

ENGL 102.601 / CIMS 112  
THE UNCANNY IN LITERATURE  
AND FILM: *HAUNTED PLACES*

CLASSROOM:

Fisher-Bennett Hall

Room to be announced

Thursdays 6:00-9:00

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Jason Zuzga

jasonzuzga@gmail.com

267-902-0731

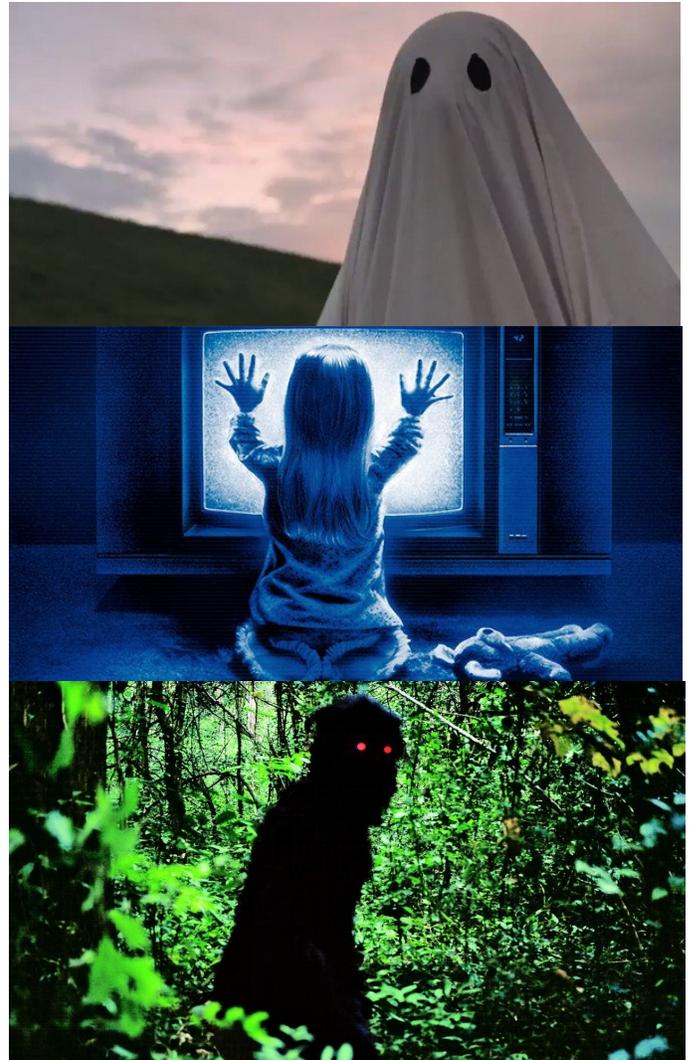
Office and Office Hours to be announced

FULFILLS REQUIREMENTS:

Sector 1: Theory and Poetics of the Standard Major

Sector 6: 20th Century Literature of the Standard Major

Sector III: Arts & Letters of the College's General Education Curriculum



We begin by entering the haunted house of literature and film and with Freud: an introduction to the unconscious, dreams, and his essay on the "uncanny": the domestic transformed by the presence and return of something disorienting, beyond control. The appeal of the uncanny is undeniable; we will both enjoy the weird and yet also think beyond the thrill and spookiness to grasp what is at stake in such tales—for our own experience of our own domesticity, our lived environments, and our own sense of home. Not only in dwellings designed and built, we will go on to explore literary and cinematic spaces that have become saturated with the presence of threat and loss, of repressed memory that insists on returning, forcing its way into the present—places where lingering spirits dwell among the living. Such tales reveal our anxieties about security and familiarity, and they perhaps ease these through exposure. How can we interpret the ways in which such tales are resolved, in terms of family, gender, ethnicity, culture and the lingering presence of architecture and landscape itself? Through a study of the architecture of the haunted place, we will come to better understand the architecture not only of the story and film itself, but of the way we go on living in our own lives in the aftermath of tragedy and uncertainty.

The array of tales of hauntings is vast – we will only be able, in a semester, to touch on a few. Also, in this course, there is much more assigned than anyone could possibly complete in one semester. Don't be alarmed at the amount of reading/viewing. In class, I will tell you which to prioritize - as well, we will split up some of the materials and report back to the full class. If you at any time begin to feel overwhelmed, contact me immediately so we can make a plan of attack.

We will be visiting the Rosenbach Museum and Library along with Eastern State Penitentiary during the course – these will be field trips arranged outside of the class meeting time.

Course Blog: Each week all students will post 300-word responses to the readings on the class Facebook page. If you are not the first to post, you should address issues raised in other student postings. 25%

Discussion: Every week we will discuss readings as a group. Come to class prepared to comment on the author's main arguments and the evidence s/he marshals in support of that argument (for secondary sources), and on what the readings tell us about the time and place in which they were written or filmed, as well as on a particular scene or passage that you would like to analyze closely. I expect you to contribute to discussion at minimum twice during each class meeting. 25%

Take-home midterm: This will be brief and basically just assure me that you are clear on the concept of the uncanny. 10%

Take-home final: This will also be brief and just touch on a few major points. 10%

Final Project: You have three choices: 1) Design a memorial installation to commemorate and make present the dead. You should include drawings and details of a site and write a 10-page researched rationale and explanation for your design. 2) Write a 20-page research paper about a novel or film assigned in the course or not – but one that you would like to pursue further investigation of – in consultation with the instructor. 3) A creative project, such as the creation of a ritual, a film, a piece of music (basically, any media or combination of media) with research involved, designed in consultation with the instructor. For all options, you will need to turn in an ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY of five items. These may include readings we have read in class or ones you uncover in your research. 30%

Class rules:

You are allowed one and only one absence over the duration of the semester. Further absences MUST be supported by a signed letter from an advisor as to family emergency or from health services - otherwise each absence beyond one will reduce your final grade a full letter grade - no exceptions.

You must be in your seat by 6:30pm. Anyone who arrives after 6:30 is welcome to stay but will be penalized a half letter grade.

NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES MAY BE USED. No cell phones. No lap tops unless taking notes after obtaining permission from the instructor. If cell phones and texting begin to be a problem everyone will be required to hand over their phone at the beginning of class and can collect it at the end of class or during break.

We will have a 15-minute break at the midpoint of class. You are welcome to bring food to class.

You are assumed to be following the UPenn code of academic integrity. Any violations will be subject to penalty according to the severity of the infringement.

[http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai\\_codeofacademicintegrity.html](http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai_codeofacademicintegrity.html)

All class discussion and behavior is expected to be kind, generous, and supportive of fellow class members. If your participation seems to be causing issues or distress, I will let you know outside of class. If the behavior continues, your class participation grade will be directly impacted.

Basically - just be good people and treat others and you would like to be treated. We will be moving across sometimes highly emotional topics; please respect and support your fellow students as they work through the material.

In addition to the below, we will watch the entirety of *American Horror Story* Season 2, if the class desires, an episode a week.

The only required book for purchase is *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. Please obtain well in advance of its occurrence on the syllabus. All

## **Week 1**

Introductions

Read stories aloud as a class in the dark with flashlight:

Edgar Allen Poe's "Ligeia," Kelly Link's "I Can See Right Through You" and "The Specialist's Hat," "The Bees" by Dan Chaon

<http://poestories.com/read/ligeia>

<https://www.mcsweeneys.net/pages/i-can-see-right-through-you>

<http://kellylink.net/specialists-hat>

<http://store.symphonyspace.org/products/the-bees-dan-chaon-performed-by-boyd-gaines>

## **Week 2 ∩ Intro to Freud, Poltergeist**

*On Dreams* by Sigmund Freud

<https://archive.org/stream/ondreams1914freu#page/2/mode/2up>

*An Outline of Psychoanalysis* by Sigmund Freud

*Poltergeist* (Dir. Tobe Hooper, 1982)

"How to Tell a Ghost Story" by Jaime Lowe

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/10/magazine/how-to-tell-a-ghost-story.html>

"Poltergeist: Suburban Ideology" by Douglas Kellner

<https://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC28folder/Poltergeist.html>

