



HORROR NARRATIVES IN LITERATURE AND FILM (ENGL 2303)

English 2303.009

Spring 2015 (Jan. 20 – May 8)

MW, 4:00-5:20

COBA 253

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**Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays,
2:00-4:00, and by appointment.**

Course Description:

When Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* debuted in cinemas in 1960, reviews were mixed, and critics seemed torn about whether or not the director had justified the film's graphic violence. Audiences flocked to it, though, and the film became a hit among consumers who had been warned of, and perhaps enticed by, its promise of violence. *Psycho* is not, of course, unique in this regard. The psychological thrill of being willfully frightened continues to attract consumers to works of horror, and various iterations of horror in literature have been commercially and critically successful for centuries. What is it about horror that consumers/readers/spectators are drawn to, and, furthermore, how do creators of horror works draw on larger sociological fears from their times to try to scare their audiences? Proposing a deeper examination of these questions, this course will trace the horror genre's characteristics through a selection of texts and films, ranging from religious-based horror (Dante's *Inferno*) to psychological suspense (Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart") to Gothic fantasy (Bram Stoker's *Dracula*) to the slasher film (*Psycho*).

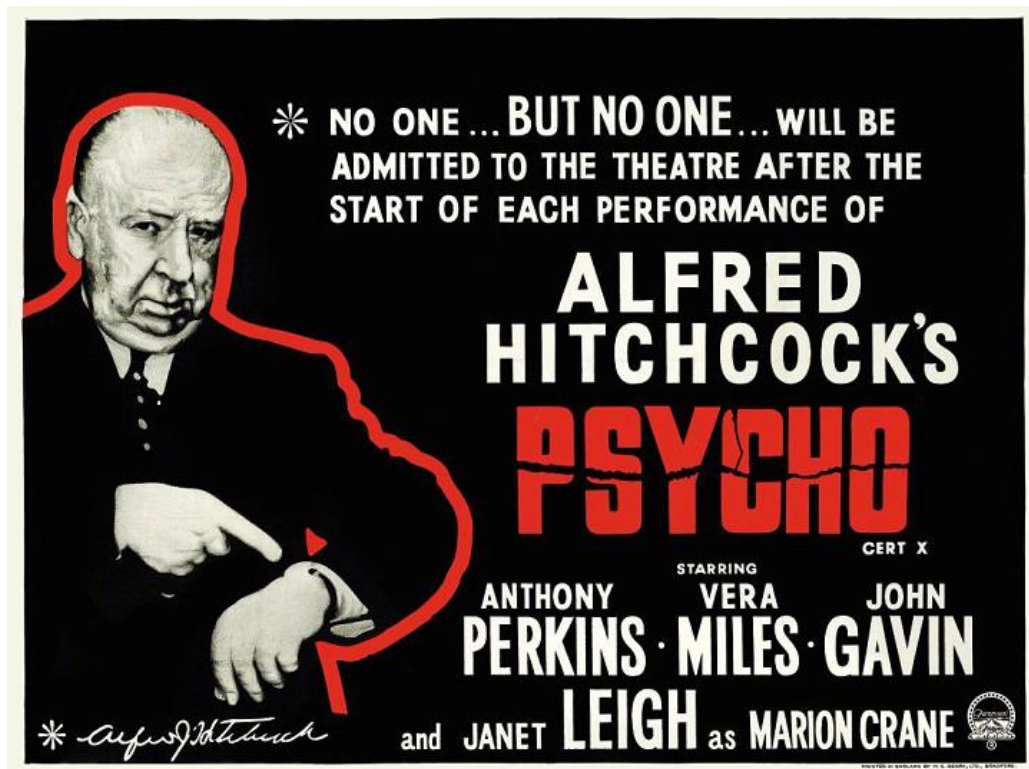
TRIGGER WARNING: Students should be aware that some of the texts and films we will be discussing might contain graphic or frightening content. Please use your own discretion about whether this will be a productive course for you.

Goals:

This course satisfies the University of Texas at Arlington's core curriculum requirements in Language, Philosophy, and Culture. The required objectives of these courses are the development of students' critical thinking, communication skills, personal responsibility, and social responsibility. Many elements of this course foster development of these objectives, which are explicitly addressed in the "Signature Assignment" (see below). The departmental guidelines for sophomore literature can be found by typing "sophomore literature" in the "Search UT Arlington" box on the University website: <http://www.uta.edu/uta>.

