

Department of English & Writing Studies

**English 2075F (001)**  
**Cultures of Blood: The Contemporary Gothic**  
Fall 2017

**Instructor:** Steven Bruhm  
sbruhm2@uwo.ca  
**Office:** AHB 2G19  
**Office Hours:** Weds 2-4 or by  
appointment  
**Course Date/Time:** Wed. 6:30-  
9:15 pm



**Teaching Assistant:** Kristen Niles  
kniles7@uwo.ca  
**Office:** AHB 0N85  
**Office Hours:** Monday 11-1 or by  
appointment  
**Course Location:** KB K203

Course Description:

While the Gothic genre dates back to the eighteenth century, the last six decades have witnessed its veritable explosion. This aesthetic mode crosses all kinds of media, including literature, film, dance, video, and photography, and invites us to think about the functions of horror in the contemporary age (that is, since the Second World War). Through novelists like Richard Matheson, Shirley Jackson, Stephen King, and Toni Morrison, and in films like *The Ring*, and *Pontypool*, we will ask the following questions: What kinds of social or personal anxieties does horror register? How do contemporary monsters look different from their predecessors? In what ways has technology changed what terrifies us? And why, ultimately, is being terrified such a popular and lucrative business?

**Objectives:**

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Identify and analyze coherently certain cultural problems across a range of media, including literature, film, photography, and dance;
- Apply literary, visual, and other cultural theories to an array of works;
- Develop further their written/oral communication skills in the clear and organized presentation of an argument/hypothesis within the prescribed word limit of a research essay, other written assignments, and class participation.

Course Materials

**Required Reading:**

Richard Matheson, *I Am Legend* (Tor)  
Shirley Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House* (Penguin)  
Stephen King, *Pet Sematary* (Pocket)  
Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (Vintage)

**Required Viewing:**

Gore Verbinski, dir. *The Ring*  
Bruce McDonald, dir. *Pontypool*  
--plus various websites as listed on the syllabus

**Content Advisory:**

This is a course in gothic aesthetics and so it goes without saying that some of the material will be graphic. Please keep that in mind as you remain registered in the course.

### Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

- Three Reading Quizzes: **5%** each
- One Comparative Essay: 2000 words plus Works Cited: **50%**
- Final Examination: **35%**

A student **must** receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>.

### **Timetable:**

- Reading Quiz 1 (in class): 27 September
- Reading Quiz 2 (in class): 25 October
- Reading Quiz 3 (in class): 22 November
- Essay (passed in in class and also through Turnitin.com): 15 November
- Final Exam: TBA

### Additional Information

The evaluation scheme is non-negotiable. I cannot change the percentages, increase or decrease the numbers or kinds of assignments, or do anything about the final exam. Your enrolment in this course is your contractual agreement to this evaluation schedule.

**Late penalties:** All essays and assignments are due on the dates indicated on the syllabus. Late essays will be docked 2 percentage points per day, weekends included. Essays not handed in during class should be placed in the essay drop box outside the English Department main office, AHB 2G02.

**Attendance** is mandatory. Please note the policy in the Undergraduate Calendar (on line) that states that any student missing an excessive number of classes may be debarred from taking the final exam (which results in an automatic failure in the course.)



Japanese Butoh, image source:  
[http://www.tonguechic.com/wp-content/uploads/0004/7363/dd\\_butoh.jpg](http://www.tonguechic.com/wp-content/uploads/0004/7363/dd_butoh.jpg)

**Assignments, week by week:**

September 13	Introduction to the Course
20	Richard Matheson, <i>I Am Legend</i>
27	Shirley Jackson, <i>The Haunting of Hill House</i> + Reading Quiz #1
October 4	<i>The Haunting of Hill House</i>
<b>Reading Week: No Class</b>	
18	Verbinski (dir.), <i>The Ring</i>
25	Stephen King, <i>Pet Sematary</i> + Reading Quiz #2
November 1	<i>Pet Sematary</i>
8	Dance: Japanese Butoh <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCT3vp0Gu1o">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCT3vp0Gu1o</a> <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnR1FJ6yQq4">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnR1FJ6yQq4</a> <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUjhQLB0hXY">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUjhQLB0hXY</a> <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZO6UhjJnC8k">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZO6UhjJnC8k</a> --plus any other web surfing on butoh you'd like to do
15	Photography and Video: Joel Peter Witkin to Marilyn Manson  (See Owl website for powerpoint images of Witkin)  Manson Videos: "Beautiful People": <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ypkv0HeUvTc">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ypkv0HeUvTc</a> "Tourniquet": <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmfQ7gSaJgM">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmfQ7gSaJgM</a> "I Don't Like the Drugs": <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6EefPcht54c">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6EefPcht54c</a>
<b>2000-word essay due, in class and through Turnitin.com</b>	
22	Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> + Reading Quiz #3
29	<i>Beloved</i>
December 6	MacDonald (dir.), <i>Pontypool</i> ; final exam review

### Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at [http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

### **Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):**

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

### Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

### **Plagiarism Checking:**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

### Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.