

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Description Form

Please read the notes at the end of the table carefully before completing the form.

Subject Code	ELC1C05
Subject Title	Horror in English Literature and Film
Credit Value	3
Level	1
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	Nil
Objectives	<p>Horror fiction is a sub-genre of the novel. It arose in England in the late eighteenth century, when the novel as a genre first entered the literary scene. It is an established aspect of studies at universities in the UK and the USA. While it has undergone many transformations of form and of content, it is popular today.</p> <p>Horror writings examine relations between the individual and extreme situations often in remote environments. They are by nature non-realist. They have also captured a large audience, in both written and film versions (e.g. Mary Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i>, Bram Stoker's <i>Dracula</i> and Stephen King's <i>The Shining</i>). The literature on horror fiction has burgeoned since the mid-twentieth century.</p> <p>During this course you will enhance your</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of history, cultures and world views <p>Lectures will introduce historical and cultural dimensions in horror writing. You will consider art as an enquiry into the human condition, the meaning of life and how humans view themselves in relation to other humans. You will apply this knowledge by producing an extensive piece of writing of 2,500 words which will describe and analyse horror texts in historical and cultural terms, providing an account of your world view.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literacy (requiring extensive reading and writing) <p>You will receive feedback and guidelines to help you develop writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher-order thinking

	<p>You will learn to think critically about horror tales and films, and demonstrate this in an oral presentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life-long learning (incorporating learning to learn activities) <p>You will develop critical thinking, problem-solving, knowledge construction and life-long learning abilities by using the learning to learn activities on the EDC website to analyse horror tales.</p>
<p>Intended Learning Outcomes <i>(Note 1)</i></p>	<p>Upon completion of the subject, you will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> understand horror writings and films in terms of history, cultures and world views. read and understand important horror prose works in English. write an extensive essay on a selection of works covered on the course, excluding ‘Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde’, ‘Carmilla’ or ‘First Love’ or the presentation topic. research and critically read writings about horror fictions and films. deliver an oral presentation in small groups on a short story or novel. <p>Outcome a) will improve understanding of the relevance of history, cultures and development through a number of approaches, including biographical, religious and political approaches. (Bloom’s taxonomy: Analysis level).</p> <p>Outcome b) will enhance literacy by requiring extensive reading of horror works. There will be instruction on reading strategies relevant to the horror tale, for instance, ways of decoding vocabulary relevant to historical settings. (Bloom’s taxonomy: Comprehension level).</p> <p>Outcome c) will develop the writing aspects of literacy, by requiring students to individually research and note, plan and write extensively, using appropriate organization, grammar and academic style on a selection of the texts studied.</p> <p>Outcome d) will further your research practice: this will entail both literacy and higher-order thinking: you will demonstrate and justify your views on the texts and critical accounts of the texts, particularly with reference to actual textual wordings (Bloom’s Application category).</p> <p>Outcome e) will involve you in giving an oral presentation to demonstrate the products of your learning to learn activities from the EDC website. (See Outcome c above).</p> <p>Your writing activities, additionally, can be classified under Bloom’s category of Synthesis, modifying and using old concepts to form new ideas; and, at the lowest level of the taxonomic pyramid, such activities as naming horror stories, recalling them and locating them will correspond to Bloom’s Knowledge category.</p>

**Subject Synopsis/
Indicative Syllabus**

(Note 2)

Synopsis

The subject will introduce cultures and world views in horror writings and films. It will cover the reasons for identifying horror as a relevant aspect of English literature studies, the value of studying it, and how theories of history, cultures and world views form the basis of literature. It will examine the structure of its knowledge domain, for instance, its exclusiveness in departing from traditional 'realist' modes of narrative presentation, the horror sub-genre as an enquiry in to the human condition and why it remains importantly beyond a species of mere entertainment literature.

Characteristic features of horror writings as a sub-genre will be examined, notably its explorations of the individual in elaborated relationships with fear, and the questions raised about the justifications of such fear in terms of the institutional (e.g. political or religious) status quo. The approach of enquiry and study methodologies such as thematic, feminist, subjective-stylistic or new historical will be introduced.

You will read one or two short stories, and/or selections from novels, and watch relevant films to prepare for a one-hour lecture, followed by small group tutorials, with input and mini-presentations on the themes of the session. The lectures will work chronologically through the development of the horror tale, from the 18th to the 21st centuries, addressing history, cultures and world views.

