

ENGLISH 102K: A HISTORY OF HORROR FILM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

DETAILS

Instructor: John M. Ware

Office: Main 331

Office hours: Tuesday 4:00-5:00; Wednesday/Friday 2:00-3:30.

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COURSE MATERIALS

There are no texts that you are required to purchase for this course. Useful electronic resources for writing and research (including documentation) include the Purdue Online Writing Lab (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>) and Diana Hacker and Barbara Fister's online guide (<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/>).

The following films are assigned for the course. Each is available from the library through course reserves; you can check out the DVD for a limited period of time from the circulation desk. You may find it useful to rent or own some of these films. Common sources for films (either as DVD or as streaming content) include Amazon, Google Play, iTunes, YouTube, Vimeo, and Snag Films.

28 Days Later. Dir. Danny Boyle. DNA Films, 2002. DVD.

Alien. Dir. Ridley Scott. Twentieth Century Fox, 1979. DVD.

The Exorcist. Dir. William Friedkin. Warner Brothers, 1973. DVD.

Halloween. Dir. John Carpenter. Compass International Pictures, 1978. DVD.

It Follows. Dir. David Robert Mitchell. Northern Lights Films, 2014. DVD.

Night of the Living Dead. Dir. George Romero. Image Ten, 1968. DVD.

Psycho. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Shamley Productions, 1960. DVD.

Scream. Dir. Wes Craven. Dimension Films, 1996. DVD.

Shaun of the Dead. Dir. Edgar Wright. Universal Pictures, 2004. DVD.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. Dir. Tobe Hooper. Vortex, 1974. DVD.

Assigned readings will be made available as pdf files on our Moodle site.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Historians of horror film locate early examples in the late nineteenth century, and genre critics continue to address the difficulty of defining horror film in a way that is both broad enough to be representative of the variety of films to which it applies and also narrow enough to be meaningful. Critics often focus on two aspects of horror film: its affect and its content. In terms of affect, critics are interested in the emotional responses that horror

films provoke in their viewers: fear, anxiety, dread, and revulsion. In terms of content, critics are interested in shared representations across horror films: monsters, demonism, psychosis, violence, lawlessness and disorder. Because of its history, its diversity in representations, and its diversity across cultures (German, American, Italian, French, Japanese, and Korean horror, for example), and its enduring popularity, horror film has provided film critics a rich field of material for various approaches to film studies.

This course focuses on a selection of Anglo-American horror films produced during the last half-century. As we study the conventions, continuities, and variations within the genre, we will also attend to some of the particular techniques employed in film studies. In addition to elements of analysis familiar from narrative texts (plot, characterization, theme, figurative language), we'll add consideration of mise-en-scene, camerawork, editing, and sound. Selected readings will address issues related to horror film as a genre or particular films that we view. Assignments encompass both written work and oral presentations, both individual and group work.

OUTCOMES

Relative to the theme of the course:

- knowledge of the history of horror film as a genre;
- knowledge of critical approaches to horror films;
- knowledge of the formal elements of film analysis;
- familiarity with a variety of English and American horror films.

Relative to assignments:

- the ability to compose analyses of various lengths and different degrees of complexity;
- the ability to develop and support an argument in edited American English;
- the ability to conduct research;
- the ability to convey results of research in writing and in speech;
- an understanding of the writing process (drafting, reviewing, and revising).

MOODLE

This course will rely on its Moodle site for the distribution of readings, the distribution of assignments, the preparation and submission of assignments, and its online gradebook feature.

GRADES

By the end of the semester, you will have received seven grades that constitute your final grade:

- Film Notebook: Response Journal (15%)
- Essay 1: Film Analysis (20%)

- Research Presentation (10%)
- Essay 2: Film Analysis (20%)
- Essay 3: Research-Supported Essay (20%)
- Attendance and Participation (15%)

Grades are represented on a one hundred-point scale, but you can convert them to a letter grade according to the following:

- 93-100: A
- 90-92: A-
- 87-89: B+
- 83-86: B
- 80-82: B-
- 77-79: C+
- 73-76: C
- 70-72: C-
- 60-69: D
- 00-59: F

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance, preparation, and participation contribute 10% to your final grade. A general, but not binding, way of conceiving of the effect of attendance on your grade is as follows: with 1-2 absences, you may still earn an A in attendance; with 2-3 absences, you may still earn a B in attendance; with 3-5 absences, you may still earn a C or a D in attendance; with 6 absences, you will likely receive an F (00) in attendance; with more than 6 absences, you will not get credit for this course. Alert me to necessary absences and unusual circumstances; retain documentation of absences. With supporting documentation, absences due to official college events will not negatively affect your grade, but they will count as absences.

If you enter class after I have checked the roll, you are late, and it is your responsibility to see me immediately after class to be certain that I count you as present. If you are more than fifteen minutes late to class, you are welcome to stay, but I will not give you credit for having attended. Tardiness will negatively affect your grade.

Participation begins with adequate preparation for class: completion of required reading and writing and the appropriate number of drafts or comments. Participation includes the extent of your contributions to discussion, whether in groups or the entire class, and the quality of your comments on peers' drafts.

Informal writing does not receive a numerical grade; instead it is graded, if at all, on a scale of -, ✓, +, or some combination of the above. ✓ indicates that the response meets the expectations set out in the assignment. Writing that exceeds expectations (whether on account of level of engagement or attention to detail) receives a +. Informal writing

contributes to an individual's attendance and participation grade. In order to receive a high grade in that category, a student should seek to accumulate pluses, minimize minuses, and respond to assignments in a timely fashion.

Your grade is something you earn, and you have every right to be concerned about it. Please visit me during my office hours or schedule a time to meet with me if you have any questions or concerns about your grade.

OFFICE HOURS, EMAIL, PHONE

Office hours are times during which you can drop by my office without prior notice and with the assurance that I will be there unless I have indicated otherwise. Please take advantage of this time to discuss any aspects of this class. I will gladly meet with you at other times; we simply need to arrange to do so. While my office phone number is 597-4362, the most effective way to contact me is by [email](#).

THE HONOR CODE

The Wofford College Honor Pledge charges students to uphold the integrity of the College. In this course, we will discuss methods by which writers clearly signal material derived from sources and incorporated into their own work through quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Failure to properly acknowledge one's sources or to appropriately quote, paraphrase, or summarize constitutes plagiarism, which is an honor code violation.

All writing for this class is to originate with this class. If you wish to use writing from an earlier point in your academic career, you need to discuss this matter with me prior to submitting any assignment.

REQUESTS

Food, phones, and laptops/tablets.

OTHER RESOURCES

Wofford College offers services related to students' academic performance and personal wellbeing: [The Writing Center](#) and the [Wellness Center](#) are two services to keep in mind.