At the completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of and an ability to analyze literary texts both orally and in writing.
- Show an understanding of literary terms and concepts appropriate to the assigned readings.
- Describe in some detail and discuss literary, historic and cultural periods, movements, philosophies, and/or techniques as covered in the readings and lectures.
- Demonstrate critical thinking and effective academic writing skills.
- Demonstrate personal responsibility in writing.
- Locate, appraise, and select scholarly research materials from print, electronic media, and internet sources appropriate to research question.
- Synthesize research findings, avoid plagiarism, and use MLA style of documentation.



Assignment Submission Protocol and Make-Up/Late Assignments:

Submission: All written assignments must be submitted in through the appropriate SafeAssign link on Blackboard for students to receive full credit. Students must also submit a completed *Essay Checklist* (which can be downloaded from Blackboard) with each written assignment. Each Essay Checklist is worth a quiz grade.

If you have trouble accessing our course's Blackboard page, contact the site's helpdesk (not me – I have no idea how to help you!).

Assignments are due on the date indicated on the attached calendar. If a student is absent on the day an assignment is due, s/he must nonetheless submit a copy of the assignment online.

Penalties: Because your work is submitted electronically, you will be penalized **10 points per day (a full letter grade)** for *each day* you fail to submit your work after the due date (including weekends and other days on which our class doesn't meet). Due to my own scheduling constraints, **I cannot accept assignments more than three days after the assignment's due date. For instance, if an assignment is due on Monday, you must submit it by Thursday to receive credit.** If you don't submit an assignment within these parameters, you will receive a zero on the

assignment. Don't make me enact these penalties, though: turn in your assignments on time!

Extensions: Extensions will be granted in advance of an assignment's due date if a student can demonstrate a legitimate need.

Absences:

Regular and punctual class attendance is expected and required of all students, and a poor attendance record will prevent students from earning passing grades in this course. I understand that you may have work, family, and/or other obligations in your lives, but you need to make arrangements to attend class.

The maximum number of permissible absences before a student automatically earns an "F" in this course is 4 absences, "excused" or not.

It is your responsibility to track your number of absences and to make sure that you are within the number of permissible absences. You can always ask me if you're not sure how many absences you have.

There is no need to contact me about your absences. No matter the excuse, you are allowed 4 absences in this course.

Excused Absences for Religious Holidays:

In accordance with State law, students absent due to the observance of a religious holiday may take exams or complete assignments scheduled for the day missed within a reasonable time after the absence. Travel time required for religious observations will also be excused. State law also requires that students notify their teachers at the beginning of the semester if they expect to miss class for a religious holiday during the semester. Students will be allowed to make up the work provided they have informed their instructors in writing within the first 15 days of the semester or term.



Electronics Policy:

The use of cell phones, laptops, and smart pads is permitted in this class, provided they do not prove disruptive to our class. **Be responsible and courteous with your electronics.** If you disregard common courtesy to your classmates or your hard-working professor, you may be the reason this progressive electronics policy is ruined for future classes. Do you want that on your conscience?



I do ask that if you have **headphones** of any kind on your person that you make sure they are at least six inches from your ears. Thank you in advance for your courtesy with this!

Behavior:

I enjoy conducting class with a degree of informality, but at no point should you take that relative informality to mean that you are free to say offensive or unkind things to me or any of your classmates. Behavioral misconduct in this class, including, but not limited to, disruptiveness, engaging in offensive dialogue, and threatening others physically or verbally, will not be tolerated. Students who misbehave will be asked to leave class and, depending on the nature of the incident, reported to the university's Behavior Intervention Team and/or the Office of Student Conduct.

On this note, if you feel that anyone in our class acts or has acted inappropriately towards you or another student in the class, please speak with me or email me about it. Your remarks would, of course, be kept strictly confidential from all parties involved. I am committed to helping facilitate a safe intellectual environment for all of my students.

Disability Accommodations:

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to

provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:

When you submit your assignments online through Blackboard, they will automatically be checked for originality. I will also be on the lookout for work that appears suspicious. **If you are caught intentionally plagiarizing or cheating on any of your assignments, you will automatically receive a “0” on the assignment. If it happens a second time, you will fail the class, no questions asked.** Additionally, cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct, as well, which could result in disciplinary action.

If you are unsure about how to properly cite or use secondary sources, please talk with me about it. There are no stupid questions in this regard.



