

LIBB 2800
U.S. Contexts Core Curriculum: Horror Films and American Culture
M-W-F: 3:00 p.m.—3:50 p.m.

All films are available on D2L and must be watched by Monday’s class meeting.

LRAP Fall 2015

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OFFICE: LRAP 176

OFFICE HOURS: M/W/F 2:00-3:00, and by appointment

Course Description: This course will look at classic and popular American horror films in an historical context in which we will examine the how horror films represent our culture’s “collective fears.” This course will also provide an analysis of the horror film genre. We will attempt to identify the defining features of the genre and account for the enduring appeal of horror films. We will also consider the contexts in which films are made and consider the reception of horror, studying the marketing of classic horror, the critical reception of the genre and tracing horror’s relationship to both ‘low-culture’ and avant-garde cinema.

Texts: *Horror: The Film Reader*, ed. Mark Jancovich

Projected Fears: Horror Films and American Culture, Kendall R. Phillips

Attendance, Participation and Late Work: Class attendance is required (including screenings). You must be present for the entire class to be counted present. Every class is important. If you are consistently absent, you jeopardize your success in the course. If you miss more than three (3) classes, for any reason, your final grade will drop by one grade point (A to A-; A- to B+, B+ to B, etc.). Being on time to class is expected and consistent lateness is considered disruptive to the class. Three late arrivals equal one absence. Late work will be docked one grade (A to A-; A- to B+ etc.) for each day it is late.

Electronic Devices: The classroom is a learning environment and should be free from computer and cell phone interruption. (*Laptops may only be used for taking notes.*)

Evaluation:

Your grades will be calculated as follows:

4 short essays (<i>2 pages, best 4 out of 5</i>)	25 pts. each (100 pts. total)
4 Quizzes (<i>best 4 out of 5</i>)	25 pts. each (100 pts. total)
Group Presentation	50 pts.
Term Essay (<i>8 pages</i>)	100 pts.
Final Collaborative Film:	50 pts.
TOTAL	400 pts TOTAL

Short Essays: Choose **ONE question** from the discussion questions and write a **2-page** answer that includes at least one reference to the assigned reading. Thoughtful engagement with the reading and the films is just as important as the ‘right’ answer. All short essays will be turned in on D2L.

QUIZZES: Each quiz will consist of **FIVE** short answer questions on the reading and the films. (Each answer is worth 5 points; partial credit may be awarded.)

GROUP PRESENTATION: (3-4 people) Your presentation will give you the opportunity to choose either a film on the syllabus or one of your own choice and present your ideas to the class. Each group will choose a 3-5 minute clip from a feature-length film to present to the class. (You may choose a film being screened in class or a film of the group's choice. All films must be approved.) After analyzing and discussing the film, together create an academic lesson plan for the film—that is, choose ONE reading assignments for the film, write **FIVE** discussion questions for the film that integrates the reading. Create exam “keys” or answers to your discussion questions. (Presentations will around mid-semester.)

In order to create context for your presentation, you will show brief clips or still shots from the trilogy and explain in the plot/theme in broad terms. In your discussion, please be sure to have one discussion question on each of the following—

1. relevance to the representation of horror film genre
2. relevance to the ideas or concepts discussed in the readings and class discussion
3. historical context (how the film represents the historical context of either the time period of the film or the year the film was produced)
4. style(s) (analysis of the film's cinematic style in context to its time and place in cinematic history or in comparison to traditional Hollywood formulas)
5. major possible meanings (explicit and implicit)

Finally, as a group, you will lead a class discussion based on your discussion questions and written answer key. You will turn in your discussion questions and answer key to me on the day of your group's presentation. Presentations should not last longer than 30 minutes.

Term Essay: The goal of your assignment is to analyze one historical time period's films; i.e., choose between Early Horror, 1970s Horror, or 1990s Horror or ONE Horror Film screened in class. Choose one or more films and write an **8-page** essay that analyzes the significance of the set of films to the film industry, the horror genre, the historical period and/or popular culture. Your essay must have a thesis with supporting evidence from the films and readings to support your claim. Your essay should develop further or go beyond the ideas discussed in the readings and during class discussions. Your essay should use specific examples from the film(s) and the assigned reading. If you use other sources, these must also be documented using MLA style. For all essays, pages must be numbered, double-spaced, in typeface about the same size as this. Film titles must be *italicized*. Essays must include brief quotations, summaries, and paraphrases of ideas from the required readings. To check for correct spellings of the names of actors, characters, directors, cinematographers, etc., go to Imdb.com. All Term Essays will be turned in on D2L.

