Spring 1-15-2008

ENG 3604-001: American literature

C C. Wharram

Eastern Illinois University

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English 3604-001: Special Topics: The Gothic Manual

Spring 2008 / TTh 17:00-18:15 / Coleman 3170

Instructor: Dr. C. C. Wharram
Email: ccwharram@eiu.edu
Office: 3010 Coleman, 217-581-6318
Office Hours: TTh 15:15-16:45; T 19:45-21:30
Mailbox: Coleman 3155

Course Description
This seminar introduces you to Gothic Literature through concepts of the “manual.” Critics have noted that Gothic works often seem so derivative and formulaic that they appear to have been written in consultation with an imaginary “Handbook to Gothic Writing.” The contemporary horror movie suffers under similar critical dismissal.

Odd then, that a genre so often considered a series of clichéd characters, images, and situations should generate such profound critical interest. There is little doubt but that the study of the Gothic has become crucial to the current literary reevaluation of Romanticism, but it is equally obviously that Gothic culture transcends periodization in a way that questions some of the central assumptions of historicist approaches to literature.

The Gothic has, since Freud, been most often read through the lens of psychoanalysis. In this course, will approach some of the intriguing questions prompted by the Gothic not through the mind, but through the image of the hand. Hands of all sorts—human and animal, physical and supernatural, visible and invisible, literal and figurative—pop up (and, of course, disappear) with startling regularity in the Gothic. The primary synecdoche for manual labor—“All hands on deck!”—the hand demonstrates a textual dexterity in its ability to figure both the presence and absence of class issues in the Gothic.

The course will assume a working knowledge of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein. Students not having read this novel previously should familiarize themselves with it (i.e., read it) before the beginning of the semester.

You will be expected to participate in our class discussions on a daily basis, so you must come to class having read the course material. Much of the reading will be extensive and challenging: you should count on at least five hours of reading per week.

Texts

Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey
Charles Brockden Brown, Wieland
Charlotte Dacre, Zofloya
W.W. Jacobs, “The Monkey’s Paw”
Matthew Lewis, The Monk
Charles Maturin, The Fatal Revenge
E.A. Poe, Complete Stories and Poems
Ann Radcliffe, The Italian

Mary Ann Radcliffe, The One-Handed Monk
Adam Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments
Charlotte Smith, The Old Manor House
R.L. Stevenson, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
Robert Tucker, The Marx-Engels Reader
Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto
Anne Williams, ed., Three Vampire Tales

Course reader will be available in early January at Copy X on Lincoln Avenue.

Academic honesty: Students are responsible for knowing Eastern Illinois University regulations and policies regarding academic honesty. Plagiarism will result in your failing the course and in further action by the university. Here is the English Department’s statement on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—“The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s own original work” (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty
student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a 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.

**Paper Policies**

Papers—and all other assignments—are due at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be commented upon, and be marked a half grade lower for every class period late. Essays turned in as email attachments are considered late. Period. End of discussion. Essays turned in a week past the deadline will be given a “zero,” but must nevertheless be submitted in order to pass the course.

Your paper should be stapled or paper-clipped and include page numbers. Format: 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins.

**Absence Policy:**

When you are absent—especially when you are frequently absent—two things happen. First, your participation grade drops substantially. Second, you naturally fall behind in understanding course material and neither the class nor the Professor can catch you up on everything missed in a day’s class. YOU need to decide when it is absolutely necessary to miss class. Be wise. It bears repeating: you cannot make up missed work and late assignments will be penalized.

**Emailing Policy:**

I want to get to know you and your work this semester. Thus I ask that you call me or stop by my office during office hours (or scheduled times) so that we can talk. DO NOT EMAIL ME TO ASK FOR AN “UPDATE” ON MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, OR TO EXPLAIN AN ABSENCE. Working groups will be assigned so that you can contact group members for notes and missed work.

**Requirements**

**ALL ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS MUST BE COMPLETED TO PASS THE COURSE**

**Midterm Exam, February 26 and March 6 (25%)**

The midterm exam will consist of two parts: an in-class section, which must be written on October 4 during our class period (no exceptions) and a take-home section, which must be handed in during our first class thereafter (October 9). The take-home section will require you to analyze two passages from our early-semester readings.

**Research Assignment (30%)**

Early in the semester, I would like you to select one or more Gothic texts—preferably a novel, but this is negotiable—on which you would consider writing a research paper. You will prepare an annotated bibliography of critical scholarship on your chosen text due by mid-semester. For your final project, to be handed in during Week 14, I will ask you to outline in detail how you would proceed in writing an article-length paper on your selected text. I will provide you with the complete assignment early in the semester. You will also present, informally, your project to the rest of the class in the last two weeks.

**Presentation of a Group Project (5%)**

By the end of the semester, you will have completed a group project that addresses the title of this course, “The Gothic Manual.” You will meet with me, in groups of three or four, to present and brainstorm your ideas as to how to approach this assignment.

