

THE HORROR FILM

SPRING SEMESTER 2020

FILM 3321.501

THIS IS THE LATEST REVISED VERSION OF THE SYLLABUS FOR FILM 3321. It incorporates all current changes in this class due to the transition to an online format. Please review it carefully for all changes made to the class format and structure. New material is highlighted in blue for your convenience. As always, please feel free to contact me via email with any questions or concerns.

John E. Petty

John.Petty@utdallas.edu

Office hours: by appointment

I am still available via email should you need to discuss anything or if you have any questions.

CLASS LOCATION AND TIMES

TUESDAYS

7:00 PM - 9:45 PM My goal is to retain this meeting time, albeit online. We will be using Blackboard Collaborate for our class meetings.

January 14, 2020 – April 28, 2020

~~MC 2.410~~—Online Until Further Notice

Direct link to class: <https://go.utdallas.edu/film3325.501.19f>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

From literature to art to film and beyond, Horror is unique among genres in that its inherent repulsiveness is exactly what attracts us to it. In this class, we'll examine what horror is, how it has changed (and remained the same) throughout the years, and how it encapsulates our experiences as a culture and as a society at a given point in history. From the great silent screamers of the 1910s and 1920s to the psychos, slashers and body horror films of more recent days, we'll not only trace the history of the horror film, but look at the way it has reflected society over time, including the queering of the horror film, the role of gender in horror, and the way in which horror films have become increasingly metatextual and self-referential in recent years.

TEXTBOOK (Required)

A Companion to the Horror Film, edited by Harry M. Benshoff. Wiley Blackwell, 2017.

Recommended Reading:

The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror, by David Skal, Farrar, Strauss & Giroux

This is a great book on the history of horror cinema from its earliest days to the near-present. Not a textbook, but a mass market publication, it is very readable and heavily illustrated. For anyone truly interested in the history of the horror film, this book is indispensable. Although it is not required, it is strongly recommended to improve your overall understanding of this class's subject matter.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

There are three levels of learning objectives specific to this course

- **“Student Learning Objectives”** are what I expect you to take away from this course. These objectives are specific to this particular class, and reflect my goals in teaching this material.
- **“General Education Core Objectives”** are those overall skills that the State of Texas expects you to gain from this course. These are not subject specific, but should transfer to other areas of study.
- **“FILM 2332 Course Objectives”** are where the above objectives meet. These are the State objectives viewed through the lens of the material we will cover in this class. This section also details the way in which the achievement of those objectives will be assessed.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Become conversant with the important directors of Japanese film, and be able to discuss their individual films and their overall themes and techniques.
- Develop an awareness of the historical and cultural events and trends that inform the films of these directors.
- Gain an understanding of the ways in which Japanese film and films from other nations are both similar and different, and be able to discuss some of the philosophical and cultural bases of Japanese film.

GENERAL EDUCATION CORE OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will demonstrate competency in the following core objectives:

- **Critical thinking skills** – Students will engage in creative and/or innovative thinking, and/or inquiry, analysis, evaluation, synthesis of information, organizing concepts, and constructing solutions.
- **Communication skills** – Students will demonstrate effective written, oral, and visual communication.
- **Teamwork** – Students will demonstrate the ability to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal, and consider different points of view.
- **Social responsibility** – Students will demonstrate intercultural competency and civic knowledge by engaging effectively in local, regional, national, and global communities.

FILM 3321 COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- **Critical thinking skills** – Analyze the artistic, industrial, and social-cultural dynamics of cinema (assessed via exams, group presentations, and class discussions).
- **Communication skills** – Create short film evaluations that demonstrate mastery of critical concepts and approaches that deepen engagement with cinema (assessed via exams, group presentations, and class discussions).
- **Teamwork** – Work together to sharpen analytical skills and to explore different points

of view regarding assigned films (assessed via the group presentations, and class discussions).

- **Social responsibility** – Demonstrate knowledge of how society and culture shape film aesthetics and reception (assessed via exams, group presentations, and class discussions).

GRADING

Your final grade will be calculated based on the following factors:

At this time, I have elected not to change the grading structure of our class. Please see individual sections below for changes to specific components.

Group Project: 20%
Research paper: 15%
Exam 1: 20%
Exam 2: 20%
Final Exam: 25%

My grading scale is as follows:

97-100 = A+
94-96 = A
90-93 = A-
87-89 = B+
84-86 = B
80-83 = B-
77-79 = C+
74-76 = C
70-73 = C-
67-69 = D+
64-66 = D
60-63 = D-
0-59 = F

ATTENDANCE

You are expected to attend all classes, to be attentive and considerate, and to keep up with the assignments listed on the syllabus. Screenings and readings are all to be completed BEFORE the class session for which they are assigned. If you must miss a class, you remain responsible for all course material covered in that class: there are no make-up classes, and each class will be taught only once. Each class period represents one week's worth of work, so attendance will be taken in every class, either by roster, or by collecting presentation evaluation forms.

During the remainder of the semester, we will continue to track attendance at all class meetings. As of right now, we will continue to meet at our regular time of Tuesdays, 7:00 pm – 9:45 pm. Attendance will be taken by signing in to Blackboard Collaborate. As such, all the below still apply for the remainder of the semester.

With that being said, I understand that everyone's life has changed in recent weeks. If things have changed for you in a way that it is impossible for you attend class at our regular meeting time, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can work out some kind of alternate arrangement. Not showing up for the remainder of the semester is not an option. PLEASE don't just fail to show up and then try to talk to me at the end of the semester. I will not entertain excuses after the fact. The time to talk with me is now. I will be as flexible as possible, but you need to initiate the conversation. If you have any questions or concerns

about the attendance policy going forward, please let me know.

Please note that the *Rules on Student Services and Activities* of the University of Texas System will be strictly adhered to. For information on the administration's rules and policies regarding student conduct and discipline, academic integrity, e-mail use, withdrawal from class, student grievance procedures, incomplete grade policies, disability services, and religious holy days, consult the material, generated by the administration, available in the relevant folder on eLearning or in the University catalog.

You are allowed two "Free" unexcused class absences during the second semester. The third unexcused absence will result in your final grade being lowered by half a point (an A becomes a B+); the fourth unexcused absence will result in your final grade being lowered by a full point (an A becomes a B). Any additional absences after four will result in your automatically failing the class.

Note also that **all course requirements must be met: this means that if you miss more than four class periods, and/or fail to take and complete all exams and assignments in full, you will guarantee an automatic failing grade for the course. Make-up exams will be permitted only in the most serious circumstances (family emergency or illness) which must be documented to my and the university's satisfaction, and at my discretion.**

In order to prevent any misunderstandings later on, you **MUST** provide the following statement to me, exactly as it is written, with no changes or alterations, and signed with your name and student ID number, emailed to me (at jep140330@utdallas.edu) prior to attending the second class of the semester. Failure to do so will disqualify you from taking the first exam. If you register for the class after the first class meeting has been held, you **MUST** provide this statement to me within 48 hours of your first class period.

The statement to be signed and emailed is:

"I have read and understood the course syllabus for FILM 3321.501. I accept, understand, and agree to all the expectations outlined therein, including rules regarding attendance, participation, grading, assignments, etc., and agree to abide by them. I am fully aware that any failure to fulfill these expectations will result in a failing grade. I further understand that, should any problems or complications occur during the semester, it is my responsibility to speak to the professor about them."

IN-CLASS ELECTRONICS

This class has a strict no laptop, no tablet, and no phone policy. Please **do not bring laptops or tablets to class** unless prior arrangements have been made. Please keep your phones on silent/vibrate and out of sight. Electronics are great, but they are distracting to you and everyone around you, including your professor. I don't want to embarrass anyone in class, so consider this your first and only warning.

To answer an often-asked question, No, you may not use your laptop to take notes, unless you have a note from the Office of Student Accessibility addressing this issue. Not only does that violate the "no electronics" policy above, but recent studies have shown that you tend to retain information/notes better when they are taken by hand than when they are typed. So put the laptop/tablet/phone away and take notes the way we did back in the dim and distant past. Be thankful that I'm not requiring you to carve your notes on stone tablets like we did when I was your age.

PARTICIPATION

I expect each one of you to actively participate in each class. I realize that this may be difficult for some of you, but this class should be as much discussion as lecture, with you coming to each session prepared not only to discuss the film in question, but also the assigned reading. I value your participation, so feel free to share your thoughts on the films, on the readings, or on my lectures, albeit in a polite and respectful way (there's only one exception to this: I do not accept the comment "it was boring," when discussing a film. That shows me that you didn't engage with the film and is not worthy of a college-level class. Find something else to say). You are not only allowed to, but encouraged to, disagree with me during class, but please bear in mind the comment about being polite and respectful. Since this class is all about actively engaging with film, it's appropriate that you actively engage with the class. When you do, I promise you'll find the entire experience far more enjoyable and much more fulfilling. As well, it's been my experience that those students who engage most actively in the class wind up with the best grades, so there's that.

SCREENINGS

Watching the weekly films is mandatory. No exceptions. All of the films included in the syllabus are on reserve at the UNT library, although you are free to watch them in any way that is convenient. It is entirely your responsibility to watch these films in a timely fashion, as we will not be viewing them in class. If you choose not to view the films, for whatever reason, I can pretty much guarantee you will not pass the class.

Some of the films listed in the syllabus may be available on Kanopy.com. Kanopy is a free streaming video service that can be accessed through the UTD library system. To sign up, simply go to Kanopy.com and sign up using your UTD ID and password. Films available on Kanopy will be noted in the schedule. Please note that many of the films we watch are from the Criterion Collection, and thus may be available on Criterion's streaming service (<https://www.criterionchannel.com/>).

PROMPTNESS

I expect you to arrive promptly for class, and to be ready to start the lecture/discussion promptly at 7:00 PM. We have a lot to cover in a relatively short amount of time, so please plan to arrive on time. As well, I expect that you will stay through the entire class, and not attempt to leave early, unless you have spoken to me prior to class. Leaving before the class is finished will result in your being marked absent for the class, and that absence will be counted against your grade.

GROUP PROJECT

At the end of the first class session and the week following, you will be expected to organize into groups for the presentations that will begin in Week 3. A group sign-up sheet will be available for your name and contact email addresses; it will be scanned and posted on eLearning once it is completed (you may also photograph it yourself). Each group will choose one of ten class sessions on offer.

~~On that day, during the first twenty to thirty minutes of class, you will briefly present three or four interesting points you learned from watching the film for the week, as well as the assigned reading(s) and your own independent research, and lead the class in discussion of three questions derived from concepts and issues presented by the film and your research. As this is an advanced class, I expect everyone in the group to take part in presenting your research findings. No one is permitted to stand up and do nothing.~~

~~Please keep your presentations to no more than 30 minutes. I know you're going to discover quite a lot about the film you research, and I know that the desire to present everything to us is strong, but please keep in mind that there's other material to be covered during class, and running longer than 30 minutes~~

~~may mean we don't get to everything I have planned. I suggest that prior to your actual presentation, you and your partner(s) go through it, timing yourselves to make sure you're within the time constraints.~~

Due to the transition to an online class format, group projects will not be presented in the same way as previously. Going forward, I would like each of the remaining groups to prepare a PowerPoint presentation on your film that can be shared with the rest of the class. As this presentation must stand apart from any in-person presentation, please make sure that each slide is meaningful on its own. Slides which include images alone, although fine for previous presentations, will need to be reconsidered in this format. I am not asking you to record a lecture/presentation with this PowerPoint, just to make sure it communicates all of your thoughts and ideas effectively. In order to conserve bandwidth, I would encourage you NOT to use film clips in your presentation.

At least two hours prior to the presentation due date (which remains the same), please forward your slide deck to me and I will post it for the class. At this point, I am considering leaving each week's material online until the next class, but that may change. Again, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

I'm not looking for a presentation of trivia here, but an exploration of themes, analyses, and/or critical readings that both deepen and broaden our knowledge of the film in question. For example, were you to present on the science fiction classic *Robot Monster* (1953), mentioning that the main shooting location in Bronson Canyon was the same as the location of the Batcave in the 1966 *Batman* TV show is trivia. Fun to know, but it contributes nothing to our understanding of the film. However, you might compare the structure of the film to the works of Italian Neo-Realists such as Roberto Rossellini or Vittorio de Sica, and explain why that is important, or you might want to examine the film in terms of its place within the apocalyptic/paranoia film genre of the 1950s and in the context of the Cold War that was raging during that time. Or you might choose a combination of all of the above.

As well, I am not interested in plot synopses during these presentations. Assume that we have all seen the film in question and move on to more interesting material. Although sometimes a reference to plot ("...the scene in which the Creature first meets his intended Bride...") is necessary, any such material should be kept to a minimum. If you include a plot synopsis of all or any part of your film exceeding a sentence or two, you will be downgraded.

Each group must make specific reference to research sources, fully crediting the authors of such works, and must make specific reference to the week's film and the assigned reading(s). ~~You may employ a clip or two, whether from the week's film or from another film that illustrates something usefully, but you will be penalized if clips in total take up more than five minutes of your allotted time.~~ I strongly recommend you do NOT do this.

Several groups in the past have begun their presentation with quizzes on Kahoot! and other platforms. Let me discourage you from doing this in the strongest possible terms. These presentations are academic exercises, not games, and although Kahoot! is a lot of fun, it adds little, if anything, to an understanding of film. Please focus your efforts on helping us approach and see deeply into the film in question rather than playing party games.

~~The presentations will be graded both by you and by your peers at the end of class; the grading forms will serve as attendance for that day as well, so do not fail to turn in a grading form, as that will result in your being marked absent from class. All students in the group will receive the same grade, and any students who request to do so may read the comments generated by his or her classmates that day after class, or the week following the presentation (when the grade will be available as well).~~

Again, due to the new nature of our class, I will grade each presentation, rather than collect and average a grade. I will, however, take into consideration the grades of previous groups and use that as a yardstick in assigning future grades. My goal here is not to penalize anyone, but to make our remaining classes flow as smoothly as possible.

In spite of the above, if it is apparent that you, as an individual participant, have not contributed equally to the presentation, I will adjust your individual grade as I feel necessary. If it is clear that your portion of the presentation is largely plagiarized, or if you are absent on the evening of the presentation, you will receive a grade of zero (0). I reserve the right to adjust grades for any other reason other than those listed here as circumstances warrant. As in all cases, the final grading decision is mine and mine alone.

RESEARCH PAPER

I don't see that any of this will have to change significantly. The only change is that you will email me your paper, time-stamped prior to 7:00 pm on Tuesday, April 7, rather than handing in a paper copy.

As part of this class, you'll be exposed to films from a variety of time periods and cultures. Sadly, time does not permit us to go into the kind of detail I'd like on all of the films in each category. Therefore, I'd like for you each to prepare a 5-6 page paper on a single Horror film. The choice of what to write about is yours, with a few exceptions:

1. You may not choose a film that has been the subject of a group presentation. There are plenty to choose from, so be creative.
2. Nothing from YouTube or anything fan made. You must engage with a movie that was legitimately distributed in theaters. That still leaves you a great deal of latitude.

I'm not looking for a simple plot synopsis of the film you choose to research, nor am I interested in a review ("I really liked this movie," or "the story was really lame." These are personal opinions/reviews, and have no place in an academic paper like this). Although some description of the work is needed, please keep it to a minimum. I want you to go into some detail regarding thematic material, the historical context in which the film was created, its significance in the history of animation, etc. Basically, go deeper than, "This movie came out in 1957, and it must have been good because it won an Academy Award." If you approach the film you're focusing on the way we focus on movies in class, you should be in good shape, but please feel free to see me if you have any questions.

With that being said, I also want more than a simple regurgitation of research that has already been written. If, for example, you choose to write about John Carpenter's *Halloween*, I expect a lot more than simply, "...the film is an expression of the 'sex=death' perception that was common during the early days of the AIDS crisis." That ground has been covered extensively, so bring something a bit more thoughtful to the table. With that being said, however, I do expect to see in your bibliography that you've consulted at least three legitimate academic sources as the basis of your paper.

About those legitimate sources: Books from respected academic publishers, academic journal articles, and some websites are acceptable. Wikipedia, personal blogs (except when written by people involved in the production of the film you're analyzing or recognized scholars), review sites, and trivia sites are NOT acceptable. The UTD Library has an extensive catalog of books and journals that are available to you for your

research. As well, you can access scholar.google.com for additional information (many of these sites require a sign-in, and while some are affiliated with UTD, others are not. Library staff should be able to help you retrieve these if you have problems). If you have any questions about whether or not a source is acceptable, please see me.

In short, I expect a well-researched, well-written paper taking a position about the film, and then discussing and defending that point. A strong thesis statement at the beginning of the paper (ex: “The music in *Bride of Frankenstein* is used for far more than simple mood enhancement. It actively comments on, and defines, characters throughout the film by the use of leitmotifs, exploring relationships that would go unnoticed and unrealized without its intervention.”) will help enormously in this regard. Please see *Writing a Successful Research Paper* appended to the end of this document for more information.

This paper will be due at the beginning of class on **Tuesday, April 7**. No late papers will be accepted, and no emailed papers will be accepted without proper medical documentation (i.e.: anything short of “Tiffany was in a coma on November 12 after forgetting to don a parachute before jumping out of an airplane and breaking almost every bone in her body. Please accept her paper, typed with her left ring-finger – practically the only bone still intact after her horrific accident – and written from her hospital bed, her moans of agony echoing down the corridor with each press of a key. Signed, Tiffany’s Doctor”). “I wasn’t feeling good” isn’t going to cut it, nor is “I forgot.”

One Final Word: The Writing Center at UTD is your best friend in getting a good grade on this paper. They can help you put together an outline, refine your argument, assist with cleaning up grammar and sentence structure and more. I would suggest visiting with them early and often. Although this is not an English class, grammar, spelling, style, sentence structure, etc., all count towards your grade on this assignment. Please don’t wait until the last minute to choose your film and get to work. If you do, I can guarantee that we’ll both be unhappy with the final product/grade.

The Writing Center offers online appointments, which I assume will continue during the remainder of the semester. You can find out more here: <https://www.utdallas.edu/studentsuccess/writing-and-speaking/writing-center/>.

If you’re planning on working with the Writing Center to improve your paper (which I certainly would encourage you to do), I would suggest contacting them as early as possible, and to keep up with all UTD correspondence concerning the rest of the semester.

EXAMS

Our Exam schedule will remain unchanged until further notice. I will let you know how the test will be administered, and what you’ll need to do, as soon as all that is finalized.

Although these remaining exams will not be proctored, I would ask that you take them as if we were in a classroom together. That is, no books, no notes, no online resources, etc. You are a fine group of students, and I am relying on your own sense of honor and personal integrity in this regard.

EXAMS #1 and #2 will be held during class time.

FINAL EXAM DATE, TIME, AND PLACE TO BE ANNOUNCED

FINALS WEEK FOR SPRING 2020 SEMESTER IS SATURDAY, MAY 2 – FRIDAY, MAY 8.

Please do not be late for the Exams. Once the exam has begun, no latecomers will be seated.

All exams will be **100 50 questions**, multiple choice. Material will come from lectures, assigned readings, our in-class discussions, film screenings, and any supplemental material supplied during class. In other words, anything is fair game. I don't believe in "trick" questions, but I will ask questions designed to probe your knowledge and assimilation of the material covered.

CELL PHONES AND OTHER MATTERS OF COMMON COURTESY

As mentioned above, cell phones **MUST** be turned off or set to vibrate during class time. No exceptions. Taking calls during class time is likewise prohibited. This is not the time for talking to your friends, texting your parents, sharing photos, or playing games on your phone. It is disrespectful both to me and to your fellow students. If you insist on using your phone during class time, you will be asked to leave, and your absence will be counted against your grade. If you have an emergency of some kind that might require you to take a call during class, you **MUST** see me before class begins and alert me to this situation.

