & Zombies*

Optional Reading: “How the Zombie Changed Video Games,” Weise (D2L)

In-Class Viewing: *World War Z*

Article Discussion Post (Weise)

Week #12

T 11/6 – Zombies, Adaptation, & Parody / Workshop for Final Project

Assigned Reading: Continue *Pride & Prejudice & Zombies*

In-Class Viewing: *World War Z*

Presentation Group 6

R 11/8 – Zombifying the Canon

Assigned Reading: Finish *Pride & Prejudice & Zombies*; excerpt of Graphic Novel Version of *Pride & Prejudice & Zombies* (D2L)

Optional Reading: “A Zombie Apocalypse: Opening Representational Spaces for Alternative Constructions of Gender and Sexuality,” Murray (D2L) & “Modern Zombie Makers: Enacting the Ancient Impulse to Control & Possess Another,” Lea (D2L)

Article Discussion Posts (Murray, Lea)

Early/Partial/Working Draft of Final Project Due

Bring Laptop/Computer

Week #13

T 11/13 –Romantic Comedies and the Zombie “Meet Cute”

Assigned Reading: *Warm Bodies* (excerpt, D2L)

Optional Reading: “Dawn of the Digital Dead: The Zombie as Interactive Social Satire in American Popular Culture,” Schott (D2L)

In-Class Viewing: *Warm Bodies*

Article Discussion Post (Schott)

R 11/15 – Zombies Across Genre / Workshop for Final Project

In-Class Viewing: *Warm Bodies*

Bring Laptop/Computer

T 11/20 – No Class – Thanksgiving Break

R 11/22 – No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Unit III. Academic Analyses & Creative Applications of Horror Genres

Week #14

T 11/27 – Peer Editing / Conferencing Day

Rough Draft of Final Project Due

R 11/29– Presentation Workshop Day

Final Project Due

Week #15

T 12/4 – PechaKucha Panel Presentations (pa-cha-ka-cha)

R 12/6 – PechaKucha Panel Presentations / Evaluations

Final Exam Week / End of Semester

(Note: This Schedule is Subject to Change at the Instructor’s Discretion &
Reading Selections are Abbreviated by Title)