

Freshman Seminar: The Afterlife of the Gothic Novel

The gothic craze took hold of British culture in the late eighteenth century and has been going strong ever since. The novel is perhaps the most familiar literary medium for exploring terror and uncertainty, but in this course we will examine how the gothic also finds expression in drama, poetry, film, and electronic literature. Despite belonging to vastly different genres and time periods, many of these works debate similar themes and share structural features of hybridity, modularity, and interactivity. But they also evolve new forms and reflect anxieties unique to their periods and writers.

We will begin by reading two classic gothic novels from the eighteenth-century, Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest* and Lewis' *The Monk*, before moving on to consider dramatic adaptations of these books (Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* and *Aurelio and Miranda*), later plays that reflect a gothic influence (Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Wilde's *Salome*), fantastic poetry (Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*, Rossetti's *Goblin Market*, Eliot's *Wasteland*), new media pieces (Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*, Nelson's *Dreamaphage*, Short's *Savior-Faire*), contemporary fiction (King's *The Shining*, Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*) and three films about the horror of modern life (*Frankenstein* [1931], *Rocky Horror Picture Show* [1975], and *The Matrix* [1999]). This course will increase students' understanding of the twenty-first century's inheritance from the gothic tradition and the reasons that the gothic continues to be such an attractive form to readers and writers alike.

Students will be responsible for active class participation, weekly postings on the course website (to reflect on the readings and raise questions for discussion), and a longer seminar paper.