

# English 148.003: Introduction to Horror

From Silent Cinema to Contemporary Literary Horror

Spring 2021



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**Office:** Dey 340

**Zoom Meeting ID:** <https://unc.zoom.us/j/91568319167>

**Office Hours:** Thursdays 12-2 & by appointment

**Course Meeting Pattern:** MWF 3:35-4:25

**Modality:** Remote only synchronous

**Zoom Meeting ID:**

## Course Description:

One genre that can be said to generate perversely accurate representations of trauma is horror. Horror specializes in hyperbolic scenarios of human subjects in the throes of excruciating physical and psychic pain, and develops these scenarios by means of phantasmatic images and hallucinatory narrative sequences. Perhaps unique to this genre, horror invites its reader or spectators into a pleasurable relationship with the trauma of horror, offering up pain, violence, and terror as elements of a compelling spectacle to be consumed and even enjoyed. This course explores the paradoxical appeal of a popular genre devoted to the unpleasure of shock, violence, and psychic disorientation. It covers a long history of horror cinema and literature from the early twentieth century to contemporary period. Overall, this course introduces students to the rich cultural history of modern horror and its deep implications with histories of race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, class, and national belonging.

The target audience for this course is anyone with a love of horror, interest in literary and visual analysis, and passion for humanistic inquiry.

### Learning Objectives:

- Recognize horror as a complex, multifaceted genre with a unique cultural history
- Identify the central themes, motifs and patterns of horror cinema & literature
- Present your ideas and interpretations in an engaging and persuasive manner
- Investigate the relationship between horror media and its social and historical context
- Explore connections between horror media and contemporary social issues

### Required Texts:

- Jose Saramago, *Blindness* (1977) ISBN: 9780156007757
- Clive Barker, *Books of Blood* (vol 1-3) (1984) ISBN: 9780425165584
- Octavia Butler, *Bloodchild & Other Stories* (1995) ISBN: 9781583226988
- Chesya Burke, *Let's Play White* (2011) ISBN: 9781937009991)
- Carmen Maria Machado, *Her Body and Other Parties* (2017) ISBN: 9781555977887

All of the preceding are available at the UNC student stores and can be directly accessed through this [link](#). If for some reason you are unable to procure them from the UNC bookstore, **you must still find copies before the reading is due in class**. Additionally, if you would like to support a local community bookstore, you may wish to pursue the following options:

- [The Regulator Bookshop](#) (Durham)
- [Flyleaf Books](#) (Chapel Hill)
- [McIntyre's Books](#) (Pittsboro)

### Required Films<sup>1</sup>

- *Nosferatu* (F.W. Murnau, 1922)
- *The Bride of Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1935)
- *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Jim Sharman, 1975)
- *Horror Noire: A History of Black Horror* (Neal-Burgin, 2019)
- *Get Out* (Jordan Peele, 2017)

All assigned viewings will be made available through our course Sakai page.

### Meeting Pattern:

Our class will meet **synchronously** via Zoom on **Mondays** and **Wednesdays**, and **asynchronously on Fridays**. We will use our synchronous meetings to discuss the texts and films in depth, focus on close readings of passages, and engage in lively conversation as we unpack these texts. As synchronous days are discussion-based, I expect you to come ready to talk/participate in the chat, to ask any questions you may have, and to share your innovative readings as we work through these texts together. We will also use some synchronous classes to discuss and prepare for your papers and final exam. Our Friday asynchronous work will include brief recorded lectures for you to watch, Sakai forum posts for you to complete, and other brief online activities.

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<sup>1</sup> No need to buy these! However, you must have viewed them by the time we are scheduled to discuss them in class

### Course Assignments: Percentages & Descriptions

- Midterm Paper (due Friday, March 5<sup>th</sup>): 25%
- Final Research Paper (due Friday, April 30<sup>th</sup>): 35%
- Sakai quizzes (always due on Wednesdays by class time): 10%
- Class Participation: 15%
- Final exam (May 13<sup>th</sup>; 4pm): 15%

#### Midterm Paper (25 points)

The midterm paper will be **3-4 double spaced pages** and will feature a close reading/literary analysis of a film or text (or both). You will be expected to make an argument about some element of the cultural text and provide extensive evidence drawn from the text to support your claims. Expectations, criteria, and due dates will be detailed in a separate handout. Overall, the purposes of these assignments are for students to critically and deeply engage with course content and make an argument regarding the significance of their particular insights and observations.