Contacting Me:

I will only respond to messages sent directly to my email address (clifford@uta.edu). This is because the Blackboard message center has proven unreliable in previous semesters. In other words, **do not message me through Blackboard**...unless you don't want me to see your message.

The screenshot shows the Purdue OWL Online Writing Lab website. The browser address bar displays <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>. The page features the Purdue OWL logo and the title "Online Writing Lab". A navigation menu includes links for Purdue OWL, Writing Lab, OWL News, Engagement, Research, Contact, and Site Map. Below the menu, a breadcrumb trail reads: OWL Family of Sites > OWL > Research and Citation > MLA Style > MLA Formatting and Style Guide. The main content area is titled "MLA Formatting and Style Guide". It includes a search bar, a sidebar with a list of links (Research and Citation, MLA Style, MLA Overview and Workshop, MLA Formatting and Style Guide, etc.), and a main text area. The main text area contains a "Summary" section, a "Contributors" list, a "Last Edited" date, and a "General Format" section. The "General Format" section states: "MLA style specifies guidelines for formatting manuscripts and using the English language in writing. MLA style also provides writers with a system for referencing their sources through parenthetical citation in their essays and Works Cited pages. Writers who properly use MLA also build their credibility by demonstrating accountability to their source material. Most importantly, the use of MLA style can protect writers from accusations of plagiarism, which is the purposeful or accidental uncredited use of source material."

Formatting Your Assignments:

To keep everyone in our class on the same page (so to speak), you must format your papers using MLA (Modern Language Association) format. This means you must: 1) cite in parentheses texts you refer to throughout your papers; 2) include a Works Cited page if you cite any sources; 3) and include a proper heading, complete with page numbers and an original title of your own devising. **These guidelines are required for every assignment you submit this semester.**

If you are confused about how to use MLA format, you're in luck because the following website (see the screen grab above) has everything you might need to know on the matter: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Formatting is the first thing I see when I grade your paper. Formatting your essays correctly might not seem important, but it shows that you've taken the time to think of even the small details with your essays. Citing sources properly isn't just a matter of mechanics: it's a question of personal responsibility that overlaps with your responsibility to the academic community of which you are a part. Plus, it makes me, as a grader, more sympathetic to you, the writer, if I don't have to correct lots of little mistakes.



Grade Percentages:

Your grade will depend upon the following:

Syllabus Scavenger Hunt: 5%

Reading Quizzes: 10%

Analysis Essay: 15%

Annotated Bibliography: 10%

Signature Assignment (Final Essay): 30%

Midterm Exam: 15%

Final Exam: 15%

Assignment Descriptions:

Analysis Essay (15%):

You will submit a shorter Analysis Essay. In this short paper (800-1,000 words), you will choose a theme, motif, or idea of interest to

you from one of the works we read during the semester so far, and develop an argument around it.

Example: Here's an example of the type of argument I'm looking for. When we read Dante's *Inferno*, you may notice that Dante often vividly describes the sounds of each new circle of Hell he enters. Indeed, in Renaissance Italy, music was thought to be one of the highest artistic expressions of holy harmony, so in Dante's Hell, "music" is the screams and curses of the damned. In Canto 13, for instance, Dante encounters a forest where the souls of the condemned inhabit trees, although this fact is not immediately apparent to the poet, who hears their cries before he intellectually understands their punishments. As he enters this forest, he notes, "Already all round I heard a mournful wailing, / But, seeing none to wail, I stopped short, blinking / Bewilderedly, as though my wits were failing" (22-4). Here, Dante privileges his sense of sight over his hearing, even though the strange sounds he hears that lead him to believe his "wits were failing" turn out to be true. Without his realizing it, his ear is tuned to the music of Hell, but, lacking a visual source for the "mournful wailing", the poet first attempts to reject the sounds in favor of a rational explanation. Why does Dante insist upon "seeing" something for it to be true, even though he has heard it clearly? How does this reaction to the wailing provide insights into Dante's character at this point in his journey? Do you notice any contrasting examples earlier or later in the text?

I've ended the above paragraph with questions you might attempt to answer in your paper if you were pursuing an argument like this. Rather than dwelling on the fact that Dante does indeed use sounds prominently in this text (something about which very few rational people would find much cause for debate), the above paragraph asks *why* this is and *how* this recurring motif might affect our understanding of Dante's text. In other words, your burden here is to show how this observation affects the way we read and interpret this work.