I personally don't mind if you bring drinks to class, but please be mindful that others use the room we're in, so make sure you clean up after yourself, dispose of trash properly, and leave the room as clean and neat as you found it. I do not intend to clean up after you – as an adult, that is your responsibility.

A NOTE ABOUT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

I have every expectation that any material that you turn in or submit for a grade will be your original work. **Plagiarism – which includes buying or otherwise obtaining material from others and passing it off as your own, as well as copying or paraphrasing the work of another without proper attribution – will not be tolerated. This includes material found on Wikipedia or on the Internet.** As a writer myself, I take this matter very seriously. Any assignment submitted to me and found to contain plagiarized material – in whole or in part – will receive a grade of zero and could lead to further action on the part of the University. End of discussion. Please familiarize yourself with UTD's policy on plagiarism (<http://www.utdallas.edu/library/help/PlagiarismTutorial/Textonlytutorial.htm>) and take it to heart, as it is fully your responsibility to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. There is no excuse for plagiarism, or for any form of academic dishonesty. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please feel free to see me.

This is more important than ever, now that we are all working remotely. Please resist any temptation to cut corners in this fashion, as all the above warnings regarding plagiarism are still in full effect.

Consider this your first and final warning on the subject.

For a detailed discussion of UTD's policy on academic integrity, plagiarism, and other subjects, please see <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Office of Student Success offers a number of resources to assist students in a number of academic disciplines, including writing, communication, reading, and study skills. Please visit <http://www.utdallas.edu/studentssuccess> for more information on these helpful services.

COMET CREED

REV DATE: March 24, 2020

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

UT DALLAS SYLLABUS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is the policy and practice of the University of Texas at Dallas to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. However, written notification from the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA) is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please discuss it with me and allow one week advance notice. Students who have questions about receiving accommodations, or those who have, or think they may have, a disability (mobility, sensory, health, psychological, learning, etc.) are invited to contact the Office of Student AccessAbility for a confidential discussion. OSA is located in the Student Services Building, suite 3.200. They can be reached by phone at (972) 883-2098, or by email at studentaccess@utdallas.edu.

SCHEDULE

January 14	WEEK 1: Introduction to Class Review of Syllabus, Outline of Expectations What is Horror? Why does it scare us? REQUIRED READING: Syllabus
January 21	WEEK 2: The Roots of Horror and Gothic Fiction WATCH: <i>The Phantom of the Opera</i> (1925, Universal Studios). <i>Please make sure you're watching the 1929 version, which is color tinted, and not the 1925 version, which is strictly black-and-white.</i> REQUIRED READING: Benshoff, 207-214
January 28	WEEK 3: Silent Horror WATCH: <i>Nosferatu</i> (1922, Prana-Film GmbH) REQUIRED READING: Benshoff, 214-223 **GROUP PRESENTATION #1**
February 4	WEEK 4: Classic Horror WATCH: <i>The Black Cat</i> (1934, Universal Studios) REQUIRED READING: Benshoff, 225-236 **GROUP PRESENTATION #2**
February 11	**EXAM 1 (Covers material through Week 4)**
February 18	WEEK 6: Sci-Fi Horror WATCH: <i>Invaders from Mars</i> (1953, 20 th Century Fox) REQUIRED READING: Benshoff, 255-272 **GROUP PRESENTATION #3**
February 25	WEEK 7: Hammer Horror and the Gothic Revival WATCH: <i>The Curse of Frankenstein</i> (1957, Hammer Films) REQUIRED READING: Benshoff, 273-290 **GROUP PRESENTATION #4**
March 3	WEEK 8: Supernatural Horror WATCH: <i>The Exorcist</i> (1973, Warner Brothers) REQUIRED READING: Benshoff, 30-37 **GROUP PRESENTATION #5**
March 10	WEEK 9: International Horror WATCH: <i>The Lure</i> (2015, Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych i Fabularnych (WFDiF)) REQUIRED READING: Benshoff, 329-344 **GROUP PRESENTATION #6**

March 17	SPRING BREAK
March 24	EXTENDED SPRING BREAK
March 31	WEEK 11: Slasher Horror WATCH: <i>Friday the 13th</i> (1980, Paramount) REQUIRED READING: Benshoff, 310-328 **GROUP PRESENTATION #7**
April 7	**EXAM 2 (Covers material through Week 11)**
April 14	WEEK 13: Gender and Queer Horror WATCH: <i>Ju-On</i> (2000, Toei Video Company); <i>Bride of Frankenstein</i> (1935, Universal Studios) REQUIRED READING: Benshoff, 38-55 **GROUP PRESENTATION #8** **GROUP PRESENTATION #9**
April 21	WEEK 15: Body Horror WATCH: <i>Vampire Girl v. Frankenstein Girl</i> (2009, Concept Film/Excellent Film/ Pony Canyon) REQUIRED READING: Benshoff, 410-416 **GROUP PRESENTATION #10**
April 28	WEEK 16: Post-Modern Horror WATCH: <i>The Cabin in the Woods</i> (2011, Lionsgate) REQUIRED READING: TBD **GROUP PRESENTATION #11**

NOTE ABOUT POTENTIALLY OFFENSIVE CONTENT

In a class covering all aspects of the horror film, I expect that some of the content covered, whether in readings, screenings, or discussion, will contain material that could be considered controversial or offensive to some. I understand that some people, for various reasons, are uncomfortable with depictions, or discussions, of violence, torture, or sexuality, for example, but I cannot tailor this class for each individual. If you feel that you do not wish to expose yourself to such material, please consider enrolling in another class. No further warnings will be given, and no exemptions from specific films will be granted to anyone for any reason.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Over the several years that I've taught UNDERSTANDING FILM, I've gathered several pieces of advice that I hope will help you to succeed in this class. I offer them here for your consideration.