#### Final Research Paper (35 points)

The final research paper will be **5-6 double spaced pages** and will also primarily feature a close reading of a particular literary text or film. However, this paper will require you to complete outside research and integrate that information into your analysis. Expectations, criteria, and due dates will be detailed in a separate handout.

#### Sakai Quizzes: (10 points)

Almost every week, you will be asked to complete a short quiz that will assess the material discussed in the readings and lecture, with the lowest grade being dropped. The purpose of these short quizzes **(10 in total)** is for students to practice close reading and close viewing, slowing down as they make their way through course content and actively processing the material. All quizzes will be posted after our Monday synchronous session, and must be finished by class time on Wednesdays.

#### Class Participation (15 points)

Your final course participation grade will be based on three central elements: attendance, discussion, and preparation:

- *Attendance:* Absences in this class are defined as **either** missing a synchronous recitation section and failing to complete the asynchronous assignment OR failing to complete a Friday asynchronous assignment. To receive credit for a missed synchronous session, watch that session's zoom recording and complete a VoiceThread exercise.
- *Preparation:* Preparation is not an abstract ideal but a series of concrete steps. Mark up your books: jot notes in the margin of the text, circle key words, look up words you do not know, scan interesting lines, brainstorm connections and questions. In other words, read actively, generating ideas for class discussion and your personal essays as you go. Adequate preparation means you can describe the situation, speaker, and basic argument for any given passage we cover in class; the basic plot and thematic developments in a segment of a novel or play; and the central cinematic devices and themes present in a film.

- *Meaningful Participation:* Active discussion in this classroom is absolutely dependent on adequate preparation. Coming to class with your books thoroughly marked and ideas/questions ready will help facilitate a more stimulating and intellectually exciting learning environment and assist you in confidently articulating your thoughts to a diverse audience. Everyone has 'off' days here and there, but I expect you to be ready and contribute to class each period.

Your participation in class is of utmost importance to me. If there are any issues I should be aware of in order to ensure your success in the class, please contact me at your earliest convenience so we can devise strategies to make the class accommodating for all.

#### Final Exam: (15 points)

The final exam will consist of 3 sections: analysis of specific quotes, short answer questions, and a long essay. The final will be cumulative and will cover all texts and film discussed in class. This will be a synchronous exam, given at the time determined by the Registrar, and will be administrated through Sakai.

#### **Grading Scale:**

A (93-100); A- (90-92); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (63-66); D- (60-62); F (<60).

I will use traditional rounding to determine grades that fall between whole values. Any mixed number with a decimal value of five tenths or higher will round up to the next whole number. (For example, 92.5 will round up to an A as a 93, but 92.4 will not.)

#### **Course Policies:**

##### Attendance Policy

You are permitted two absences, no questions asked, without penalty. Absences may be excused only with timely, official documentation from the appropriate university office. For each subsequent absence, you will lose 1 percentage point from your class participation grade. Seven or more absences may be grounds for failure in this course. If you miss class for any reason, you are not excused from the assignments due or completed during that class period. Finally bear in mind that class will start on time each day; habitually entering the (virtual) classroom late is disruptive and will negatively impact your participation grade, as will repeated absences

##### Classroom Environment & Content Note

Creating a classroom environment that makes all students comfortable expressing their thoughts and ideas is critical. To that end, each student is responsible for exercising tolerance and respect for a wide variety of ideas and healthy intellectual disagreement. Our University philosophy supports this position, which fosters intellectual growth.

As our course readings focus on horror, trauma, and related topics, some readings and films will include descriptions and scenes of sex and violence. I will do my best to alert the class to any mature content in advance of our readings and discussions, and we will endeavor to treat these portions of our texts—like all of our readings—thoughtfully and respectfully. Please feel free to set up a meeting with me if you have any concerns or would like to discuss what to expect from our texts.

