

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

CL9616B: ***The Uncanny and the Fantastic*** Tuesdays 9:30-12:30

Instructor: Vlad Tumanov (vtumanov@uwo.ca)



Brief Overview

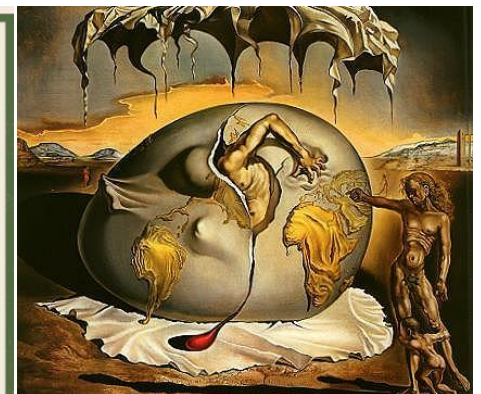
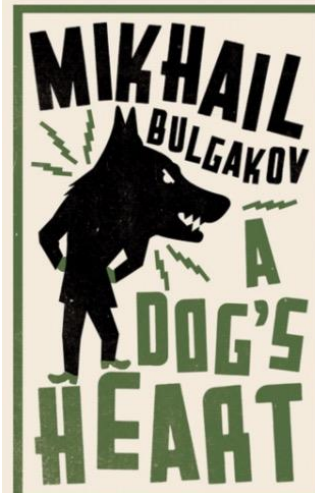
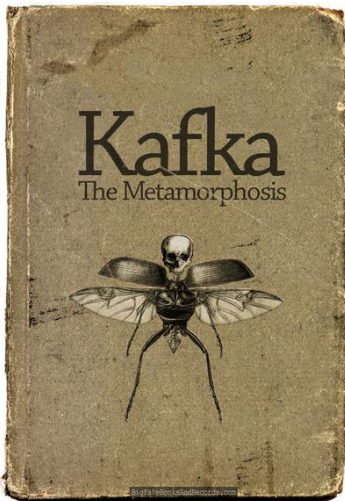
Fantastic fictional worlds are often based on the violation of physical laws while the uncanny involves the combination of the familiar with the deeply disturbing. With the uncanny and the fantastic, story-telling becomes a tool for exploring the hidden recesses of the human mind and for facing our greatest fears. In the modern age, authors have delved into such realms in order to work out and model challenges of life in the ordinary world by pushing the human imagination and emotions to the limit. This course will consider a number of works in different languages representing various approaches to the fantastic and the uncanny.

Course Requirements:

Participation - 10%
Oral presentation - 30%
Essay 1 - 30%
Essay 2 - 30%

Texts in Sequence:

Hoffmann, E.T.A. [*The Sandman*](#). [Another version](#). 1816
Gogol, Nikolai. [*The Nose*](#). (another [translation](#)) 1835-6.
James, Henry. [*The Turn of the Screw*](#). 1898.
Kafka, Franz. [*The Metamorphosis*](#). [Another version](#). 1915.
Bulgakov, Mikhail. [*Heart of a Dog*](#). 1925.
Suskind, Patrick. [*Perfume*](#). 1985.
*Background Theory - Todorov, Tzvetan. [The Fantastic](#).



Approx. schedule: **Sept.:** Introd., Hoffmann, Gogol; **Oct.:** James, Kafka **Nov.-Dec.:**, Bulgakov, Suskind

Oral Presentation and Essays

- Pick a work or works from the list below (or propose your own) and use it/them for your oral presentation and your 2 essays.
- The oral presentation should be 30 minutes long with a PPT presentation. It will take place during class time.
- Students have to email the instructor their preferred presentation dates.
- One of the essays can be on the same topic as that of the presentation but cannot be just a version of the presentation. It has to stand on its own.
- The 2nd essay has to be on a different topic and different works.
- Both essays have to include graduate-level research, i.e., references and a list of works cited.
- Each essay should be 3000 - 4000 words.
- Under the Resources tab on OWL, you will find a sample essay by one of your predecessors. For your oral presentation, you can follow roughly the same format accompanied by PPT visuals.
- For the presentation and essays, you can concentrate on the key themes, devices, symbols and ideas of the topic. You can explore character psychology, plot development, allusions, intertextuality and other aspects of literary scholarship. Let your research with secondary sources guide you.
- Please upload your essays **in Word format** under OWL>Assignments: the due dates are provided for each assignment.

Works

Kafka, F. *The Trial*

Chamisso, A. *Peter Schlemihl*

E.A. Poe (one or more tales)

Karlsson, J. *The Room*

Saramago, J. *Blindness*

Tournier, M. *The Ogre* (a.k.a *The Erl-King*)

Erofeev, V. *Moscow to the End of the Line*

Haushofer, M. *The Wall*

Garcia-Marquez, G. *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Pelevin, V. *The Life of Insects*

Cortazar, J. *Bestiary*

Ishiguro, K. 1 of 2 novels: *Never Let me Go* or *The Unconsoled*

Balzac, H. *The Wild Ass' s Skin*

Murakami, H. *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*

Duve, K. "Im tiefen Schnee ein stilles Heim"

NB: Todorov's *The Fantastic* is the background theory text for this course (see link above). It can be read by students at their own convenience.