- TIP #1:** **SHOW UP.** I can guarantee that if you do not show up for class, you will fail. The choice is yours.
- TIP #2:** **PARTICIPATE.** Get involved with the class discussions, ask questions, challenge me. The latter is not only allowed, it is encouraged, as long as you do so politely and respectfully. I've noticed that in past classes, those that get involved and really take part in the class tend to get the best grades in the end.
- TIP #3:** **WATCH THE MOVIES.** Plan your time so that you can watch each film in advance of the class for which it's assigned.
- TIP #4:** **FORM STUDY GROUPS AND MEET OFTEN.** Meeting in small groups to study on a regular basis can help with both learning and retention, meaning that you'll be that much better prepared for each exam.
- TIP #5:** **MANAGE YOUR TIME.** This goes not just for this class, but for the rest of your life. The one big problem I see with students is that they haven't learned and perfected time management skills. Realize that there are only 24 hours in a day, and you have a lot to cram into each one. Learn to budget and control your time and you'll find everything gets a lot easier.
- TIP #6:** **DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE.** This goes along with #5, but it's particularly aimed at group projects. I expect a lot out of you with these and, frankly, so do your fellow students. It's easy to see which groups put time into their presentations, and which blew them off until the last minute, so prepare a presentation of which you can be truly proud.
- TIP #7** **TAKE NOTES DURING LECTURES.** Taking notes is a good thing. Trying to transcribe my PowerPoint slides word for word is not. **DON'T TRY TO COPY THE POWERPOINT SLIDES WORD FOR WORD!** Take notes on the most important points, but realize you won't be able to get every word, nor should you try. You'll miss more than you gain that way, so don't burden yourself trying to copy down each word verbatim.

Here are a few resources regarding effective note taking:

<http://www.edudemic.com/effective-ways-to-take-notes-in-class/>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Take-Better-Notes>

<https://studyskills.com/students/how-to-take-notes-in-class/>

<https://www.oxfordlearning.com/5-effective-note-taking-methods/>

- TIP #8** **TALK TO YOUR PROFESSOR.** If you're having a problem that's interfering with your ability to learn in class, come and see me. If you don't understand something, come and see me. If you have a question about assignments or expectations, come and see me. I'm happy to talk to you before or after class, or we can find a time to get together outside of class. The point is, don't let problems build throughout the semester. Talk to me and let's see if we can't work something out.
- TIP #9** **ENJOY THE CLASS!** I want you to learn a lot about film this semester, but there's no reason that shouldn't also be fun. If you take the above to heart, we'll all have a good time in class and come out of it with a better understanding of film and media.

***The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change
at the discretion of the Professor.***

UNDERSTANDING FILM

FILM 3321.501 – The Horror Film

Writing a Successful Research Paper

Professor John E. Petty
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Office hours: by appointment

As you know, part of this class involves a written assignment. I expect that you will spend some time with this research paper, and turn in work that is as finished as possible.

Writing well is an important discipline that will pay huge dividends in the years to come, no matter where your career path leads. Therefore, I insist on proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, organization, proofreading, structure, etc., and will deduct points for things like weak sentence structure, poor grammar, typos, sloppy formatting, and lack of organization. Please take these assignments seriously, as they represent a significant part of your final grade.

If you are concerned about your ability to craft a successful paper, I urge you to obtain a copy of *The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition*, by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White. This is one of the most useful books you will ever buy, one that professional writers review on a regular basis. A small, relatively inexpensive book, it succinctly captures the elements of good writing for any occasion. Although it is not a required text for this course, I highly recommend that you buy it, keep it, and review it frequently.

Researching Your Paper

A good paper begins with solid research, and that begins with a defined topic. Once you've settled on the film you're going to write about, and the argument you're going to make, then you can start your research.

When I was in Grad School, one of my professors told me, "The longer your thesis title, the easier it is to write. What he meant was that a long thesis title narrows down your area of research substantially. For example, "The Horror Film" is an extremely broad title, one that requires an enormous amount of research. "The American Horror Film" narrows the focus to a single nation, while "The American Horror Films of the 1920s" narrows down the time period. The American Horror Films of Director Tod Browning in the 1920s" winnows your topic down even more, while "The American Horror Films of Tod Browning and Lon Chaney in the 1920s" reduces your subject to a mere handful of films. Keep this in mind while deciding on your topic. 5-6 pages is a very short paper, so don't bite off more than you can chew. Instead of writing on *The Exorcist*, you would be better off focusing on "The Use of Light and Shadow in *The Exorcist*" or "Religious Iconography in *The Exorcist*" or something like that. This will also help to focus your paper, and aid you in directing your research.