### Due Dates:

All papers and revisions are due by midnight on the assigned deadline and must be submitted to the proper place on Sakai. All class readings and screenings must be completed **before** the day they are listed on the course schedule, before the synchronous session.

### Late Policy

All work must be submitted on time to the proper place on Sakai. Work not submitted at the specified time is considered late unless we made prior arrangements or unless there is an extreme extenuating circumstance (such as severe illness/injury or a family emergency). Work will be accepted up to 4 days late with a 10% per day late penalty. **Finally, you are able to request one-three-day extension over the course of the semester, no questions asked.**

### Netiquette

Netiquette is the term used to describe the special set of rules for online communication. Students should be aware that their behavior impacts other people, even online. I hope that we will all strive to develop a positive and supportive environment and will be courteous to fellow students and your instructor. Due to the nature of the online environment, there are some things to remember when taking an online course and engaging with others.

- Do: Follow the same standards of behavior that you subscribe to offline. Keep in mind that all online communication is documented and therefore permanent.
- Don't: Flame others in discussion forums. Flaming is the act of responding in a highly critical, sarcastic, or ridiculing manner – especially if done on a personal level. Remember that these discussions are meant for constructive exchanges and learning!
- Do: Ensure you are actively participating in class and responding to all instructor inquiries
- Don't: Go for long periods of time without communicating to your instructors or classmates. It is important to stay a part of the online community!

### **University Policies:**

#### Accommodations:

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

#### Attendance:

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

- Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC)

- Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#), and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC).

Please communicate with me early about potential absences. Please be aware that you are bound by the [Honor Code](#) when making a request for a University approved absence.

#### Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more. (source: Student Safety and Wellness Proposal for EPC, Sep 2018)

#### Diversity Statement:

I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve, I appreciate suggestions.

#### Honor Code:

Our work in this class will conform to the principles and procedures defined in the *Instrument of Student Judicial Governance* (<http://instrument.unc.edu/>). The research that we do this semester, whether primary or secondary, print or online, formal or informal, will require careful documentation on your part to ensure that you are accurately citing all materials. We will review citation guidelines early and often throughout the semester and you will be responsible for reading and understanding the honor code as outlined in your Student Guide. You must cite your sources in all your work, including drafts as well as final versions of your feeders and projects. If I suspect you of plagiarizing all or part of an assignment, I am required to report the offense to the Honor Court.

#### The Learning Center

The UNC Learning Center is a great resource both for students who are struggling in their courses and for those who want to be proactive and develop sound study practices to prevent falling behind. They offer individual consultations, peer tutoring, academic coaching, test prep programming, study skills workshops, and peer study groups. If you think you might benefit from their services, please visit them in SASB North or visit their website to set up an appointment: <http://learningcenter.unc.edu>.

Non-Discrimination Policy: The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with these principles and applicable laws, it is therefore the University's policy not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or veteran status as consistent with the University's Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct. No person, on the basis of protected status, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under any University program or activity, including with respect to



employment terms and conditions. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

#### Plagiarism:

At UNC, plagiarism is defined as “the deliberate or reckless representation of another’s words, thoughts, or ideas as one’s own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.” ([Instrument of Student Judicial Governance](#), Section II.B.1.). Plagiarism consists of, but is not limited to, the intentional or even inadvertent submission of another’s work as your own. It is the student’s responsibility to be apprised of the UNC Honor Code and the proper methods for citation, paraphrasing, and synthesizing the words of others. I expect all the students in this course to have familiarized themselves with the university’s guidelines on plagiarism before handing in any piece of writing. Failure to adhere to, and respect this policy will result in your failing of this course and possible suspension from the university. Therefore, if you have any questions regarding the university policy or format, I invite you to bring those questions to my attention for clarification before you hand in any written work.

#### Title IX Resources:

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Adrienne Allison – [Adrienne.allison@unc.edu](mailto:Adrienne.allison@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](http://safe.unc.edu).

