

Courtney Miller Santo
4605 Forms of Fiction
Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:20 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
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Patterson 416

Overview

The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest is fear of the unknown –HP Lovecraft

Despite numerous novels and short stories that utilize fear as not only plot, but theme (think Frankenstein, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Grimm's Fairy Tales, Poe), the genre is rarely examined on its own.

This course will survey the history of the literary horror short story and then ask students to use what they learn to write their own horror story.

The first two-thirds of the class focus on close analytical readings of stories with special attention to two aspects: 1) plot—that is how does the author use the tools of narration and translation to successfully convey horror, 2) internal conflict—or how the fear of the unknown is leveraged as subtext for a wider human experience.

The final one-third of class will be devoted to workshop of each student's original horror story.

This class will emphasize critical analysis of an author's use of plot and internal conflict as well as ask the students to put what they learn about these elements to use in writing their own horror fiction. In addition, students will be expected to increase their knowledge about the other aspects of craft (plot, character, setting, theme, style, tone). The goals for students are: 1) learn to vivisect a writer's work in order to understand how she uses particular craft elements, 2) Develop their own abilities to execute elements of craft in their own stories.

Requirements include the writing of an original story as well as an analytical paper. Discussion of published works and students' fiction will constitute the bulk of class time. The course will be approximately two-thirds literary study and one-third workshop.

Texts: Required

American Fantastic Tales: Terror and the Uncanny from Poe to Now

Edited by Peter Straub

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