FINAL COLLABORATIVE FILM:

Final project options offer you the opportunity to work with other students. The goal is to share knowledge and learn from each other. Together, create a short film (under 10 min.) in the style of one of the filmmakers studied this semester. The video can be a parody, or it can be done straight, but successful videos will be ones that other members of this class can easily recognize as having been created in the style, for example, of Alfred Hitchcock. This project can involve several students. We will screen the films in class on Mon. Dec. 7th and Wed. Dec. 9th and vote on them. The top 2 films will be screened during LRAP's Celebration of the Arts on the evening of Wed., Dec. 9th.

GRADING: All assignments will be graded on a points system based on their adherence to the assignment and on thoroughness, accuracy, clarity, and effective articulation of the course material. The more fully you apply the concepts from the course, the more effective your project will be (and the higher your grade).

Letter grades have the following value:

A (90%-100%)= Excellent in all respects, including content, organization, language, and style. Interesting, original, and persuasive work that develops a strong argument in support of a well-defined thesis or central idea. Shows a thorough knowledge of all relevant course materials to date.

B (80%-89%) = Good in all the respects noted above. Solid work.

C = (70%-79%) = Average. May have potentially excellent ideas, but has problems in focus, style, mechanics, clarity, or precision and therefore fails to do justice to those ideas. Or may be clearly and correctly written but is generally uninformed or uninspired.

D (60%-69%)= Below Average. May have some good ideas, but does not develop and support a strong thesis that reflects a solid knowledge of course materials; or may be riddled with mechanical errors.

F (59% or below)= Time to seek advice.

HORROR FILMS and AMERICAN CULTURE

Course Schedule (subject to change):

Week One

EARLY HORROR

D2L Streaming: *Dracula* (Tod Browning) 1931, 75m

Monday, Aug. 24

Discussion: Why Horror?

Wednesday, Aug. 26

Reading: *Projected Fears*, Introduction pages 1-10 & Chapter One, “*Dracula 1931*” pages 11-33, *Horror: The Film Reader*, Noel Carroll, “Why Horror?” pages 33-45; Andrew Tudor, “Why Horror? The Peculiar Pleasures of a Popular Genre” pages 47-55.

Friday, Aug. 28

Discussion: *Dracula*

Week Two

Classic Horror

D2L Streaming: *Bride of Frankenstein* (James Whale) 1935, 71m

Monday, Aug. 31

Discussion: *Bride of Frankenstein*

Wednesday, Sept. 2

Discussion: *Bride of Frankenstein*

Reading: *Horror: The Film Reader*, General Introduction, pages 1-23; and *Horror: The Film Reader*, Paul O’Flinn, “Production and Reproduction: The Case of Frankenstein” p. 103-115

Friday, Sept. 4

TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL

D2L Assignment

Week Three

1950s HORROR

D2L Streaming: *The Thing From Another World* (Howard Hawks) 1951, 71m

Monday, Sept. 7

LABOR DAY—No Classes

Wednesday, Sept. 9

Discussion: *The Thing From Another World*

Reading: *Projected Fears*, Chapter Two “*The Thing From Another World 1951*” pages 35-59

Discussion: *The Thing From Another World*

Friday, Sept. 11

Discussion: *The Thing From Another World*

Week Four

1960s HORROR

D2L Streaming: *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock) 1960, 109 m

Monday, Sept. 14

•**1st Quiz** (*Dracula*, *Bride of Frankenstein*, and *Thing From Another World*)

Wednesday, Sept. 16

Discussion: *Psycho*

Reading: *Projected Fears*, Chapter 3, *Psycho*, pages 61-80

Friday, Sept. 18

Discussion: *Psycho*

Week Five

Cult Horror

D2L Streaming: *Night of the Living Dead* (George A Romero) 1968, 96m

Monday, Sept. 21

1st Short Essay Due; turn it in on D2L

Discussion: *Night of the Living Dead*

Wednesday, Sept. 23

Discussion: *Night of the Living Dead*

Reading: *Projected Fears*, Chapter Four “*Night of the Living Dead* 1968” pages 81-100

Friday, Sept. 25

Discussion: *Night of the Living Dead*

Week Six

1970s HORROR

D2L Streaming: *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin) 1973, 132m

Monday, Sept. 28

•**2nd Quiz:** (*Psycho* and *Night of the Living Dead*)

Wednesday, Sept. 30

Discussion: *The Exorcist*

Reading: *Projected Fears*, Chapter Five “*The Exorcist*” pages 101-122 & *Horror: The Film Reader*, Barbara Creed, “Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine” pages 68-76

Friday, Oct. 2

Discussion: *The Exorcist*

Week Seven

Low-Budget Horror

D2L Streaming: *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, (Tobe Hooper) 1974 83m.