#### The Writing Center:

The Writing Center is BOTH online and in-person. This could be a wonderful resource to help with your writing assignments in this course (and any assignments in your other courses). You do not need a complete draft of your assignment to visit; they can help you at any stage! You can set up an appointment on their website: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu>. The Writing Center is the Student and Academic Services Building and offers personalized writing consultations as well as a variety of other resources.

### **Course Schedule**

Note: The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including readings, screenings, and deadlines (excluding the scheduled final examination). These changes will always be announced as early as possible.

## **Unit 1: Historical & Theoretical Foundations of Horror**

### **Week 1: Silent Horror**

**Wednesday (1/20):** syllabus & course review

in-class-viewing: *Ah! La Barbe* (Segundo de Chomón, 1905)

**Friday (1/22):** Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny” in *Writings on Art and Literature* (1919)

Please note: despite this being a Friday session, we will meet synchronously in our usual zoom room

## **Week 2: Cinema Vamps & Vampires**

**Monday (1/25):** *Nosferatu* (F.W. Murnau 1922)

**Wednesday (1/27):** selections from Rolf Giesen, *The Nosferatu Story: The Seminal Horror Film, Its Predecessors and Its Enduring Legacy* (2019):

- Introduction: “100 Years after WWI” (pgs. 1-5)
- Chapter 14: “The Vampire Jew and the Curse of Anti-Semitism” (pgs. 103-111)

Sakai quiz #1 due by class time

**Friday (1/29):** view selected clips from *A Fool There Was* (Frank Powell, 1915) and complete asynchronous assignment

- Optional reading: Kristine Somerville, “Enemy of Men: The Vamps, Ice Princesses and Flappers of the Silent Screens” (pgs. 77-94)

## **Week 3: The Hollywood Monster Movie**

**Monday (2/1):** *The Bride of Frankenstein* (Whale 1935)

**Wednesday (2/3):** read selections from: Jeffery Jerome Cohen (editor), *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (1996)

- Preface: “In a Time of Monsters” (vii-xiii)
- Chapter 1: “Monster Culture (Seven Theses)” (pgs. 3-26)

Sakai quiz #2 due by class time

**Friday (2/5):** view selected clips from *Young Frankenstein* (Mel Brooks, 1974) and complete asynchronous assignment

- Optional Reading: Susan Sontag, “Notes on ‘Camp’” (1964)

## **Unit 2: Pandemics & Apocalyptic Horror**

### **Week 4: Speculative Fiction & Pandemic Literature**

**Monday (2/8):** Jose Saramago, *Blindness* (pgs. 1-25)

**Wednesday (2/10):** Jose Saramago, *Blindness* (pgs. 26-56)

Sakai quiz #3 due by class time

**Friday (2/12):** view selected clips from *Contagion* (Steven Soderbergh, 2011) and complete asynchronous assignment

### **Week 5: Pandemic Literature (continued)**

**Monday (2/15):** Wellness Day; no class

**Wednesday (2/17):** Jose Saramago, *Blindness* (pgs. 57-94)



Sakai quiz #4 due by class time

**Friday (2/19):** read Jose Saramago, *Blindness* (pgs. 95-130) and complete asynchronous assignment

### **Week 6: Pandemic Literature & Health Humanities**

**Monday (2/22):** Jose Saramago, *Blindness* (pgs. 131-159)

**Wednesday (2/24):** Either read Jose Saramago, *Blindness* (pgs. 160-185) OR watch selected clips from *Perfect Sense* (David Mackenzie, 2012). Due to the explicit portrayals of sexual violence during this part of Saramago's novel, I am giving all students the choice of opting out of this reading and completing an alternate assignment instead.

