

GRMN1060-401

COML1060401, GSWS1060401

Fulfills Arts & Letters Sector (all classes)

The Fantastic and Uncanny in Literature: Ghosts, Spirits, and Machines

Liliane Weissberg

Fall 2024

PSYL A 30

MW 1:45 PM-3:15 PM

Do we still believe in spirits and ghosts? Do they have any place in an age of science of technology? Can they perhaps help us to define what a human being is and what it can do? We will venture on a journey through literary texts from the late eighteenth century to the present to explore the uncanny and fantastic in literature and life. Our discussions will be based on a reading of Sigmund Freud's essay on the uncanny, and extraordinary Romantic narratives by Ludwig Tieck, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Prosper Merimee, Villiers de Isle-Adam, and others.

The course will count towards the major or minor in Comparative Literature, Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, as well as the minor in Psychoanalytic Studies.

Syllabus

Wednesday, August 28 **Introduction: Enlightenment, Catholicism, and the New Scientific Progress**

Monday, September 2 **no class: Labor Day**

Wednesday, September 4 **The English Gothic Novel: Castles and Labyrinths**
Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto (1764)
(Anna and John Aikin, *"On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror, with Sir Bertrand, a Fragment" on canvas, as is further material*)

Monday, September 9 **The German Turn: From Castle to Ruin to Fragment**
Friedrich Schlegel, Athenaeum fragments (selections)
Novalis, Pollen (selection) (texts and further material on canvas)
Heinrich von Kleist, "The Beggarwoman of Locarno" (1810)
(text and further material on canvas)

Wednesday, September 11 The World Below

Ludwig Tieck, "Eckbert the Blonde" (1797)
(text and further material on canvas)

Monday, September 16 Sexual Mysteries

Heinrich von Kleist, "The Marquise of O****" (1808)
(further material on canvas)

Wednesday, September 18 The West! A New Continent

Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Huntly (1799)
(further material on canvas)

Monday, September 23 Natives and Settlers

Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Huntly

first term paper due

Wednesday, September 25 The Psychological Dimension

E.T.A. Hoffmann, "The Sandman" (1816); *Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" (1919)*
(texts and material on canvas)

Monday, September 30 Human Invention

Mary Shelley, Frankenstein (1818)
(further material on canvas)

Wednesday, October 2 Religion

Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Minister's Black Veil" (1832)
(text and further material on canvas)

Monday, October 7 Human Perfection

Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birth-Mark" (1843)
(text and further material on canvas)

Wednesday, October 9 The Undead I

Edgar Allan Poe, "Ligeia" (1838)
(text and further material on canvas)

Monday, October 14 Doubles (session on zoom!)

Edgar Allan Poe, "William Wilson" (1839)
(text and further material on canvas)

Wednesday, October 16 Special individual session: Please watch Alfred Hitchcock's film, *Psycho* (1960) (available at the library and via screening services)

Monday, October 21 **France!: Archeological Pasts (session on zoom!)**
Prosper Merimée, "The Venus of Ille" (1837)
(text and further material on canvas)

Wednesday, October 23 **No class**

Monday, October 28 **The East! Human and Animal**
Prosper Merimée, "Lokis" (1869)
(text and further material on canvas)

second term paper due

Wednesday, October 30 **Inventors and Inventions**
Villiers de Isle-Adam, Tomorrow's Eve (1886)
(further material on canvas)

Monday, November 4 **The Perfect Woman (Again)**
Villiers de Isle-Adam, Tomorrow's Eve

Wednesday, November 6 **The Irish Colony**
Bram Stoker, Dracula (1897)
(further material on canvas)

Monday, November 11 **Special session:** Screening of F.W. Murnau, Nosferatu (1922)

Wednesday, November 13 **Night Shows**
Angela Carter, Nights at the Circus (1984)
(further material on canvas)

Monday, November 18 **Feminist Creatures**
Angela Carter, Nights at the Circus

Wednesday, November 20 **The Undead II**
Toni Morrison, Beloved (1987)
(further material on canvas)

third term paper due

Monday, November 25 **The Question of Slavery**
Toni Morrison, Beloved (1987)
(further material on canvas)

Wednesday, November 27 **No Class: Th, F classes shifted to T, W**

Monday, December 2 **American History II**
George Saunders, Lincoln in the Bardo (2017)
(further material on canvas)

Wednesday, December 4 **Beyond the Grave**
George Saunders, Lincoln in the Bardo (2017)

Monday, December 9 **Salon of Ghosts and Spirits: Exhibition of Creative Work**

Creative Project Due

Books Assigned for Class (stories and secondary material are placed on canvas):

Horace Walpole, The Castle of Ortranto, Oxford UP (also available as pdf on line)
Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Huntly, Penguin Books (also available as pdf on line)
Mary Shelley, Frankenstein, Oxford UP (also available as pdf on line)
Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Tomorrow's Eve, University of Illinois Press
Bram Stoker, Dracula, Norton Critical Editions (also available as pdf on line)
Angela Carter, Nights at the Circus, Viking Press
Toni Morrison, Beloved, Vintage Editions
George Saunders, Lincoln in the Bardo, Random House

Requirements:

Attendance in class and recitation sessions; three brief scholarly papers of ca. 5-7 pages (see deadlines above); a creative project (fictional interview with an author or literary figure discussed in class).

Liliane Weissberg's Office Hours: W, 3:30-4:30 pm, Williams Hall 747 or by appointment:
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