

What Poe Said to Freud: Theories of Horror and the 19th Century Gothic

UHON 222-003 | M | 1:00-3:30 | SHC 12 | 25052

Fulfills A&S Group V: Humanities

Dr. Renee Faubion

Ever wondered why we shudder when we see our own blood? Or why the dark seems full of ghosts—even when we know it isn't—and why we feel they are coming for us? This seminar sets out to explore these questions by reading important nineteenth-century horror texts against the theories of horror and terror developed by Sigmund Freud, Edmund Burke, Eric Jung, and several modern theorists including Kristeva, Zizek, and Greenburg. These thinkers will provide context for our reading of horror tales as we try to understand how and why such tales are meant to be frightening. Ultimately, our goal will be to dissect the "illicit pleasure" of the horror story to understand our culture's values and the dynamics, desires, and anxieties that are most fundamental to our humanity. For example, Freud's essay on the uncanny describes our most intimately terrifying urges rising up like horrifying ghosts in the dark to haunt our eyes and thoughts while Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* unites the love of beauty and art with the terrible pleasure of violence and pain. Our journey through these texts and ideas will also take us into the elements of craft to help us consider how writers and artists develop such frightening texts. As the culmination of our work this semester, students will have the option of trying their hands at creating terrifying texts of their own.

Readings

Stoker, *Dracula*

Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*

Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Hogg, *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*

Short Stories by Poe, Gilman, and Le Fanu



Requirements

Regular participation with good attendance, short-writes for seminar preparation, two short essays, one presentation, and one final project with secondary research that includes the option of a creative attempt at inducing fear through an original text or work of art.



About the Instructor

After receiving undergraduate and graduate degrees in Russian from Trinity University and the University of Kansas, Renee Faubion earned a second M.A. and a Ph.D. in English from UNM. Her fields include gothic literature, postmodern theory, and magic realism. She has won three awards for excellence in teaching.

About the Student Teacher

Liana Rivera is a slightly mad Psychology and English double-major with particular interest in learning and memory and their effects on human behavior. Her goal is to use her studies to become a mental health counselor and help people work through their fears and challenges and lead happier lives.