

Prof. Nicola Behrmann

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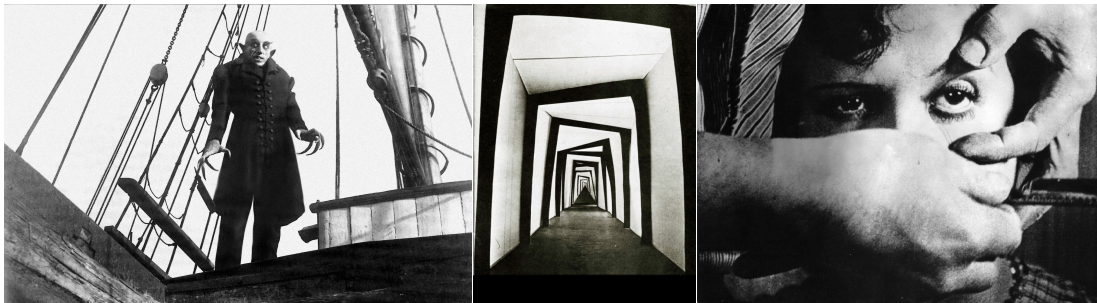
Tales of Horror

Mini-Course

Spring Semester 2014

T/Th 9:50-11:10am

1.5 credits



Course Description

Frankenstein and Dracula, vampires and zombies, Doppelgängers, ghosts, and artificial humans continue to haunt cultural imagination throughout the centuries. This course explores the tales of horror through some of its most spellbinding creatures and fantasies in a time period ranging from the Grimm Brothers to Alfred Hitchcock: We will consider the historical or political context and the psychoanalytical underpinnings in each horrific tale and we will pay close attention to the ways a text or a film establishes, safeguards, or releases its horrific kernel. We will reflect the ways in which horror enters German Expressionist films and why moving images relate particularly well to the uncanny and will explore the similarities and differences in the way film and literature explore horror. Readings include E.T.A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman," Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Jeremias Gotthelf's "The Black Spider," Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and two short stories by Franz Kafka. Filmic contributions range from Murnau's *Nosferatu* and Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* to Louis Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* and Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*. Theoretical reflections are provided by Lotte Eisner, Sigmund Freud, Barbara Johnson, Siegfried Kracauer, Laurence A. Rickels, and Slavoj Žižek.

Course Goals: At the end of this course, students should be able to identify the elements of horror in a text or movie, close read a story or a film, engaging the tale and considering its historical context and the medium in which it is told, and apply the various theoretical reflections on horror in both written and oral form.

Required Books:*

- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Penguin Classics) **ASIN:** B00BP001TK
- Jeremias Gotthelf, *The Black Spider* (New York Review Book Classics, 2013) **ISBN-13:** 978-1590176689

*All other materials on the syllabus are available on Sakai. You must **print out** course materials from Sakai and have a copy of them with you in class.

Course Grading

Final Grade:

Class Participation	20%
3 Response Papers (3pp.)	45%
Oral presentation:	15%
Final Paper:	20%

No late work will be accepted. Only one unexcused absence allowed.

Grade distribution: A=90-100%; B+=85-89; B=80-84; C+=75-79; C=70-74; D=65-69; F=64 and below

Departmental Policies

Attendance

All students must attend regularly and arrive prepared; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. Those who miss more than two class sessions without a compelling excuse should expect a one-step reduction in the course grade (i.e. an A becomes a B+, a B+ becomes a B). Every additional three absences may entail a further one-step grade-reduction. Three late arrivals count as one absence. Note: It is the responsibility of students who have been absent (for any reason) to find out what they have missed and obtain materials that may have been handed out.

Cell Phones

Cell phones and all other technological devices (beepers, iPods, MP3players...) must be turned off during class out of respect for the instructor and fellow students. Please schedule all important phone communications outside of class time.

Photocopies

Department photocopying fees add up quickly and impressively; we will therefore need to collect from each student 5 cents per page toward the cost of handouts other than quizzes and tests.

Disability Support Services

Students who may be requesting accommodations due to disabilities are encouraged to familiarize themselves with procedures and policies regarding disability support services at the following website: <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>. It is recommended that students seeking accommodations begin filing paperwork as soon as possible as the documentation review process may take up to 30 business days. Students are encouraged to speak with teachers about these issues at the beginning of the term. All such conversations will be kept strictly confidential.

Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity are an extremely serious matter, and can lead to a student's failing the course and being referred to the University's Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action. When referring to ideas other than your own, always acknowledge your sources clearly and completely, whether you are quoting or paraphrasing. Note also that use of online translation services is not permitted as a tool for generating work that you submit for course credit. Please see the University's policies on academic integrity at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>, and discuss with your instructor any questions you may have about this and related issues.

Course Schedule

- March 11** Introduction: **THE KERNEL OF HORROR**. Zizek on Hitchcock's *The Birds* and *Psycho*; Grimm Brothers, "The Pied Pieper of Hamelin."
- March 13** Poe, "The Black Cat;" Zizek, "Diabolical Evil and 'The Black Cat'."
- March 25** **MAN/MACHINE/MOTHER**: Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818);
- March 27** Shelley, cont.; Johnson, "My Monster, My Self."
- April 1** **DOPPELGÄNGER**: Hoffmann, "The Sandman" (1826).
- April 3** Hoffmann, cont.; Freud, "The Uncanny." **1st Response Paper due.**
- April 8** **D/EVIL**: Gotthelf, "The Black Spider" (1842).
- April 10** Gotthelf, cont. **2nd response Paper due.**
- April 15** **SUCKING BLOOD**: Stoker, *Dracula* (1897); Rickels, *The Vampire Lectures* (excerpts);
- April 17** *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (Murnau, 1922); Eisner, *The Haunted Screen* (excerpts)

April 22 **NIGHTMARES:** Kafka, "In the Penal Colony"

April 24 Kafka, "A Country Doctor" (1918); *Un Chien Andalou* (Buñuel, 1929). **3rd response paper due.**

April 29 **ANGST:** *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* (Wiene, 1920); Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (excerpts); Eisner, *The Haunted Screen* (excerpts).

May 1 Term Paper Workshop.

Final Paper due: TBA.