Because you only have 800-1,000 words with which to explain your idea, you should try to be as specific as possible from the early lines of your paper. Going beyond a basic understanding of plot and characters (a summary, in other words), your essay should show that you understand some of the questions and concepts with which these texts engage. The goal of this essay is to demonstrate your own engagement with the texts we are studying. This essay, therefore, should be an intelligent response to both the texts and our class discussions.

Secondary sources are not required for this essay, but I would encourage you to try to engage scholarly sources in this paper as practice for your final essay.

Annotated Bibliography (10%):

Directions: A few weeks before you submit your final essay, you will submit a topic proposal, at least two research questions (that is, questions you hope to answer or explore during your research of this topic), and a three-item annotated bibliography. Your final essay requires you to engage with three academic sources, so in this assignment, you will list each source (using MLA citation style); give a one- or two-sentence summary of the source; and then explain in at least three sentences why this source is useful to your argument and/or research. You can find a sample of this assignment posted on Blackboard.

In previous semesters, students have failed or done poorly on the Annotated Bibliography because they didn't follow directions. This assignment is not meant to trick you: follow the directions in the above paragraph, and you will do fine!

Purpose: This assignment is designed to help you make sure that you approach your Signature Assignment through research first. A good research-based essay does more than use secondary sources for "back up"; it draws on questions and ideas raised by other scholars to reach new conclusions and questions. You should, in other words, engage with your secondary sources as part of a "conversation" about your primary text.

Midterm and Final Exams (15% each, or 30% of your final grade):

Description: The exams will consist of two parts. Part one will contain four to six short answer questions, in which you will be asked to identify a quotation and to give a brief explanation of the significance of that quotation in the texts we've covered. Part two asks you to write an essay about concepts we've discussed, using evidence from the texts (which will be allowed as resources during the exam).

How to Prepare for Your Exams: Your exams will assess your ability to analyze our texts based on ways we've examined them in class. I will not test you on passages we didn't discuss in class, so that means that anything we talk about in class is fair game. Make sure, then, that you jot down, highlight, or otherwise indicate for yourself passages we do discuss in class.

Open-Book Exams: Both of your exams are open book, but only hard copies of your books or print outs of e-texts will be allowed during the exams, so plan accordingly as you purchase your books for the semester.

Reading Quizzes (10%):

Reading quizzes are designed to ensure that you are keeping up with your readings. Since this course relies heavily on discussion and participation, you must keep up with the reading in order to help me make it interesting. Quizzes give you a little extra incentive. These weekly pop quizzes are not meant to trick you, and they are not analytical. In other words, if you are caught up with your assignments, you should have no problem getting an easy 10%. However, bearing in mind that life throws curveballs which are not always homework-friendly, I will drop your two lowest quiz grades at the end of the semester.

Essay Checklists: With each essay, you will electronically submit an **Essay Checklist** (posted on Blackboard), which will be counted as a quiz grade. These are designed to help you boost your assignment grades by keeping you from making small, but potentially costly errors.

Syllabus Scavenger Hunt (5%):

Follow the directions on the sheet entitled "Syllabus Scavenger Hunt" (posted on Blackboard) and submit it by the date indicated below. The purpose of this assignment is to help to engage with the syllabus on your own, to assess your ability to follow directions, and to make sure you know how to format your papers in MLA.

Signature Assignment (Final Essay) (30%):

For the Signature Assignment, also known as your final essay (1200-1800 words), you will choose one or more of the works/authors from our syllabus, and write a critical essay with a clear analytical thread related to an issue of social responsibility. Within these parameters, your topic is entirely up to you, and you are welcome to develop an idea from your Analysis Paper if you would like.

Objectives: The Signature Assignment addresses all four of the University-prescribed objectives. **Personal responsibility:** This essay includes the integration of outside sources (see next paragraph); it, therefore, requires students to demonstrate personal responsibility as they use the words and ideas of other writers in an accurate and ethical manner. The construction of a clearly articulated thesis statement supported by a careful analysis of textual evidence demonstrates **critical thinking** and **communication skills**. The development of a well-organized essay that demonstrates the correct use of grammar and other writing mechanics, and demonstrates an awareness of how to appeal convincingly to an audience further addresses the communication objective. The critical analysis of the way the selected text(s) engages a significant issue of social responsibility addresses the **social responsibility** objective.