In the assessments you will deliver a presentation on a short story, novelette or novel, with references to film where appropriate, read in detail three set texts totalling around 200 pages and write a book report on each, and produce an extended piece of out-of-class writing on the sub-genre. The extended writing will fulfill the Writing Requirement, based on any works covered in class except for those that form part of the Reading Requirement or the oral presentation. All short story readings are either available free on the internet, mainly from Project Gutenberg, are in the PolyU library, or links will be provided. Most of the novels are available in the PolyU library. All are discussed in the academic literature on the horror tale and elucidate the lecture topics.

Indicative Syllabus

Topics: include: fear of entrapment and constraints of females by powerful males; fears about the abuses of religion; fears about the revenge ethic and tradition; fears related to vampirism; fears about science out of human control; parodies of the horror/ terror genre; fears about competition and retaliation from non-human species; fears about adverse psychological change and the reactions of individuals under high pressures from the environment; fears about unknown but personally attractive lovers.

Week 1: Introduction. Overview of course. A specific focus on the development of horror/ terror writing in England in a literary climate where writers standardly produced an appeal to reason to solve problems, and overlooked the emotions.

Week 2: 18th C classical horror works: Radcliffe, Lewis. In the earliest stages of the genre, now classic scenarios of female entrapment in castles emerge, and the evil monk in Lewis's tale 'The Monk' foreshadows the theme of religious oppression or tyranny that develops extensively in Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*.

Week 3: Religion and Ireland: work of C.R. Maturin. In Maturin's major novel *Melmoth the Wanderer*, stories within a story further the intricacies of horrific potential in religious abuses, good and evil are dramatically opposed. The main antagonist has made a pact with the devil and his narrative includes a host of individual scenarios and tales.

Week 4: Early American horror: E. A. Poe and N. Hawthorne. Poe's short stories introduce different perspectives on horror: fears arise from the unknown powers of nature ('A descent into the maelstrom', 'MS found in a bottle'), from revenge (The cask of Amontillado', 'Hop Frog') and from psychological tortures ('The Pit and the Pendulum').

Week 5: 19th C Decadence in horror fiction: Le Fanu, Arthur Machen. By the time of such writers as Le Fanu and Machen, there was a quest for new sensations in writings. Erotic fantasy was explored in the supernatural concepts of the vampire.

Week 6: 19th C perspectives on science: Mary Shelley, R. L. Stevenson.

The developments in science in the nineteenth-century led to worries that scientific experiments might go beyond human control, and there were questions about religious ethics ('Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde', Frankenstein').

Week 7: *Dracula* and vampire myths: Bram Stoker, S. Le Fanu and the female vampire.

Stoker's *Dracula* might suggest that sexual repression could result in a sudden release in monstrous forms; sexual predation could be one fearful consequence of repressing desires. Other perspectives include the character of Count Dracula as a ruthless ruler, victimising the innocent and the poor. At the same time, fears of threats to religion re-surface, as the vampire's victims are polluted with the taint of 'sin'.

Week 8: Comic perspectives on horror: Wilde's 'The Canterville Ghost'; A. Hitchcock's film 'The House at number 17'.

By the late nineteenth century the horror sub-genre, already mocked lightly by Jane Austen in *Northanger Abbey*, was open to parody or satire (Wilde's 'The Canterville Ghost'. Whereas Hitchcock's film (1930s) is a parody of horror conventions (e.g. haunted house), Wilde's tale has a spiritual theme – the ghost's own redemption by a child for its sins.

	<p>Week 9: Horror fiction in the 20th C: A. Blackwood short stories. D. Du Maurier's <i>The Birds</i>. S. King's <i>The Shining</i>.</p> <p>There are many horror themes in Blackwood's ghost stories. Du Maurier's tale looks at possible threats from other species. King's novel focuses on the psychological cracking of an ordinary person, under duress from isolation and confinement. These three authors show how the horror sub-genre has branched out into a number of fresh directions.</p> <p>Week10: Horror fiction in the 21st C: Carol Joyce Oates. Recent developments in horror fiction: non-anthropocentrism, eco-Gothic, animal studies. Oates brings together the issues of human mind gone wrong and sexual predation in the form of a love story. The young girl fancies that she loves a man who forces her to undergo bizarre and hurtful acts. In the twenty-first century, computer dating has received critical responses, and this kind of issue may be relevant in this context. Poe had been preoccupied with supernatural revisits from dead lovers, but Oates transplanted the love theme within the realms of the everyday world.</p> <p>Week 11: In-class writing: Assignment 1: Book reports: limited to 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' (Luckhurst (ed.) pp. 1-66), 'Carmilla' (Tracy (ed.) 1999, pp. 243-319) and 'First Love' (Oates, 1996, pp. 3-86).</p> <p>Week 12: Assignment 2: Oral presentations (groups).</p> <p>Week 13: Assignment 2: Oral presentations (groups). Assignment 3: Extensive Writing Due.</p>
<p>Teaching/Learning Methodology</p> <p>(Note 3)</p>	<p>The subject examines history, cultures and world views with different theoretical perspectives, as detailed in the indicative syllabus above.</p> <p>Students will develop skills and attitudes for approaching the study of literary fiction by self-analysis and by life-long learning activities carried out in lectures, seminars and tutorials. Students will assess a range of actual literary critical approaches (indicated above in the Synopsis) and will be encouraged to explain the reasons for adopting their particular methods.</p> <p>In tutorials, a mixed approach will include instruction, interaction, short presentations and in-class quizzes.</p>

Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes <i>(Note 4)</i>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th> <th rowspan="2">% weighting</th> <th colspan="6">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>a</th> <th>b</th> <th>c</th> <th>d</th> <th>e</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Oral presentation</td> <td>30%</td> <td>√</td> <td>√</td> <td></td> <td>√</td> <td>√</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Book report Includes the Reading Requirement</td> <td>30%</td> <td>√</td> <td>√</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Extensive Writing Includes the Writing Requirement</td> <td>40%</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>√</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100 %</td> <td colspan="6"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)						a	b	c	d	e		1. Oral presentation	30%	√	√		√	√		2. Book report Includes the Reading Requirement	30%	√	√					3. Extensive Writing Includes the Writing Requirement	40%			√				Total	100 %						
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<p>Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:</p> <p>1. The oral presentation will facilitate assessment of the mastery of history, cultures and world view, indicate the degree of understanding of texts and show how far research has been conducted and effectively used.</p> <p>2. The book report will reveal to what extent the reading of the three major texts has been accomplished and how far students have produced a relevant, in-depth appraisal of the works and their significance.</p> <p>3. The extensive writing will provide a lengthy account of selected horror writings and the quality of content, organization and language will be evident.</p>																																															
Student Study Effort Expected	Class contact:																																														
	▪ class work	33Hrs.																																													
	▪ assessments	6Hrs.																																													
	Other student study effort:																																														
	▪ outside class work	78Hrs.																																													
	Total student study effort							117Hrs.																																							
Reading List and References	<p>Crain, C. (ed.) (2002). <i>Wieland, or, The transformation: an American tale and other stories</i>, Charles Brockden Brown. New York: Modern Library.</p> <p>Day, W. (1985). <i>In the circles of fear and desire: a study of Gothic fantasy</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.</p>																																														

	<p>Luckhurst, R. (ed.) <i>Robert Louis Stevenson: Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and other tales</i>. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics.</p> <p>Morrow, P. & McGrath, P. (eds.) (1991). <i>The New Gothic: a collection of contemporary Gothic fiction</i>. London: Pan Books.</p> <p>Oates, J.C. (1996). <i>First love: a Gothic tale</i>. New Jersey: The Ecco Press.</p> <p>Punter, D. (ed.) (2012). <i>A new companion to the Gothic</i>. Blackwell Reference Online: Wiley-Blackwell.</p> <p>Richetti, J. (ed.) (1996). <i>The Cambridge companion to the eighteenth-century novel</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Sage, V. & Lloyd Smith, A. (eds.) (1996). <i>Modern gothic: a reader</i>. Manchester: Manchester University Press.</p> <p>Tracy, R. (ed.) (1999). <i>Sheridan Le Fanu: In a Glass Darkly</i>. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics.</p> <p>Vieira, M. (2003). <i>Hollywood horror: from gothic to cosmic</i>. New York: Abrams.</p>
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Note 1: Intended Learning Outcomes

Intended learning outcomes should state what students should be able to do or attain upon completion of the subject. Subject outcomes are expected to contribute to the attainment of the overall programme outcomes.

Note 2: Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus

The syllabus should adequately address the intended learning outcomes. At the same time over-crowding of the syllabus should be avoided.

Note 3: Teaching/Learning Methodology

This section should include a brief description of the teaching and learning methods to be employed to facilitate learning, and a justification of how the methods are aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the subject.

Note 4: Assessment Method

This section should include the assessment method(s) to be used and its relative weighting, and indicate which of the subject intended learning outcomes that each method purports to assess. It should also provide a brief explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes.