





Literary Studies (LTST) 612

The 19th-Century English Novel: Gothic Transformations (Revision 1)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode:

Individualized study 

Credits:

3

Area of study:

Arts

Prerequisites:

MAIS 601 or a senior-level English course.

Precluded:

None

Faculty:

[Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

Overview

LTST 612: Gothic Transformations provides intensive study in the English novel in the nineteenth century, where the genre became the most popular literary

form in a period of explosive growth in the English reading nation amid social and economic transformations under British capital and empire.

The course adopts the discourse of "the Gothic" as an interpretive framework for closely reading and historically contextualizing the genre of the novel. We will read and discuss seven novels from the period, together with contemporary literary criticism and scholarship about them.

Outline

This course provides intensive study in the English novel in "the long nineteenth century" (1780-1914), when the genre became the most popular literary form in a period of explosive growth in the English reading nation amid social and economic transformations under British capital and empire. The course adopts the discourse of "the Gothic" as an interpretive framework for closely reading and historically contextualizing the genre of the novel. The Gothic is itself not a genre but a mode, one that becomes influential to and adapted by a diverse range of authors, across a diverse range of literary forms. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818/1831), for example, adapted the Gothic to modern contexts and thus founded the "scientific romance" – which in turn engendered today's science fiction. The Gothic thus becomes an interpretive prism that refracts other important modes and subgenres of the nineteenth-century English novel, from satire (e.g. Austen) and realism (e.g. Brontë), to fin-de-siècle "sensation" fiction (e.g. Marsh).

Gothic fictions and those that adapt the Gothic also represent important cultural mediations of the social, political, and economic issues and transformations that characterize Britain during the rise of industrial capital and the global expansion of England's empire: the transformation of literary production (e.g. serialization, copyright change, circulating library distribution); the advent of public education, industrialization and class conflict; imperial expansion; feminism (e.g. the "New Woman" discourse); and developments in science and technology (e.g. new recording media).

But rather than take an exhaustive survey of the period's novels, this course provides intensive reading in a limited number of them, complemented by reading in selected criticism on these texts. This course thus teaches both literary history and how that history is constructed through criticism. This course focuses as much on what critics and scholars have made of the assigned novels as on the novels themselves. We will look at how different critical methods operate: their premises; their arguments; their applications;

in sum, the strength (or weakness) of their readings. This course assumes an interest in reading criticism and exploring various literary theories; it also assumes students have become acquainted with theory via MAIS 601 and/or LTST 605. This is not a theory course, but theory informs the criticism we will be reading and discussing.


These "Gothic transformations," read together with commentary and research on them, furnish students with vital context, repertoire, and analytic skills for understanding a key period in the development of the English novel, for practicing literary criticism, and for relating the Gothic's historical emergence to its continuing popularity.

Learning outcomes

The student in this course is expected to develop and practice the following critical capacities:

- To understand the major social, historical, political, cultural, and theoretical **contexts** informing literary production in the historical period in question
- To practice **close reading** (to develop critical thinking, active reading, and interpretive skills), **scholarly research** (to develop information literacy), **academic writing** (to develop argument and communication skills), and **social media interaction** (to develop digital ICT skills)
- To gain knowledge of historical processes, interrelations, and transformations of literary **production, distribution, and reception**
- To recognize and distinguish among major **genres** and **modes** of literature that emerged in the period
- To attain working knowledge of various kinds of literary theory (e.g.: new historicism, Marxist criticism, feminist and gender theory, poststructuralism) and to critically assess the application of these theories in literary criticism and scholarship
- To read and critically assess—in a word, to **critique**—scholarly arguments in literary criticism in order to appreciate and master the **substance, structure, and style** of academic writing

Evaluation

To receive credit for this course, students must participate in the online activities, successfully complete the assignments, and achieve a final mark of at least 60 per cent. Students should be familiar with the Master of Arts—Interdisciplinary Studies [grading system](#) . Please note that it is students' responsibility to maintain their program status. Any student who receives a grade of "F" in one course, or a grade of "C" in more than one course, may be required to withdraw from the program.

The following table summarizes the evaluation activities and the credit weights associated with them.

- 15% **Blogging** and/or discussion posts (at least 6 posts of at least 250 words each, posted over course contract period)
- 20% **Critique** of one scholarly article included in *Frankenstein*
- 25% **Critique** of one scholarly article included in *Wuthering Heights*—or of one in *Dracula*, or an independently sourced scholarly article on any assigned novel except *Frankenstein*
- 40% **Essay** (includes 10% for preparatory essay **proposal** of 250-750 words, to be submitted for instructor marking and approval of proposed topic at least three weeks before the complete essay itself, which should be about 3000 words)

Activity	Weight
Blogging and/or discussion posts (at least 6 posts of at least 250 words each, posted over course contract period)	15%
Critique of one scholarly article included in <i>Frankenstein</i>	20%
Critique of one scholarly article included in <i>Wuthering Heights</i> —or of one in <i>Dracula</i> , or an independently sourced scholarly article on any assigned novel except <i>Frankenstein</i>	25%
Essay (includes 10% for preparatory essay proposal of 250-750 words, to be submitted for instructor marking and approval of proposed topic at least three weeks before the complete essay itself, which should be about 3000 words)	40%
Total	100%

Materials

Shelley, Mary. 3rd ed. *Frankenstein*. Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism.

New York: Bedford / St Martin's, 2016.  (Print)

Lewis, Matthew. *The Monk* (1796). Peterborough: Broadview P, 2003. 

(Print)

Austen, Jane. *Northanger Abbey* (1818). Peterborough: Broadview P, 2002.

 (Print)

Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights* (1847). Case Studies in Contemporary

Criticism. New York: Bedford / St Martin's, 2003.  (Print)

Collins, Wilkie. *The Woman in White* (1860). Peterborough: Broadview P,

2006.  (Print)





Stoker, Bram. *Dracula* (1897). 2nd ed. Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism.

New York: Bedford / St Martin's, 2016.  (Print)

Marsh, Richard. *The Beetle* (1897). Peterborough: Broadview P, 2004. 
(Print)

Primary texts are listed in the order they are to be read, according to the course study guide.

Important links

- › [Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies](#) 
- › [Focus Areas](#) 
- › [Courses](#) 
- › [Fees and Funding](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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