Citing Sources: You will also need to engage with at least **three scholarly, secondary sources** in this paper in order to show that you have taken care to locate your argument within a wider conversation about the work at hand. Examples of scholarly sources include:

- Scholarly articles (e.g. academic articles published in peer-reviewed journals; you can find citations for these articles by using the MLA International Bibliography database, JSTOR, or Project Muse – all of which you can access through UTA's library online)
- Scholarly books or book chapters (it's a good bet that a book is scholarly if it was published by an academic press, such as Oxford University Press; if you're not sure, ask me!)

The purpose of this essay is to show that you have given serious critical thought to an element of at least one of these works. Students must properly integrate material from two secondary sources into their analysis in a way that gives credit to the author(s) whose ideas and language they are incorporating. **This is not a research paper or a summary of the work of literature, but a paper in which you draw on secondary sources to communicate an interpretive argument about your chosen text through the lens of social responsibility.** The library's on-line plagiarism tutorial (which you will complete during the first two weeks of class for

a quiz grade), offers an excellent overview of citing sources responsibly:
<http://library.uta.edu/plagiarism/>.

Social Responsibility: An issue of “social responsibility” can encompass anything from: religious discrimination or persecution; race and/or slavery; class and/or economic oppression; colonialism and/or empire; humanity’s relationship with nature and/or the environment and/or animals; national identity controversies; sexual orientation and gender issues; disability and trauma; globalization and/or neo-colonialism; and the way the work of literature itself can be seen as a rhetorical attempt to engage effectively in significant regional, national, or global issues.

As the semester progresses, I encourage you to take note of topics or works you find interesting. If you write about something you find important or interesting, your paper will be better!

Required Course Texts:

Books:

The following editions are required for this course. Print books are preferred, but e-books are also acceptable. Note that tablets, phones, and laptops will not be allowed during exams, but print books will be.

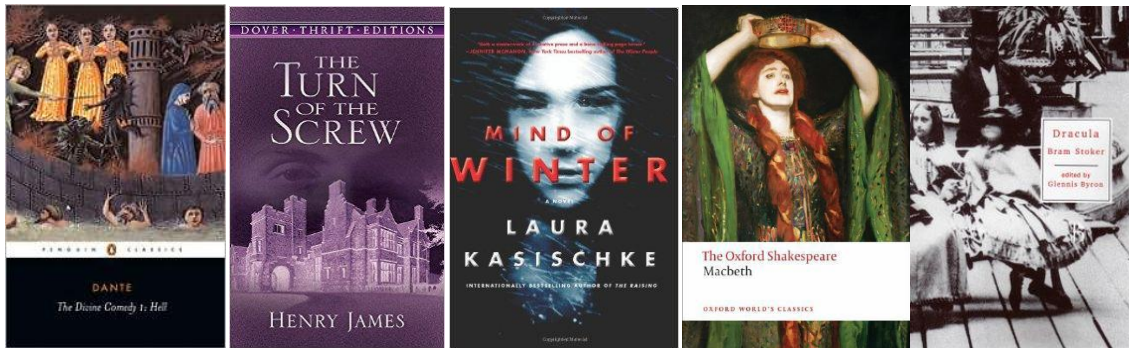
Dante. *The Divine Comedy 1: Hell*. Ed. and trans. Dorothy L. Sayers. London: Penguin, 1949. ISBN: 978-0140440065.

James, Henry. *The Turn of the Screw*. Dover Thrift Editions. Ed. Stanley Appelbaum. New York: Dover, 1991. ISBN: 9780486266848.

Kasischke, Laura. *Mind of Winter*. New York: HarperCollins, 2014. ISBN: 9780062284396.

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. Oxford World’s Classics. Ed. Nicholas Brooke. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. ISBN: 9780199535835.

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Ed. Glennis Byron. Toronto: Broadview, 1997. ISBN: 9781551111360.



Films:

You do not need to purchase DVDs of each of these films, but they are required viewing for this course. Each of these films is available on either Netflix, Amazon.com, iTunes, and other VOD services. I will also host free screenings of any of these if enough students would find it useful.

The Conjuring. Dir. James Wan. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2013.

Psycho. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Paramount Pictures, 1960.

Scream. Dir. Wes Craven. Dimension Films, 1996.

The Shining. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Warner Bros., 1980.

The Silence of the Lambs. Dir. Jonathan Demme. Orion Pictures, 1991.



