

**English 201.001: Introduction to American Gothic Fiction
Spring 2015, MWF 11:00-11:50 a.m., 027 Simpkins Hall**

Professor: Dr. Timothy Helwig

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Office Hours: Mon, 2:00-4:00; Wed, 2:00-3:00; Fri, 12:00-1:00

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Course Objectives

In this survey course, we will study how early American fiction authors—such as Washington Irving, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Harriet E. Wilson, and Rebecca Harding Davis—employed the Gothic romance to explore the strengths and weaknesses, the hopes and anxieties, of the young republic. From there we will consider how late 19th-century American fiction authors like Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Henry James adapted the Gothic to psychological explorations of madness, repression, and human subjectivity; we will study the unique form of the Southern Gothic in stories by William Faulkner and Truman Capote; and we will examine how contemporary American fiction uses the Gothic to comment on the American Dream.

Required Texts

Faulkner, William. *As I Lay Dying*. New York: Vintage, 1991.

Jackson, Shirley. *The Haunting of Hill House*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006.

James, Henry. *The Turn of the Screw and Other Short Fiction*. New York: Bantam Books, 1983.

Lloyd-Smith, Alan. *American Gothic Fiction*. New York: Continuum Publishing, 2004.

Melville, Herman. *Benito Cereno*. Bedford College Edition. Boston: Bedford Books, 2008.

Wilson, Harriet. *Our Nig*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2009.

****NOTE: All additional texts (beyond the ones listed above) are available as PDFs on our Western Online course site. Please print off the texts on Western Online, and bring the copies with you to class for discussion.**

Course Policies

1a. Attendance/Class Participation. Although I will provide background and context for our reading at the start of each class period, the course will rely upon your active participation, including your own analysis and exploration of our texts. Because our class discussions depend upon everyone's thoughtful contributions, it is essential that you maintain regular attendance and that you come prepared to discuss the reading material each day. Each student is allowed *six* absences total. I do not expect or require students to explain nor document these absences, and I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. Students who have seven or more total absences will receive an automatic F for the course. Finally, chronic tardiness will negatively affect your class participation grade, so please arrive promptly to class.

1b. Laptop and Cellphone Policy. Typing on a laptop or texting on a cellphone is distracting to me and to your peers. Therefore, unless you have a documented disability that permits the use of a laptop for note-taking, you are not permitted to use a laptop during class. Cellphones, which can play a valuable role in the event of an emergency, should be set to vibrate at the beginning of class.

Cellphone texting during class is strictly prohibited and will result in dismissal from the classroom and the loss of a full letter grade of class participation for each infraction after an initial warning. In the event of a personal emergency, please excuse yourself from the classroom to use your cellphone.

2a. Essay Assignments. Over the course of the semester, you will write two essays in response to specific prompts. Each essay must develop a clear thesis statement (an argument, not just an observation) and include appropriately documented evidence from the texts you are analyzing. Your thesis statements for the two essay assignments must be submitted and approved in advance (see below for deadlines); essays turned in without pre-approved thesis statements will not be graded and will be counted as late. Essays that are not turned in by the deadline will be docked one full letter grade for each class period that passes without submission; essays more than three class periods late will receive a "0." Finally, as a condition for passing this course, both essays must be turned in no later than May 11, 2015.

2b. Electronic Submission. Essays and Short Papers will be submitted electronically on Western Online, and both assignment sheets will review how to submit your paper. If you are unsure about how to submit your paper to Western Online, please speak with me well before the due date. Because you will submit papers electronically, you should make sure to save your work in several formats (on a hard drive, on a flash drive, by emailing the paper to yourself). Technology problems are not an excuse for submitting a paper late.

2c. Draft Workshops. You will participate in a draft workshop for each of the two essay assignments. You will be graded on your own draft, as well as on your comments to your peers' drafts. Hard copies of your drafts and the draft worksheets will be turned in at the beginning of the class period immediately after the paper is due online. If you are absent, draft workshops can be made up for partial credit, but you must arrange this with me ahead of time.

3. Western Online Discussion Posts. Four times this semester, you will be asked to complete a short writing assignment related to that week's reading and to post your response to Western Online by the start of class on the due date. Each discussion post is worth 2.5% of your final course grade and must be submitted on time to receive credit.

4. Academic Integrity. Academic integrity is an important part of our intellectual community at Western Illinois University, so please document all of your sources appropriately and see me if you have any questions. Acts of plagiarism and cheating will result in failure for the course and referral for academic discipline. Please review the university's Student Academic Integrity Policy online at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>.

5. Exams. You will have a mid-term exam and a cumulative final exam in this course.

6. Quizzes, which cannot be made up due to an absence or tardiness, may occur at the start of any class. At the end of the semester, I will drop your two lowest quiz scores.

7. Office Hours and Email. Over the course of the semester, you are encouraged to visit me during my office hours. They are available to you to use without setting up an appointment, although you are welcome to set up an appointment, too. If you are not able to meet during my office hours, please email me to set up an appointment. The best way to keep in touch with me during the semester is by email, which I check daily. Over email you may make appointments to meet with me and you may ask questions regarding any of the assignments.

8. University Writing Center (UWC) offers students at any academic level collaborative, one-on-one consultation on writing projects from any discipline at any point in the writing process. People often mistakenly think of writing centers as places for people in trouble—places where "experts" tell them everything that is wrong with their writing. That is not the case here. We believe that writing is a social act and that talking about writing is essential to revision, no matter the skill level of the writer. We have four writing centers open on the Macomb campus for your convenience, and you can walk in or call to make an appointment: 3rd Floor of Malpass Library (298-2815), 025 Simpkins Hall (298-3512), 108 Tanner Hall (298-3477), and Basement of Bayliss Hall (298-3624). Please note that a visit to the UWC should be a supplement—rather than a replacement—for talking about your paper with me. See the UWC's webpage for more information: www.wiu.edu/university_writing_center/index.php

9. Disability Support Services: In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s) you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through Disability Support Services and provide it to the instructor. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Support Services at 298-2512 for additional services.

10. Please review your **Student Rights and Responsibilities** online at www.wiu.edu/provost/students, and see me if you have any questions.

Breakdown of Final Grade

15% Essay #1
15% Essay #2
20% Mid-Term Exam
20% Final Exam
10% Western Online Discussion Posts
10% Class Participation
10% Quizzes

+/- Grading Scale

A.....93-100	C-...70-72
A-....90-92	D+...68-69
B+...88-89	D....63-67
B.....83-87	D-...60-62
B-....80-82	F.....59 and below
C+...78-79	
C.....73-77	

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Please note that the assignments are subject to change based upon the needs of our class, and that you are responsible for keeping apprised of announced changes in the schedule.

WEEK ONE

- 1/21 Introduction: The Emergence of American Gothic Fiction
- 1/23 J. Hector St. John De Crèvecoeur, *Letters From an American Farmer*; Alan Lloyd-Smith, *American Gothic Fiction*, pp. 1-9 and 25-35; **Student Questionnaire Due in Class**

WEEK TWO

- 1/26 Washington Irving, “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”; “Setting” in *A Short Guide to Reading Novels and Short Stories*
- 1/28 Thomas Nelson Page, “No Haid Pawn”; “Plot” in *A Short Guide to Reading Novels and Short Stories*
- 1/30 Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle”; Alan Lloyd-Smith, *American Gothic Fiction*, pp. 65-78

WEEK THREE

- 2/2 Edgar Allan Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart” and “The Black Cat”; “Narrative Structure” in *A Short Guide to Reading Novels and Short Stories*
- 2/4 Edgar Allan Poe, “The Cask of Amontillado”; “Point-of-View” in *A Short Guide to Reading Novels and Short Stories*
- 2/6 **Western Online Discussion Post #1 Due.** Edgar Allan Poe, “Berenice”

WEEK FOUR

- 2/9 Edgar Allan Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher”; “Artistic Unity” in *A Short Guide to Reading Novels and Short Stories*
- 2/11 Nathaniel Hawthorne, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux”; “Character” in *A Short Guide to Reading Novels and Short Stories*
- 2/13 Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown”; “Theme” in *A Short Guide to Reading Novels and Short Stories*

WEEK FIVE

- 2/16 Herman Melville, “Bartleby, the Scrivener”; “Motifs” in *A Short Guide to Reading Novels and Short Stories*
- 2/18 Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*, pp. 35-72

2/20 Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*, pp. 73-107

WEEK SIX

2/23 **Draft Workshop for Essay #1**

2/25 Class canceled for optional student conferences.

2/27 **Essay #1 Due on Western Online by 11:59 p.m.** Alan-Lloyd Smith, *American Gothic Fiction*, pp. 79-94

WEEK SEVEN

3/2 Rebecca Harding Davis, "Life in the Iron-Mills"

3/4 Rebecca Harding Davis, "Life in the Iron-Mills"

3/6 **Western Online Discussion Post #2 Due.** Harriet Wilson, *Our Nig*, pp. 1-40

WEEK EIGHT

3/9 Harriet Wilson, *Our Nig*, pp. 41-80

3/11 Mid-Term Exam Preparation

3/13 **Mid-Term Exam**

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 16-20—NO CLASSES

WEEK NINE

3/23 **Class canceled.**

3/25 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"; Alan-Lloyd-Smith, *American Gothic Fiction*, pp. 94-116

3/27 Edith Wharton, "The Lady's Maid's Bell"; Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, pp. 1-11

WEEK TEN

3/30 Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, pp. 11-82

4/1 Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, pp. 82-133

4/3 Charles W. Chesnutt, "The Goophered Grapevine"

WEEK ELEVEN

- 4/6 William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, pp. 1-57
- 4/8 William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, pp. 58-99
- 4/10 William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, pp. 100-149

WEEK TWELVE

- 4/13 William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, pp. 150-217
- 4/15 William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, pp. 218-261
- 4/17 **Western Online Discussion Post #3 Due.** H. P. Lovecraft, "The Lurking Fear"; Alan Lloyd-Smith, *American Gothic Fiction*, pp. 116-127

WEEK THIRTEEN

- 4/20 Shirley Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House*, pp. 1-49
- 4/22 Shirley Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House*, pp. 49-89
- 4/24 **Western Online Discussion Post #4 Due.** Shirley Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House*, pp. 89-131

WEEK FOURTEEN

- 4/27 Shirley Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House*, pp. 132-182
- 4/29 Truman Capote, "Miriam"
- 5/1 Joyce Carol Oates, "The Hand-puppet"

WEEK FIFTEEN

- 5/4 Stephen King, "Children of the Corn"
- 5/6 **Draft Workshop for Essay #2**
- 5/8 **Essay #2 Due on Western Online by 11:59 p.m.** Final Exam Preparation
- 5/13 **Final Exam, 10:00-11:50 a.m.**