**Final Exam, Tuesday April 29, 17:15—19:15 (25%)**

The final exam—a university requirement—will verify your engagement with the class material through identification, short-answer, and essay questions. The final exam will contain both take-home and in-class sections.

**Seminar Participation (15%)**

I will expect you to come to seminar having read the material, and with questions or comments on the readings. Some of the course material may be quite challenging: you should pinpoint specific moments of reading difficulty, and query me (“test” me, if you will) about them. If you attend class without reading
the texts carefully and completely, you will almost certainly fail the exam, and your class-participation grade will suffer immensely. If necessary, we will have unannounced quizzes at the beginning of class. You cannot “make up” missed quizzes; however, if you perform inadequately on a quiz, you may be required to write a paper demonstrating that you have (subsequently) read the material quizzed.

Important disclaimers...

Conduct
Instructors are responsible for maintaining order and a positive learning environment in the classroom. Students whose behavior is disruptive either to the instructor or to other students may be required to discontinue course activities and to cancel the course registration (or be disenrolled). In addition, students may be subject to disciplinary action.

Grades
Your instructor sets the requirements and grading criteria for specific assignments. Here are general standards for grades:

A = Achievement that is outstanding and unique
B = Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet the requirements
C = Assignment meets the basic requirements in every respect
D = Assignment meets only some of the requirements and is worthy of credit
F = Assignment does not substantially meet the basic requirements

For in-class or other brief writing assignments, you will be graded on a scale of √+, √, or √-. Work that is strongly engaged and on-topic will receive a √+. Satisfactory work that is on-topic will receive a √. Work that shows little engagement or is off-topic will get a √-.

Incompletes
Incompletes are not given except in the most extraordinary circumstances (e.g., medical emergency), which a student must be able to document, and only if just a small part of the course remains to be finished. The student and teacher must make a written agreement concerning the condition of the incomplete.

Cell Phones
All those not turning off their cells and/or other electronic devices will be subject to relentless mockery, public shaming, and, if necessary, unimaginably gothic tortures. More importantly, your class participation grade will be severely compromised.

Text Messaging
If you send or receive texts during class, you advertise to everyone around you that you are a pathetic junkie who cannot survive without an umbilical cord to the chatter of others. Just thought you’d like to know.
English 3604.1: Schedule of Classes—subject to revision

WEEK ONE
T Jan 8       The Gothic
Th Jan 10     E. A. Poe: "The Cask of Amontillado"

WEEK TWO
T Jan 15      Horace Walpole: *The Castle of Otranto*
Th Jan 17     Horace Walpole: *The Castle of Otranto*
F Jan 18      **Deadline to Drop without a grade**

WEEK THREE
T Jan 22      Horace Walpole: *The Castle of Otranto*; Clara Reeves: Preface to *The Old English Baron*
Th Jan 24     Adam Smith: *Theory of Moral Sentiments*

WEEK FOUR
T Jan 29      Matthew Lewis: *The Monk*
Th Jan 31     Matthew Lewis: *The Monk*

WEEK FIVE
T Feb 5       Matthew Lewis: *The Monk*
Th Feb 7      John Polidori: *The Vampyre* in *Three Vampire Tales* (Williams)

WEEK SIX
T Feb 12      Karl Marx: Selections from *The Marx-Engels Reader*
Th Feb 14     Charlotte Smith: Elegaic Sonnets; Adela Pinch: excerpt from *Strange Fits of Passion*

WEEK SEVEN
Tu Feb 19     Conferences
Th Feb 21     Conferences

WEEK EIGHT
Tu Feb 26     **Midterm In-Class Exam and Take-Home distributed**; Ann Radcliffe: *The Italian*
Th Feb 28     Ann Radcliffe: *The Italian*

WEEK NINE
Tu Mar 4      Ann Radcliffe: *The Italian*
Th Mar 6      **Midterm Take-Home Exam due**

WEEK TEN
Mar 10 - 14   **SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS**
WEEK ELEVEN

Mon, Mar 17  LECTURE: 7:00pm—Grand Ballroom of the MLK Union—SUSAN BORDO’s keynote address for Women’s History Month

Tu Mar 18  Charles Brockden Brown: *Wieland*

Th Mar 20  Charles Brockden Brown: *Wieland*

WEEK TWELVE


Th Mar 27  Robert Louis Stevenson: *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

WEEK THIRTEEN

Tu Apr 1  Robert Louis Stevenson: *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Th Apr 3  Conferences

WEEK FOURTEEN

Tu Apr 8  Bram Stoker: *Dracula*

Th Apr 10  **Research Assignment due**; Presentations

WEEK FIFTEEN

Tu Apr 15  Bram Stoker: *Dracula*

Th Apr 17  Bram Stoker: *Dracula*

WEEK SIXTEEN

Tu Apr 22  Presentations

Th Apr 24  *Gothika*

**Final Exam, Tuesday April 29, 17:15—19:15**