**Friday (2/26):** Read Scrivner et al. (2020), "Pandemic practice: Horror fans and morbidly curious individuals are more psychologically resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic" (Sept. 2020) and complete asynchronous assignment

### **Week 7: Pandemic & Apocalyptic Visions**

**Monday (3/1):** Jose Saramago, *Blindness* (pgs. 186-216)

**Wednesday (3/3):** Jose Saramago, *Blindness* (pgs. 217-240)

**Friday (3/5):** view selected clips from *Melancholia* (Lars von Trier 2011) and complete asynchronous assignment

Deadline: Midterm paper due by midnight

## **Unit 3: LGBTQIA+ Horror**

### **Week 8: Clive Barker's Queer Vision**

**Monday (3/8):** selections from Clive Barker, *Books of Blood* (vol 1-3):

- "The Book of Blood" (pgs. 1-14)
- "The Midnight Meat Train" (pgs. 15-42)

**Wednesday (3/10):** selections from Clive Barker, *Books of Blood* (vol 1-3):

- "In the Hills, The Cities" (pgs. 135-164)

Sakai quiz #5 due by class time

**Friday (3/12):** Wellness Day; no class

### **Week 9: Queer Feminist Horror**

**Monday (3/15):** selections from Carmen Maria Machado *Her Body and Other Parties* (2017):

- "The Husband Stitch" (pgs. 1-32)

**Wednesday (3/17):** selections from Carmen Maria Machado *Her Body and Other Parties* (2017):

- “Mothers” (pgs. 45-65)
- “Real Women Have Bodies” (pgs. 125-148)

Sakai quiz #6 due by class time

**Friday (3/19):** Read “Difficult at Parties” (pgs. 219-241) and complete asynchronous assignment

- Optional Reading: Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine* (1995): Introduction

### **Week 10: Horror & Transing Gender**

**Monday (3/22):** Stryker, Susan. 1994. “My Word to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage.” *GLQ* (pgs. 237-254)

**Wednesday (3/24):** *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Jim Sharman, 1975)

Sakai quiz #7 due by class time

**Friday (3/26):** view selected clips from *The Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathon Demme, 1991) and complete asynchronous assignment

### **Week 11: Queer Afrofuturist Horror**

**Monday (3/29):** selections from: Octavia Butler, *Bloodchild & Other Stories* (1995)

- “Bloodchild” (pgs. 1-32)

**Wednesday (3/31):** selections from: Octavia Butler, *Bloodchild & Other Stories* (1995)

- “The Evening and the Morning and the Night” (pgs. 33-70)

Sakai quiz #8 due by class time

**Friday (4/2):** University Holiday; no class

### **Week 12: Queer Afrofuturist Horror (continued)**

**Monday (4/5):** Wellness Day; no class

**Wednesday (4/7):** selections from: Octavia Butler, *Bloodchild & Other Stories* (1995)

- “Speech Sounds” (87-110)

**Friday (4/9):** Read “Near of Kin” (pgs. 71-86) and complete asynchronous assignment

## **Unit 4: Horror Noire; Or, Blackness & Horror**

### **Week 13: Horror Noire**

**Monday (4/12):** *Horror Noire: A History of Black Horror* (Neal-Burgin, 2019)

**Wednesday (4/14):** continue discussing *Horror Noire* (Neal-Burgin, 2019)  
**Sakai quiz #9 due by class time**

**Friday (4/16):** view selected clips from *Night of the Living Dead* (George Romero, 1968) and complete asynchronous assignment

**Week 14: Blackness & the Contemporary Horror Blockbuster**

**Monday (4/19):** *Get Out* (Jordan Peele, 2017)

**Wednesday (4/21):** continue discussing *Get Out* (Jordan Peele, 2017)  
**Sakai quiz #10 due by class time**

**Friday (4/23):** view selected clips from *Us* (Peele, 2019) and complete asynchronous assignment

**Week 15: Black Feminist Horror**

**Monday (4/26):** selections from: Chesya Burke, *Let's Play White* (2011):

- “Walter and the Three-Legged King” (pgs. 1-14)

**Wednesday (4/28):** selections from: Chesya Burke, *Let's Play White* (2011):

- “Chocolate Park” (pgs. 49-72)

**Friday (4/30):** Read “I Make People Do Bad Things” (pgs. 19-34) and complete asynchronous assignment

**Deadline: Final Research Paper due by midnight**

**Week 16: Class Review & Finals Prep**

**Monday (5/3):** course review

**Wednesday (5/5):** LDOC/course evaluations

**Optional Class Viewing:** The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (outdoor screening details tbd)

**Final Exam: Thursday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 4pm**