As far as research goes, start with the UTD library. The material you'll find there has been vetted and reviewed by both peers and editors, ensuring (in most cases) an accurate portrayal of the information you seek. This cannot be said of a number of online sites, as, literally, anyone can post anything without any restraint, and it can be hard to tell the true experts from the enthusiastic fans from those who don't know how much they don't know. I realize that the Internet is a convenient source of information (and, sadly, of misinformation), but I cannot urge you strongly enough to start your research in the library (there are people there who can help you, if you don't know where to start), and then fill in with online sources (not Wikipedia)

Part of your initial research should be finding out who the recognized experts in the field are. The list of authors in your textbook is a good start, but I'd also recommend people like David Skal, Gregory Mank, Rik Worland, Robin Wood, Stephen Prince, and John Landis. Of course, this is not a definitive list; plenty of other writers have written excellent texts on horror films. These are the kinds of references and resources you want to tap for your paper, not a random online site that purports to have in-depth information.

This should go without saying that you'll be best served by starting your research and your writing as soon as possible, rather than waiting until the week before your paper is due. This is an important part of your grade, and one that you can entirely control. Get started sooner rather than later, and you'll have an easier time of things as the semester progresses.

Written Assignment Requirements

What follows are some of my requirements for the written assignments. These are not optional.

- All written assignments will be typed in a 12 pt. standard font (Calibri, Helvetica, Times New Roman, etc.) on white printer paper, printed on one.
- Use 1" margins all around, left justified, and double spaced.
- With that said, however, please don't try to pad your page count by making every sentence a new paragraph. I will not look kindly on this.
- Scrupulously observe the rules of English grammar, spelling, punctuation, citation, etc. I WILL deduct points for sloppy writing, typos, poor grammar, etc.
- I will not repeat my thoughts on plagiarism here, as that topic is covered quite extensively in your syllabus. Suffice it to say I have zero tolerance for any form of academic dishonesty, and expect all the work you hand in to be entirely your own.
- Please do not simply regurgitate the writings and ideas of others. Bring some original insights to this paper. I'm looking for YOUR thoughts, not the recycled thoughts of authors you've read. Don't just tell me that Godzilla is a metaphor for the atomic bomb; we all know that, and we've heard it a million times. It's not wrong, but it's also not original. If that's the main thesis of your paper, you're doing it wrong. Of course, you can mention the metaphorical nature of Godzilla if that helps support your larger argument, but take your paper beyond that.
- Do NOT turn in your first draft. The essence of good writing is Write, Edit, Rewrite, Repeat, Repeat as necessary. As Ernest Hemingway said, "The first draft of anything is [crap]." (No, he didn't say "crap," but a syllabus is no place for an accurate quote in this regard. Look it up if you're interested in what he really said). Your first draft is your starting point. Make it better from there, until you've come up with something you're proud to turn in. Remember, the time you save by not doing a rewrite is fleeting. Grades are forever.
- Proofreading is your friend. Do not rely exclusively on SpellCheck to proof your written assignments, as it is a "dumb" system. It will not, for example, alert you to the use of "tow" instead of "two," as both words are correctly spelled, nor will it reliably guide you in the use of "it's" as opposed to "its" (Hint: "it's" is ONLY used as a contraction for "it is." It is NOT the possessive form of "it."). One old trick that proofreaders use is reading a text backwards. By doing so, you can focus on individual words and not glide over them as you consider whole sentences. It's also never a bad idea to have someone else read through your paper before handing it in.

- Please observe the above requirements. They're pretty simple and straightforward. Deviating from these guidelines without a very good reason will lose you points. Following instructions is an important skill to learn.
- Wikipedia is NOT an acceptable source for citation in a paper. Nor are personal blogs (unless they're written by someone personally involved with the subject of your paper. If you're writing a paper on film music, for example, a personal blog post by Danny Elfman or Hans Zimmer would be appropriate. A blog post by Joe Hyucketyhyuck would not.)

Written Assignment Structure

For any writing assignment of this type, your paper should be broken down into three distinct sections:

- **THESIS STATEMENT:** This is where you provide an overview of your argument. Lay out your argument in broad strokes here, and help me understand your point. Please don't simply tell me what you're going to tell me. Don't get sidetracked here, either, by going off on various tangents. The job of this part of the paper is to express your argument in broad stroke, not to provide all the background your argument requires. That can be done in the next section.
 - As an example of an opening thesis statement, here's the opening from a paper I presented at a conference:

“Japanese *dai kaiju eiga* (literally, giant monster films) are frequently seen as low-brow and ‘cheesy’ by Western audiences due, at least in part, to their often ‘unrealistic’ special effects. Although there are likely multiple causes for this perception that ‘unrealistic’ equals low quality – including social, cultural, and political – one largely overlooked cause, and the one that will be examined in this presentation, is a lack of understanding of the cultural referents that underlie the text rather than any inherent lack of quality on the part of the film. It is my thesis that an understanding of the history and elements of traditional Japanese drama, particularly as embodied in both the oldest form – Noh – and the most popular – Kabuki – will illuminate the cultural foundation upon which these films are set, and thus lead to a reappraisal of their worth as artistic and cultural statements.”
 - Notice that I don't tell the reader what I'm going to tell them, nor do I try and lay out my whole argument in this opening paragraph. In fact, I don't offer any examples or proof or anything here. I simply state my assertion that a lack of understanding of cultural reference points can hinder the enjoyment and understanding of a film from a foreign culture and prepare to move on. This opening paragraph encapsulates my idea, and serves as a proper entry point for the reader.
 - By doing this, the reader knows what I'm talking about, and is prepared to go on to read the rest of the paper, in which I support and defend my position.
- **DEVELOPMENT:** This is where you'll develop your argument, bringing in specific examples to bolster the statements you made above. Here is where you have to convince me of your argument.
 - Here's just one paragraph from my development section, where I talk about the differences between Eastern and Western theater, offered as one difference that must

be understood in order for a Westerner to fully appreciate a Japanese film:

“One thing that many observers of Japanese cinema fail to recognize is the fundamental difference in outlook between Japanese and American dramatic presentations. If one determines that American theater, as epitomized by the Broadway production, is ‘representational’ – that is, the actors on stage behave as if the audience is not present in order to ‘represent’ reality as closely as possible, then Japanese theater, as seen in the traditional Noh and Kabuki plays, is ‘presentational,’ in which the actors acknowledge the audience and make no pretense of presenting ‘reality.’ Indeed, as Earle Ernst states, ‘The actor Nakamura Kichiemon described the Kabuki performance as *honto-rashii uso*, “a plausible lie”: the audience ... is not required to suspend its disbelief, willingly or unwillingly, for it accepts art on the premise of its being nonrealistic’ (Ernst, 81). Therefore, in watching these uniquely Japanese films, one must approach them with an Eastern ‘presentational’ mindset, rather than a Western ‘representational’ mindset.”

- In this section, I bring in a quote from an authoritative source (properly cited) to strengthen my argument. Now I’m getting into the specifics of why I believe what I said in the opening paragraph.
- **CONCLUSION:** This is the wrap-up. Tie everything together here, and bring your argument to a strong conclusion, but don’t simply tell me what you’ve already told me. This is your final chance to make your case.
 - This is often the toughest part of the paper, to effectively wrap things up without just repeating yourself. This is the place for additional insights, but it shouldn’t raise any new questions that you don’t intend to answer. Here’s my conclusion:

“Every culture has its own particular outlook that informs everything that culture produces, including its art, literature, music, and, of course, film. Just as one must consider the ancient Japanese art of *ukiyo-e* – the beautiful woodblock prints that have offered a window into the Japanese aesthetic soul since the early seventeenth century – in the context of the culture that created it, so too must the unique Japanese genre of *dai kaiju eiga* be approached, not as a bastard form of American science fiction movies, but as its own unique and compelling art form. Only when this approach is taken can these films truly speak with the voice that their creators intended.”
 - In this section, I’ve concluded my argument, but without simply restating what I said in the opening. I also end with a statement as to why this argument is important in truly appreciating foreign films, effectively ending the paper with a statement as to why such things matter.
 - Please keep in mind that this paper was 21 double-spaced pages, consisting of more than 6,000 words, so only a small amount is reprinted here. Hopefully, however, this is enough to give you an idea of what I’m looking for.

By utilizing this structure, your paper will be more focused, more persuasive, and, ultimately, more successful.



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The Ultimate Cheatsheet for Critical Thinking

Want to exercise critical thinking skills? Ask these questions whenever you discover or discuss new information. These are broad and versatile questions that have limitless applications!



Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... benefits from this? ... is this harmful to? ... makes decisions about this? ... is most directly affected? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... have you also heard discuss this? ... would be the best person to consult? ... will be the key people in this? ... deserves recognition for this?
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... are the strengths/weaknesses? ... is another perspective? ... is another alternative? ... would be a counter-argument? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... is the best/worst case scenario? ... is most/least important? ... can we do to make a positive change? ... is getting in the way of our action?
Where	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... would we see this in the real world? ... are there similar concepts/situations? ... is there the most need for this? ... in the world would this be a problem? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... can we get more information? ... do we go for help with this? ... will this idea take us? ... are the areas for improvement?
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... is this acceptable/unacceptable? ... would this benefit our society? ... would this cause a problem? ... is the best time to take action? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... will we know we've succeeded? ... has this played a part in our history? ... can we expect this to change? ... should we ask for help with this?
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... is this a problem/challenge? ... is it relevant to me/others? ... is this the best/worst scenario? ... are people influenced by this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... should people know about this? ... has it been this way for so long? ... have we allowed this to happen? ... is there a need for this today?
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... is this similar to _____? ... does this disrupt things? ... do we know the truth about this? ... will we approach this safely? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... does this benefit us/others? ... does this harm us/others? ... do we see this in the future? ... can we change this for our good?