Monday, Oct. 5

2nd Short Essay Due; turn it in on D2L

Discussion: *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*

Wednesday, Oct. 7

Discussion: *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*

Reading: *Projected Fears*, Chapter Five “*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*” pages 101-122; and
Horror: The Film Reader, Robin Wood, “The American Nightmare: Horror in the 70s,” 25-32

Friday, Oct. 9

Discussion: *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*

Week Eight

Horror and Suburbia

D2L Streaming: *Halloween*, (John Carpenter) 1978, 91m.

Monday, Oct. 12

•**3rd Quiz** (*The Exorcist* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*)

Wednesday, Oct. 14

Discussion: *Halloween*

Reading: *Projected Fears*, Chapter Six “*Halloween 1978*” pages 123-143

Horror: The Film Reader, Carol J. Clover “Her body, himself: Gender in the Slasher Film”

Pages: 77-89

Friday, Oct. 16

Discussion: *Halloween*

Week Nine

1980s HORROR

D2L Streaming: *Friday the 13th* (Sean S. Cunningham) 1980, 95m

Monday, Oct. 19

Discussion: *Friday the 13th*

Wednesday, Oct. 21

Discussion: *Friday the 13th*

Friday, Oct. 23

Discussion: *Friday the 13th*

Week Ten

Award Winning Horror

D2L Streaming: *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick) 1980, 146m

Monday, Oct. 26

3rd Short Essay Due; turn it in on D2L

Wednesday, Oct. 28

Discussion: *The Shining*

Friday, Oct. 30

Discussion: *The Shining*

Week Eleven

1990s HORROR

D2L Streaming: *Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme) 1991, 118m

Monday, Nov. 2

Reading: *Projected Fears*, Chapter Seven “*The Silence of the Lambs* 1991” pages 145-161, Mark Jancovich, Genre and the Audience: Genre Classification and Cultural Distinctions in the Mediation of the Silence of the Lambs” pages 151-161.

Wednesday, Nov. 4

•**4th Quiz** (*Halloween*, *Friday the 13th* and *The Shining*)

Friday, Nov. 6

Film Groups: Location Shooting

Week Twelve

Postmodern Horror

D2L Streaming: *Scream* (Wes Craven) 1996, 111m

Monday, Nov. 9

4th Short Essay Due; turn it in on D2L

Wednesday, Nov. 11

Discussion: *Scream*

Reading: *Projected Fears*, Chapter Eight “*Scream* 1996” pages 163-180

Friday, Nov. 13

Discussion: *Scream*

Week Thirteen

End of the CENTURY HORROR

D2L Streaming: *American Psycho* (Mary Harron) 2000

Monday, Nov. 16

Discussion: *American Psycho*

Wednesday, Nov. 18

Discussion: *American Psycho*

Friday, Nov. 20

5th Short Essay Due; turn it in on D2L (optional)

Discussion: *American Psycho*

Nov. 23—27—Fall and Thanksgiving Break

Week Fourteen

21st Century Horror

D2L Streaming: *The Cabin in the Woods*, (Drew Goddard) 2012, 95m.

Monday, Nov. 30

Discussion: *Cabin in the Woods*

TERM ESSAY: DRAFT DUE

Wednesday, Dec. 2

Discussion: *Cabin in the Woods*

Friday, Dec. 4

Discussion: *Cabin in the Woods*

Week Fifteen

Monday, Dec. 7

In-class Screening: Student Films

Wednesday, Dec. 9

In-class Screening: Student Films

5:45 p.m.—Celebration of the Arts

Student Film Festival (7:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m. in Libby 103)

Friday, Dec. 11—Last Day of Classes

•**5th Quiz** (*Silence of the Lambs*, *Scream*, *American Psycho*, and *Cabin in the Woods*)

FINAL EXAM WEEK

TERM ESSAY DUE

Wednesday, Dec. 17th at midnight

IMPORTANT NOTE: No late work will be accepted after Dec. 18th.