

English 1102: Composition II
Gothic Fictions: Technologies of Terror
Spring 2006, Sections G, L, E4

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Office Hours: MWF, 11am-12 and by appointment

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Course Objectives

While developing skills in oral communication, writing, and research, participants will

- Understand the relationship between technology and fear within Gothic fictions
- Explore how Gothic fictions work as fear-producing machines within culture
- Investigate why these machines reproduce themselves through many historical periods and media

Course Description

The three most famous Gothic novels of the nineteenth century, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, have had a long afterlife (undeath?) in literature, comics, film, television, video games, and other electronic media. Each of these novels focuses on technology as a source of terror, either explicitly in its subject or implicitly in its form. These texts also use cultural anxieties about race, gender, and sexuality to turn their "monsters" into what Judith Halberstam calls "meaning machines." Thanks largely to their reproduction within film and other media, these monstrous machines of nineteenth-century British literature continue to manufacture meanings in contemporary American culture. As they move into new cultural contexts and new media forms, the monsters, their stories, and their meanings evolve. This course examines how the Gothic operates as a literature *about* the terror of technology and also a literature that *is* a technology of terror.

Texts

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* [novel]

James Whale, *Frankenstein* and *Bride of Frankenstein* [films]

Shelley Jackson, *Patchwork Girl* [hypertext]

R.L. Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* [novel]

John Landis, *An American Werewolf in London* [film]

David Fincher, *Fight Club* [film]

Bram Stoker, *Dracula* [novel]

Joss Whedon, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* [television]

Stephen Sommers, *Van Helsing* [film]

Selections from Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, George Landow, *Hypertext 2.0*, Jay

Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation*, et al. available via online reserve

The St. Martin's Handbook (with *Comment*)

NOTE: All page numbers on the schedule refer to the Norton editions of the novel available at the GT Barnes & Noble.

Graded Work

A = 90-100; **B** = 80-89; **C** = 70-79; **D** = 60-69; **F** = 1-59
A+/98 ; A/95 ; A-/92 ; B+/88 ; B/85 ; B-/82 ; C+/78 ; C/75 ; C-/72 ; D+/68 ; D/65 ;
D-/62; F/1-59*

*Failure to complete an assignment will result in a "0," and assignments turned in late will receive a penalty of one letter grade per day after the due date, excluding weekends and holidays.

Individual Essays and the Group Project [70%]

Peer-edited drafts, workshop participation, and other preparatory work count toward the final assignment grade. Failure to workshop a draft (i.e., a draft grade of zero) during specified classes will result in a grade penalty of at least one letter. Note your name, your class section, my name, and your actual word count on everything you turn in.

Essay 1: Use a critical/theoretical reading to help you interpret how and why one fictional text focuses on technology. 1500 words, 20%

Essay 2: Interpret the relationship between one of the novels and one of its remediations. 2000 words, 20%

Group Research Project: Use 8-10 online and print sources to develop an interactive project that presents research and an argument about the mediated afterlife of one of the primary novels. Present the project to the class as a group, and turn in individual self-evaluations and annotated bibliographies.

Annotated Bibliography and Self-Evaluation, 10%

Proposal, Project, and Presentation, 20%

Online Responses and Participation [30%]

Online Responses: 4 responses, 250-500 words each, 5% each (20% total)

During a week when a "Posting Discussion" appears on the schedule for Friday, post a response to a text on the schedule for that week on WebCT *no later than 12pm on Thursday*. You must post responses for four *different* Posting Discussions. You must post at least two of your responses *before March 3*. Two responses must be evaluations, and two must be interpretations. Indicate the type of response in your paper's heading.
Evaluation: Provide a detailed review of the text. Using analysis of specific passages or scenes, identify one of the text's goals and its success or failure
Interpretation: Provide a close reading of a passage or scene and explain how a meaning you find in the passage contributes to the work as a whole.

Class Discussion, Group Activities, Quizzes, etc.

Make class meetings productive by sharing your insights and completing group assignments. This class focuses on oral as well as written communication, so regular in-class contributions are mandatory. Speak up! Saying something is more important than saying the "right" thing. Classes that do not demonstrate familiarity with the readings will take unannounced reading-check quizzes (i.e. pop quizzes, no fun), which count

toward the participation grade. Any written work collected but not described above also counts toward the participation grade.

Attendance

This class moves quickly, and each class meeting builds upon previous meetings. Attendance is crucial for your success. If you must miss class due to illness or an unavoidable schedule conflict, please email me ahead of time. You may miss two classes without penalty; missing more than six classes will lower your final grade by *at least* one letter. *Failure to attend on a workshop day will result in a zero on the draft unless you clear the absence with me ahead of time.*

Class Decorum

Lateness, noisy cell phones, and other interruptions lower the productivity of the whole class and might, therefore, lower your participation grade. We will discuss a number of sensitive issues in this class: failure to treat classmates with respect is a communication failure and could result in a lower grade as well as disciplinary action.

Additional Information

Students with Disabilities

If you need accommodation for any sort of disability, please see me during office hours. Students with disabilities should contact Access Disabled Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS). For an appointment with a counselor call (404) 894-2564 (voice) / (404) 894-1664 (voice/TDD) or visit Suite 210 in the Smithgall Student Building. For more information visit <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>

Software/Computing Resources and Requirements

All students must meet the technology requirements for students at GT. You must have access to your own computer with Internet capabilities, word processing software, and access to the *Comment* website (packaged with *SMH*) to complete the work in this class. Access to web design software is recommended.

Turning in Work and Academic Honesty

Unless otherwise noted, submit hard copies of essay assignments during class on the due date and via turnitin.com, an online anti-plagiarism software. You are responsible for knowing and abiding by GT's policy for academic integrity. Consult the Honor Code online at <http://www.honor.gatech.edu> or in the General Catalog. Students who engage in dishonesty will receive a 0 on the assignment and may fail the course. I will report academic dishonesty to the Dean of Students, who may take further action.

The Fine Print

I reserve the right to alter the policies and assignments on this syllabus. I will exercise this right rarely, but I will usually provide more detailed information about assignments during class. This syllabus is your guide for the semester. Keep it. Know it. Love it.

Schedule of Meetings, Topics, Readings and Assignments

Complete readings BEFORE the class meeting for which they are scheduled.

[NOTE: Dates preceded by a "*" are important due dates]

Week One

Jan. 9: Course Introduction—Approaching Horrors

Jan. 11: What is Gothic? *Bruce Wright, "In Beaminster Churchyard"* [library e-res]

Jan. 13: What is a Monster? *Judith Halberstam, "Parasites and Perverts"* [e-res]

Week Two

Jan. 16: HOLIDAY—NO CLASS

Jan. 18: Ghastly Origins, *Frankenstein, Prefaces 5-6, 169-173; 7-58*

Jan. 20: Monstrous Births, *Frankenstein, Moers 214-224*

Week Three

Jan. 23: Dialog and Structure, *Frankenstein 59-101*

Jan. 25: (Self) Destruction, *Frankenstein 103-156*

Jan. 27: First Posting Discussion, *read postings on WebCT*

Week Four

Jan. 30: Frankie Goes to Hollywood, *see Whale's Frankenstein*

Feb. 1: Monstrous Sequels, *see Whale's Bride of Frankenstein*

Feb. 3: Second Posting Discussion, *read postings on WebCT*

Week Five

*Feb. 6: WORKSHOP, ESSAY ONE DRAFT, *Frankenstein, Butler 302-313*

*Feb. 8: ESSAY ONE DUE, *Frankenstein, Mellor 274-286*

Feb. 10: NO CLASS

Week Six

Feb. 13: Technological (Re)birth, begin *Patchwork Girl*

Feb. 15: Hypertext Stitches, continue *Patchwork Girl*; *Landow 198-205* [e-res]

Feb. 17: Third Posting Discussion, *read postings on WebCT and continue Patchwork Girl*

Week Seven

Feb 20: Urban Spaces, Secret Doors, *Jekyll and Hyde 7-47, Walkowitz 141-144*

Feb. 22: Good vs. Evil, and Others, *Jekyll and Hyde 47-62, Houghton 146-149*

Feb. 24: Fourth Posting Discussion, *read postings on WebCT*

Week Eight

Feb. 27: Science and Society, *Jekyll and Hyde "Scientific Contexts" 132-140*

Mar. 1: Transformation, *see Landis's American Werewolf..., King 69-77* [e-res]

Mar. 3: Fifth Posting Discussion, *read postings on WebCT*

Schedule, Continued

Week Nine

Mar. 6: Terrorism and Technology, *see Fight Club, Bolter 3-15* [e-res]

Mar. 8: Monstrous Masculinity, *Fight Club* and *Jekyll and Hyde, Linehan 204-213*

Mar. 10: Sixth Posting Discussion

Week Ten

Mar. 13: Technique: Essay Strategies, *SMH TBA*

*Mar. 15: WORKSHOP, ESSAY TWO DRAFT

*Mar. 17: ESSAY TWO DUE, Group Project Brainstorming [Bring all three novels!]

SPRING BREAK: Mar. 20-24. Get a head start on *Dracula*.

Week Eleven

Mar. 27: Dark Journeys, *Dracula* 9-55 [RECOMMENDED: Craft 444-459]

Mar. 29: Pleasant Invasions, *Dracula* 55-147 [LONG ASSIGNMENT—PLAN AHEAD]

Mar. 31: Transformation Revisited, *Dracula* 147-193 [REC: Roth 411-421]

Week Twelve

*Apr. 3: Tech War, *Dracula* 194-228, PROPOSAL DUE

Apr. 5: Good vs. Evil Revisited, *Dracula* 228-285 [REC: Senf 421-431]

Apr. 7: Seventh Posting Discussion

Week Thirteen

*Apr. 10: West vs. East, *Dracula* 285-327, ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
[REC: Arata 462-470]

Apr. 12: Slayage, *see Buffy*, “Welcome...” and “The Harvest”

Apr. 14: Eighth Posting Discussion

Week Fourteen

Apr. 17: Project Prep Session I

Apr. 19: Project Prep Session II

Apr. 21: Monster Mash, *see Van Helsing*

Week Fifteen

*Apr. 24: PRESENTATIONS

*Apr. 26: PRESENTATIONS

*Apr. 28: PRESENTATIONS