“A spectre is haunting Europe,” Marx famously proclaimed in the opening of the Communist Manifesto (1848), but the spectre with which he was concerned was no vaporous phantom beckoning from the beyond, but the altogether more tangible presence of communism, a social and political movement dedicated to a materialist understanding of history. For Marx, writing in the aftermath of Hegel, it was as if it were matter which had returned from some crypt to haunt the philosophy of spirit. No ghost in the machine, communism in this text appears as a living body that has come to announce its revenge on idealism itself. This course explores just such tangled relations between matter and spirit in contemporary critical theory, and the ways in which this relationship has been so often cast in notably gothic terms, as forms of haunting, possession, exorcism, conjuration, divination, and the return from the dead. It begins with a consideration of Hegel’s concept of geist, the “world spirit” which directs and moves through history, and proceeds to a consideration of the ways in which this animating force has continued to trouble the work of thinkers from Marx and Freud to Adorno, Benjamin, Derrida, Kristeva, Lyotard, Butler, Malabou, Dean, Galloway, Edelman, and Žižek. The topics to be studied include the world spirit, commodity fetish, the death drive, fantasy, virtuality, the uncanniness of the other, the horrors of abjection, the cryptic influence of the archive, the gothic nature of the network, and the queerness of children. Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel Never Let Me Go (2005) will serve as a touchstone for classroom debates and discussions—no experience with the paranormal is required.
**Required Texts**

1. Available in the Western Book Store (and in .pdf format through Dropbox)


2. Available in .pdf format through Dropbox


**Assignments**

Participation: 10%
Presentation (ten-twelve minutes): 15%
Seminar (twenty minutes) and Seminar Report (2,500 words): 30%
Research essay (5000 words): 45%

**Presentation**

The Presentation is a brief (ten-twelve minutes) and informal (it need not be scripted) critical reflection on some specific example of the cultural preoccupation with haunting. This may take the form of a passage from a theorist or author, an article from a newspaper or magazine, a clip from a film or tv program, an interesting web site, art installation, etc. Whatever you choose to present, the material should relate directly to the issues and concerns of course, with particular concern for the relation of spirit to matter, soul to body, signal to noise, and it should be presented in such a way as to engender discussion and debate.
The aim of the Presentation is two-fold. Firstly, it will allow us to extend the range of the course materials beyond that of the syllabus. The Presentation provides one of the means by which the course will address individual research interests and allow these interests to be discussed by the class as a whole. Secondly, these Presentations will provide further opportunities for critical analysis. Successful presentations will discuss the materials being introduced in a context which emphasizes their importance to an understanding of the conceptual issues developed in the course readings, with specific reference to readings in the course syllabus.

Seminar

The Seminar is an oral presentation of no less than twenty minutes in length. Its goal is to provide a critical introduction to the assigned reading for that week. A critical introduction differs from a conventional literature review in that the presenter offers not only a synopsis of the main thesis of the essay, and some explication as to how this thesis is subsequently developed, but also a sense of evaluation: what points do you find most convincing, which least convincing, and why? The Seminar should be presented in such a way as to engender class discussion: while presenting its own thesis and preserving its own critical perspective, it should provide opportunities for dialogue and exchange, raising questions as often as answering them.

Following the Seminar, you are encouraged to speak with the instructor to discuss how best to revise the material into a short essay (2,500 words), due one week after the oral presentation. This short essay should not be simply a transcript of the oral presentation, but rather a formal essay in style and tone that shows clear indications of having taken up and developed the material first presented in class.

Grading will take into account both oral and written versions of the seminar equally. Successful seminars will demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the readings under consideration, a strong sense of critical engagement with the assigned text, pointing out both strengths and weaknesses of its major theses, and a willingness to explore beyond the assigned material to discover connections between it and other materials discussed (or not yet discussed but still pertinent) in the class.

Essay

The research essay is your opportunity to provide a sustained examination of one of the topics addressed in the course syllabus or from theorists not addressed in class but whose work addresses the rubric of “spirit and matter.” The essay may not repeat or extend material already presented in your seminar, but should, rather, take up new issues and concerns. With permission, your essay may develop material from the Presentation, however. As a research essay, you will be expected to engage with whatever secondary criticism that is relevant to your thesis, including both articles and monographs on the topic. You are strongly encouraged to discuss your essay ideas and topics with me early in your research process.

All bibliographic notation will employ the MLA method of parenthetical notation and a works cited page. If you are unfamiliar with this method, you are encouraged to acquaint yourself with a standard style guide such as the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, which is available in the reference shelves of the D.B. Weldon Library.
Essays are due on April 15. **Late papers will only be accepted if you discuss the circumstances with me well in advance of the due date and receive an extension.**

**Lecture and Reading Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td><em>Spirit</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lecture: Hegel, <em>Preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td><em>Matter</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lecture: Marx &amp; Engels, <em>The Communist Manifesto</em>; Marx, Selections from <em>Capital</em> (pages 26-58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td><em>Uncanny</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lecture: Freud, Selections from <em>The Interpretation of Dreams</em> (Chapter V: The Material Source of Dreams, pages 193-97; 278-83; Chapter VI: The Dream Work, pages 298-326)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar: Freud, “The Uncanny”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Recommended: Hoffman, “The Sandman”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Drive</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lecture: Freud, <em>Beyond The Pleasure Principle</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar: Malabou, <em>The New Wounded</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td><em>Aura</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lecture: Horkheimer and Adorno, <em>Dialectic of Enlightenment</em> (pages 3-42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar: Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Pages</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 18</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 25     | Abjection | Lecture: Butler, “Bodies That Matter”  
Seminar: Kristeva, “Approaching Abjection” |
| March 4 | Archive  | Lecture: Derrida, “Freud and the Scene of Writing”  
Seminar: Derrida, Archive Fever |
| 11     | Revenant  | Lecture: Derrida, Spectres of Marx (pages 3-48)  
Seminar: Derrida, “In the Name of the Revolution” (Spectres of Marx, pages 95-124) |
| 18     | Fantasy  | Lecture: Žižek, “How Did Marx Invent the Symptom?” (The Sublime Object of Ideology, pages 3-55)  
Seminar: Žižek, “Cyberspace, or the Unbearable Closure of Being”  
Seminar: Dean, “Affective Networks” |
Seminar: Nusselder, “Fantasy and the Virtual Mind”  
Seminar: Galloway, “The Computer as a Mode of Mediation” |
<p>| April 1 | Class cancelled |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture/Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| April 8 | *Future*  
Lecture: Lyotard, “Can Thought Go On Without a Body?”  
Seminar: Edelman, *No Future* |
| 15 | **Research Essay Due** |