

HONS3301-H02: THE PHILOSOPHY OF HORROR

Spring 2017

MWF 12:00-12:50 MCOM 080

Instructor

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Office hours: MWF 9:00-10:00

Course Description

This course asks, centrally, what is the nature of horror, and why do we like it? Not everyone is into Stephen King novels and slasher flicks. Not everyone appreciates a ghost story or monster movie. But a surprisingly large number of people do. So, what is the appeal of horror? Why do we like being scared? Doesn't that seem... self-contradictory? Our study of the philosophy of horror will begin with a tour through the history of 'art-horror'—the macabre and uncanny in literature, theatre, and film—to set the groundwork for philosophical inquiry in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Along the way, we'll take in a bunch of horror stories, if only to keep us on the edge of our seats.

Not recommended for students with heart conditions.

Core Texts

- Stephen King, *Danse Macabre* (Gallery Books: 9781439170984)
- Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or Paradoxes of the Heart* (Routledge: 0415902169)
- All other readings for this course will be supplied as PDFs, available in the Course Readings section for this course on Blackboard.

Course Requirements

Exams

There will be four take-home exams for this class:

<i>Exam</i>	<i>Assigned</i>	<i>Due</i>
1	Wed, Feb 22	Mon, Feb 27
2	Mon, Mar 20	Fri, Mar 24
3	Fri, Apr 14	Wed, Apr 19
4	Mon, May 8	Fri, May 12

Each exam is worth 12% of your final grade. Exams will not be accepted late without authorized excuse.

Critical Essays

Over the course of the semester, you will have to write three 6-to-8 page critical essays focused on a particular work of horror fiction. For these, select:

- One film from Appendix 1 in King's *Danse Macabre* (pp. 439-443)
- One film from the appendix at the end of this syllabus.
- One horror novel of your choosing. King offers a limited list in his Appendix 2 (pp. 445-447), but you are not required to choose from this list. The several authors we will be reading in class provide a wide variety of recommendations and examples.

You may *not* select a film that we are scheduled to screen in the course (see course schedule, below). A great many of the films listed in the appendices are available in the University Library. Each essay must analyze the work in service of an argument for how the work illuminates the nature of horror. It may be that the work challenges, complicates, or expands a view offered by one of the authors we have read. The essay should, as such, grapple with the theoretical materials from the course. The essay should *not* simply be a summary of the work, nor a *mere application* of some view we have considered in class. It should,

instead, present an *argument* and *critical analysis* of the nature of horror (so any summary of the work should be in service of this end). It may be that the first movie you watch offers nothing particularly illuminating about the nature of horror. In such a case, watch another horror movie. Repeat as needed.

Further details about the critical essays will be provided in class.

Essays are due on the following dates:

- Essay #1 due Friday, March 10
- Essay #2 due Monday, April 10
- Essay #3 due Monday, May 8

You are not required to turn your essays in in any particular order, so you could, for example, submit your essay on the horror novel as Essay #1, Essay #2, or Essay #3. Although you are not required to do so, I *strongly* recommend that you meet with me about your topics and essays prior to submitting your work. Time permitting, I am happy to look at outlines and drafts.

Each essay is worth 14% of your final grade. For each day your essay is late, your grade will be deducted one letter grade (10%).

Participation

The final 10% of your grade is participation. Participation includes doing the assigned readings *before* the class in which the reading shall be discussed, taking active part in class discussion, putting serious effort into your papers, and attendance. See also “Classroom Courtesy” below.

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due</i>	<i>% of Grade</i>
Exam #1	Mon, Feb 27	12
Essay #1	Fri, Mar 10	14
Exam #2	Fri, Mar 24	12
Essay #2	Mon, Apr 10	14
Exam #3	Wed, Apr 19	12
Essay #3	Mon, May 8	14
Exam #4	Fri, May 12	12
Participation	--	10
Total:		100

Special Accommodations

- Students with disabilities that require special class or exam accommodations must present a form from AccessTECH Disability Support Program specifying the details during the first week of classes. Their offices are located in 335 West Hall. See www.accesstech.dsa.ttu.edu.
- You will not be penalized for any absences due to religious observances. However, it is your responsibility to inform me in advance of any intended absences for religious observance *as soon as possible* so that we can make other arrangements. As well, it remains your responsibility to have read the material assigned for that day and to obtain any notes from one of your classmates for classes missed.

Attendance

For each class you miss without authorized excuse, your final grade will be deducted 1%. After 10 unauthorized absences, you will receive a failing grade in this class regardless of your performance on course assignments.

Classroom Courtesy

Please be courteous to your fellow students and avoid unnecessary disruptions. Arrive on time, leave on time, and *turn off your cell phone during class*. Note that if your cell phone rings during class, *I get to answer it*.

Laptops are permitted in class, but please do not abuse this privilege. Text-messaging is *not* permitted during my class. If you are seen text-messaging during class-time, your final grade will be deducted 1 percent. This is your only warning.

The Writing Center

Particularly for new philosophy students, I strongly recommend that you work on your paper with a writing tutor. The Writing Center offers *free assistance* in room 175 of the Philosophy and English Building. See <http://english.ttu.edu/uwc01>.

Academic Integrity and Irresponsibility

I take incidents of academic misconduct *very seriously*. These include but are not restricted to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and fabrication. Penalties are dependent on the nature of the misconduct, and may involve disciplinary proceedings with the Student Judicial Programs. Knowing what constitutes academic misconduct is *your responsibility*. If you have a concern about what constitutes academic dishonesty *prior to turning in an assignment*, please see me, and I will be happy to help you. For more information, see <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentjudicialprograms/academicinteg.php>.

Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

Introduction	Fri Jan 20	<i>No Readings</i>	
Horror Stories	Mon Jan 23	Lovecraft, “Supernatural Horror in Literature”: §§1-6 (12-51)	
	Wed Jan 25	Lovecraft, “Supernatural Horror in Literature”: §§7-10 (52-106)	
	Fri Jan 27	Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart”; Lovecraft, “The Dunwich Horror”	
	Mon Jan 30	King, <i>DM</i> : Forenotes, Chs. I-II (xi-49)	
	Wed Feb 1	King, <i>DM</i> : Chs. III-IV (50-112)	
	Fri Feb 3	<i>No Readings</i> : in-class radio play listening	
	Mon Feb 6	King, <i>DM</i> : Ch. V (113-136)	
	Wed Feb 8	King, <i>DM</i> : Ch. VI (137-211)	
	Fri Feb 10	<i>No Readings</i> : in-class TV episode screening	
	Mon Feb 13	King, <i>DM</i> : Chs. VII-VIII (212-263)	
	Wed Feb 15	King, <i>DM</i> : Ch. IX, §§1-5 (264-344)	<i>Thursday Feb 16: Movie screening—The Shining (details TBD)</i>
	Fri Feb 17	<i>No Readings</i> : film discussion	
	Mon Feb 20	King, <i>DM</i> : Ch. IX, §§6-10(344-412)	
Psychology and the Uncanny	Wed Feb 22	King, <i>DM</i> : Ch. X, Afterword (413-438); Jentsch, “The Psychology of the Uncanny”	<i>Take-Home Exam 1 Assigned</i>
	Fri Feb 24	Hoffmann, “The Sand-man”; Ito, “Headless Sculptures”	
	Mon Feb 27	Freud, <i>The Uncanny</i> ; Mori, “The Uncanny Valley	<i>Take-Home Exam 1 Due</i>
	Wed Mar 1	Kristeva, “Approaching Abjection” — <i>Guest lecture by Heather Warren-Crow (College of Visual & Performing Arts)</i>	<i>Thursday, Mar 2: Movie screening—Texas Chainsaw Massacre (details TBD)</i>
	Fri Mar 3	<i>No Readings</i> : film discussion	
	Mon Mar 6	Wood, “An Introduction to the American Horror Film”	

	Wed Mar 8	Creed, "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine"	
	Fri Mar 10	Barker, "In The Hills, The Cities"; Tiptree, "The Screwfly Solution"	<i>Essay #1 Due</i>

Spring Break

The Nature of Horror	Mon Mar 20	Carroll, <i>TPoH</i> : Ch. 1 (12-58)	<i>Take-Home Exam 2 Assigned</i>
	Wed Mar 22	Hills, "An Event-Based Definition of Art Horror"	
	Fri Mar 24	Irving, "The Devil and Tom Walker"; King, "Jerusalem's Lot"	<i>Take-Home Exam 2 Due</i>
	Mon Mar 27	Singer, "The Golem"— <i>Guest lecture by Mark Webb</i> (Philosophy Dept)—"Golems, Vampires, and Demons: Religion in Horror"	
The Paradox of Fiction	Wed Mar 29	Radford, "How Can We Be Moved by the Fate of Anna Karenina?"	
	Fri Mar 31	Walton, "Fearing Fictions"	<i>Friday, Mar 31: Movie screening—Night of the Living Dead (details TBD)</i>
	Mon Apr 3	<i>No Readings: film discussion</i>	
	Wed Apr 5	Carroll, <i>TPoH</i> : Ch. 2 (59-96)	
	Fri Apr 7	Carroll, <i>TPoH</i> : Ch. 3, pp. 97-128	
	Mon Apr 10	Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown"; King, "Children of the Corn"	<i>Essay #2 Due</i>
	Wed Apr 12	Carroll, <i>TPoH</i> : Ch. 3, pp. 128-157	
	Fri Apr 14	Du Maurier, "The Birds"; Matheson, "Day of Reckoning"	<i>Take-Home Exam 3 Assigned</i>
<i>No Class</i>	Mon Apr 17	<i>No Class</i>	
The Paradox of Horror	Wed Apr 19	<i>No Readings: Guest Lecture by Rob Weiner</i> (Honors College)	<i>Take-Home Exam 3 Due</i>
	Fri Apr 21	Hume, "Of Tragedy"	
	Mon Apr 24	Feagin, "The Pleasures of Tragedy"	
	Wed Apr 26	Carroll, <i>TPoH</i> : Ch. 4, pp. 158-195	<i>Thursday, Apr 25: Movie screening—Jacob's Ladder (details TBD)</i>
	Fri Apr 28	<i>No Readings: film discussion</i>	
	Mon May 1	Morreall, "Enjoying Negative Emotions in Fiction"	
	Wed May 3	Gaut, "The Paradox of Horror"	
	Fri May 5	Hill, "Best New Horror"; Klein, "The Events At Poroth Farm"	
	Mon May 8	Carroll, <i>TPoH</i> : Ch.4, pp. 195-214	<i>Essay #3 Due</i> <i>Take-Home Exam 4</i>

Take-Home Exam 4 is due by e-mail by 5:00 pm, Friday May 12.