Homework Calendar:

It is your responsibility to keep up with upcoming assignments and readings, regardless of whether I mention them in class.

Week 1:

Topics: Introduction to Course; *The Twilight Zone*

1/21: Intro to Horror; Watch *The Twilight Zone* episode “Mirror Image” in class.

Week 2:

Topics: Hitchcock; Religious-Based Horror: *The Conjuring*; Taking Notes on Visual Media

1/26: Come to class having watched the film *Psycho* (**Make sure you watch Hitchcock’s 1960 version, not the terrible remake from the 1990s!**). Along with our discussion about the film, we’ll spend some time talking about how to “read” films as texts.

1/28: Come to class having watched the film *The Conjuring*. (As you watch, make sure you take notes on the film as though it were a text you are reading. You can find a link to a site that gives ideas about how to do this on Blackboard. From time to time, I may ask you to show me your notes on our class films for quiz grades.); **Syllabus Scavenger Hunt due by class time today**

Week 3:

Topics: Religious-Based Horror, cont.: Dante’s Journey through Hell

2/2: Dante, *Divine Comedy, 1: Hell*, cantos 1-8 (Take your time reading this text. It helps to read it aloud. You’ll probably also find it useful to read the endnotes or introductory materials when you get confused. Feel free to consult online reading guides like *Shmoop* if you need to.)

2/4: Dante, *Divine Comedy, 1: Hell*, cantos 7-12 **Confirmation of your completion of the library’s plagiarism quiz (<http://library.uta.edu/plagiarism/>) due in my email inbox by class time today for a quiz grade.**

Week 4:

Topics: Religious-Based Horror, cont.: Dante’s Journey through Hell

2/9: Dante, *Divine Comedy, 1: Hell*, cantos 13-21

2/11: Dante, *Divine Comedy, 1: Hell*, cantos 22-27

Week 5:

Topics: Dante, cont.; Ghosts and Hauntings

2/16: Dante, *Divine Comedy, 1: Hell*, cantos 28-34

2/18: Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, pp. 1-32 (chapters 1-7)

Week 6:

Topics: Ghosts and Hauntings

2/23: James, *The Turn of the Screw*, pp. 33-87 (chapter 8-end)

2/25: Edgar Allan Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart" (link posted on Blackboard. Make sure you print it out and bring it to class or bookmark it on the devices that you bring to class.); **Analysis Essay and Essay Checklist due by 11:59pm tonight on Blackboard.**

Week 7:

Topics: Hauntings and Domestic Horror; Exam

3/2: Come to class having watched the film *The Shining*; Exam Review

3/4: **Midterm exam**

3/9 – 3/15: Spring Break!!

Week 8:

Topics: Domestic Horror

3/16: Laura Kasischke, *The Mind of Winter*, pp. 1-113

3/18: Kasischke, *The Mind of Winter*, pp. 113-82

Week 9:

Topics: Domestic Horror, cont.; Existential Horror

3/23: Kasischke, *The Mind of Winter*, pp. 182-276

3/25: William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, act 1 (Oxford edition, pp. 95-121)

Week 10:

Topics: The Horror of the Self

3/30: Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, acts 2-3 (Oxford edition, pp. 122-167)

4/1: Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, acts 4-5 (Oxford edition, pp. 167-211)

Week 11:

Topics: Hannibal the Cannibal: Myth-Making and Social Horror

4/6: Come to class having watched the film *The Silence of the Lambs*.

4/8: Watch an episode of the TV show *Hannibal* in class.

Week 12:

Topics: Stoker's *Dracula* as Social Anxiety

4/13: Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 29-108

4/15: Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 109-68; **Annotated Bibliography and Essay Checklist due by 11:59pm tonight on Blackboard.**

Week 13:

Topics: Stoker's *Dracula* as Social Anxiety

4/20: Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 169-245

4/22: Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 246-99

Week 14:

Topics: Stoker's *Dracula* as Social Anxiety

4/27: Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 300-84

4/29: Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 385-419

Week 15:

Topic: Exam Review

5/4: Come to class having watched the film *Scream*.

5/6: **LAST DAY OF CLASS:** We'll do a review for your final and then watch the creepiest TV show episode you've ever seen (I'm not going to tell you what it is, though, because that would spoil the surprise). **Signature Assignment (final essay) and Essay Checklist due by class time today on Blackboard.**

5/13, Wednesday: Final Exam, 2:00-4:30pm