## **Week 3 ∞ The Uncanny**

"The Sandman" by ETA Hoffman from *The Uncanny* by Nicholas Royle

"The Uncanny" by Sigmund Freud

[http://www.english.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Freud\\_Uncanny.pdf](http://www.english.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Freud_Uncanny.pdf)

"Fiction and its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche*" by Hélène Cixous, in: *New Literary History*, Vol. 7, No. 3, Spring 1976: 525-548

"The Uncanny: An Introduction" by Nicholas Royle from *The Uncanny*

#### **Week 4 ∩ The Uncanny continued**

*Housebound* (Dir. Gerard Johnstone, 2014) (on Netflix)

"Unhomely Houses" by Anthony Vidler from *The Architectural Uncanny*

"Night spaces: The Haunted House" by Martyn Hudson in *Ghosts, Landscapes and Social Memory*

"'Housebound' and the domestic horror-comedy" by Alexandra Heller-Nicholas

"On Textual Haunting" by Julian Wolfreys in *The Spectralities Reader* edited by Maria Del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren

"Film" by Nicholas Royle from *The Uncanny*

#### **Week 5 ∞ The Death Drive**

*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* by Sigmund Freud

<http://www.bartleby.com/276/>

"The Concept of the Death Drive: A Clinical Perspective" by Otto Kernberg

*The Haunting* (Dir. Robert Wise, 1963)

"Gothic Affects: Digitally Haunted Houses and the Production of Affect-Value" by Bruno Lessard in *Popular Ghosts* edited by Maria Del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren

"Buried Alive" by Anthony Vidler from *The Architectural Uncanny*

"The death drive" by Nicholas Royle from *The Uncanny*

#### **Week 6 ∩ Mourning**

"Mourning and Melancholia" by Sigmund Freud

"Pathological Mourning and Childhood Mourning" by John Bowlby

*A Ghost Story* (Dir. David Lowery, 2017)

#### **Week 7 ∞ Grief and Trauma**

##### **TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED**

*The Babadook* (Dir. Jennifer Kent, 2014)

Excerpt from THE POETICS OF SPACE by Gaston Bachelard [in FILES]

"What the Hellish *Babadook* Has to Say About Childhood Grief" by Lenika Cruz

<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/12/what-the-hellish-babadook-has-to-say-about-childhood-grief/383528/>

"THE BABADOOK: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TRAUMA AND PARENTHOOD" by Dave Kajmowicz

<http://seroword.com/film/the-babadook-the-psychology-of-trauma-and-parenthood/>

"Through a Mother's Eyes: *The Babadook* and Examining Trauma" by Kelcie Mattson

<https://medium.com/@wewillbethestars/through-a-mothers-eyes-the-babadook-and-examining-trauma-women-in-horror-series-e1f25804dca9#.o195czyzb>

#### **Week 8 ∩ Beloved, The Trauma of Slavery in the United States**

##### **TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE**

*Beloved* by Toni Morrison

#### **Week 9 ∞ Beloved continued**

"not only the footprints but the water too and what is down there" in *Ghostly Matters:*

*Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* by Avery Gordon

"Getting Back One's Dead for Burial: Traumatic History and Ritual Reburial in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*" in *Cultural Haunting: Ghosts and Ethnicity in Recent American Literature* by Kathleen Brogan

Zong! By M. Nourbese Philip (excerpt)

"Zong Spectres: Ghosts of the slave system" by Martyn Hudson in *Ghosts, Landscapes and Social Memory*

### **Week 10 ∩ The Ghost Dance**

*Tracks* by Louise Erdrich (excerpt)

*God's Red Son: The Ghost Dance Religion and the Making of Modern America* by Louis Warren (excerpt)

"Bidwell Ghost" by Louise Erdrich (poem)

"The Invention of White People" by Leslie Marmon Silko (poem)

"Ghost dancing: cultural translation in Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*" in *Cultural haunting: ghosts and ethnicity in recent American literature* by Kathleen Brogan

"Shape-shifters, Ghosts, and Residual Power: An Examination of Northern Plains Spiritual Beliefs, Location, Objects, and Spiritual Colonialism" by C. Jill Grady in *Phantom Past, Indigenous Present*

### **Week 11 ∞ The Spanish Civil War**

#### **FINAL PROJECT: P ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**

*The Devil's Backbone* (Dir. Guillermo del Toro, 2001)

[https://www.amazon.com/Devils-Backbone-Marisa-Paredes/dp/B00HMK2OU0/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=movies-tv&ie=UTF8&qid=1493258339&sr=1-1&keywords=The+Devil%27s+Backbone](https://www.amazon.com/Devils-Backbone-Marisa-Paredes/dp/B00HMK2OU0/ref=sr_1_1?s=movies-tv&ie=UTF8&qid=1493258339&sr=1-1&keywords=The+Devil%27s+Backbone)

"*The Devil's Backbone: The Past Is Never Dead...*" by Mark Kermode

<https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/2850-the-devil-s-backbone-the-past-is-never-dead>

"Writing Against Memory and Forgetting" by Gabrielle Schwab in *Haunting Legacies*

"Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History" and "Traumatic Departures: Survival and History in Freud" by Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*

### **Week 12 ∩ Pacific West**

#### **FINAL PROJECT: ONE PAGE PROPOSAL DUE**

*Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* (Dir. Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2010)

[https://www.amazon.com/dp/B009NSXYQC?ref\\_=imdbref\\_tt\\_wbr\\_aiv&tag=imdbtag\\_tt\\_wbr\\_aiv-20](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B009NSXYQC?ref_=imdbref_tt_wbr_aiv&tag=imdbtag_tt_wbr_aiv-20) (view in class)

*Spirited Away* (Dir. Hayao Miyazake, 2001)

"Showing the Unknowable: *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*" by Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano in *Cinematic Ghosts* edited by Murray Leeder

"Learning About Time: An Interview with Apichatpong Weerasethakul" by Ji-Hoon Kim

"Matter out of Place- Carnival, Containment, and Cultural Recovery in Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*" by Susan Napier

"Totoros, Boar Gods, and River Spirits: Nature Spirits as Intermediaries in the Animation of Hayao Miyazaki" by Chris G. Hall

### **Week 13 ∞ Memory and Memorials**

#### **FINAL PROJECT: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**

*Night and Fog* (Dir. Alain Resnais, 1956)

*Memorials as Spaces of Engagement: Design, Use and Meaning* by Quentin Stevens and Karen A. Franck (excerpt)

"*Night and Fog and the Origins of Post-Traumatic Cinema*" in *After-image: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust* by Joshua Hirsch

"The Inadequacy of Berlin's 'Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe'" by Richard Brody  
<http://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/the-inadequacy-of-berlins-memorial-to-the-murdered-jews-of-europe>

"Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin: The Uncanny Arts of Memorial Architecture" by James E. Young

<http://www.staff.amu.edu.pl/~ewa/Young,%20Libeskind's%20Uncanny%20Architecture.pdf>

"Shadow of the Colossus: The Spectral Lives of 9/11" by Georgina Banita in *Popular Ghosts* edited by Maria Del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren

### **Week 14 ♪ Returned to Life in Death**

*In the Flesh Series One* (Dir. Dominic Mitchell, 2013, BBC)

<https://www.amazon.com/In-The-Flesh-Season-1/dp/B00D5RKDI4>

"About Losing and Being Lost" by Anna Freud

"On the Uses and Disadvantages of Living Among Spectres" by Giorgio Agamben in *The Spectralities Reader*

"Queer Spectrality: Haunting the Past" by Carla Freccero from *The Spectralities Reader*

"Darkness" by Nicholas Royle from *The Uncanny*

"Arrivals from the Future" by Martyn Hudson in *Ghosts, Landscapes and Social Memory*

"Candy Spills (Félix González-Torres)"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTNjHiLXsfE>

"Felix Gonzalez-Torres. Specific Objects without Specific Form"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcHqknzFasg>

"Hide/Seek: Portraits by Felix Gonzalez-Torres and David Wojnarowicz"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iiLMJru7SY>

**TAKE-HOME FINAL and FINAL PROJECT due LAST DAY OF FINAL EXAM PERIOD.**