



In this seminar, we will explore Victorian writers' fascination with the uncanny and the occult. In his 1919 essay "The Uncanny," Sigmund Freud describes the uncanny as that "species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and familiar." The uncanny describes that which is unusual, weird, and unnerving but also strangely familiar. For Freud, uncanny feelings can arise from the experience of *deja vu* or from seeing a corpse or waxwork.

Yet what did the uncanny mean in the nineteenth century? In this class, we will explore ways in which the Victorians (and two American authors) grappled with uncanny feelings in a society that was experiencing vast technological and social changes. Our readings – by authors such as Charles Dickens, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and Bram Stoker – will range from ghost stories to gothic novels to essays about new technologies. Students will be required to write a series of response papers, participate in class discussions, and write a lengthy scholarly essay. Please note that this course satisfies the pre-1900 literature requirement of the MA-English degree.

Novels to be purchased (you can use other editions but these are preferred):

- *Lady Audley's Secret*/Mary Elizabeth Braddon/Oxford/ 019957703X
- *Dracula*/Bram Stoker/Oxford/ 0199564094
- *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*/Robert Louis Stevenson/Oxford/ 0199536228

*FYI, you can also find these in free online versions via sites like Project Gutenberg and Archive.org if you prefer.

Evaluation:

Response Papers 25%

Presentation 10%

Participation 20%

Critical Essay Proposal 5%

Critical Essay 18-20 pages; 40%

Total 100%

<p>Mon June 18: Introducing the Uncanny</p> <p>How does Freud define the uncanny? How is the uncanny historically specific?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny” • Excerpts from <i>The Ashgate Research Companion to Nineteenth-century Spiritualism and the Occult</i> (2012), Edited by Tatiana Kontou and Sarah Willburn
<p>Tues June 19: Ghost Stories and Modernity</p> <p>In what ways do ghosts and new technologies intersect in these narratives and essays?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Dickens, “Railway Dreaming” • Charles Dickens, “A Flight” • Charles Dickens, “The Signal-Man” • Margaret Oliphant, “The Open Door” • Rebecca Stern, “Moving Parts and Speaking Parts: Situating Victorian Antitheatricality,” <i>ELH</i> (1998) 65.2.
<p>Wed June 20: Poetry and Uncanny Voices</p> <p>How do these poets experiment with voice? Or with unfamiliar spaces and states?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christina Rossetti, “Goblin Market” • Robert Browning, “My Last Duchess” • Robert Browning, “Porphyria’s Lover” • Emily Dickinson, #339 “I like a look of Agony,” #340 “I felt a Funeral in my Brain,” #372 “After great pain,” and #591 “I heard a fly buzz”
<p>Thurs June 21: Sensation Fiction</p> <p>How is Braddon’s novel ‘sensational’? How does the novel work to defamiliarize Victorian society?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Elizabeth Braddon, <i>Lady Audley’s Secret</i>
<p>Friday June 22: The Expanding Mind</p> <p>How do these narratives explore ideas of clairvoyance or madness? And how do these ideas relate to gender?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Eliot, “The Lifted Veil” • Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper”
<p>Mon June 25: The Uncanny Double</p> <p>What does this novel have to say about Victorian masculinity and identity? About Hurley’s notion of the ‘abhuman’?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.L. Stevenson, <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> • Kelly Hurley, Introduction to <i>The Gothic Body</i> (1996)
<p>Tues June 26: Gothic Others</p> <p>Is Dracula uncanny (think about him as a racialized figure or an ‘abhuman’)? How does the novel engage with new technologies? With the Gothic?</p>	<p>Conference proposals due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bram Stoker, <i>Dracula</i>
<p>Wed June 27: Gothic Cont.</p> <p>What is Martin’s argument? How does Braddon’s story, published before <i>Dracula</i>, offer a different version of the Victorian vampire or the Gothic?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniel Martin, “Some trick of the moonlight: Seduction and the Moving Image in Bram Stoker’s <i>Dracula</i>,” <i>Victorian Literature and Culture</i> (2012) 40.2. • Mary Elizabeth Braddon, “Good Lady Ducayne”
<p>Thurs June 28</p>	<p>Class Conference</p>
<p>Friday June 29</p>	<p>Film screening</p>

July 2-27	Participate in BbLearn activities; consult with Tara in person, via email, or via Skype.
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FINAL ESSAY DUE Friday July 27 on BBLearn by 5pm.

Learning Objectives

- Read and write about literary (and other) texts in a range of genres; more specifically, be able to entertain a range of arguments about a text, develop your own reading of a text, and support that reading using the text itself as well as the work of other scholars in the field—that is, situate yourself in academic conversations
- Make connections between historical contexts and literary texts
- Produce standard features of the profession—including a conference presentation as well as an article-length essay
- Participate in a lively, comfortable classroom community, and actively shape both the class and your own learning experiences

Detailed Evaluation Information:

Short Response Papers (25%):

At five points throughout the term, you will be required to write a response of approximately 500 words to your reading. This is a way to respond to your current reading, to make connections between texts, or to pose questions. Ideally, you will come to some kind of conclusion or reach an argument, but these responses can be looser than a typical academic essay. You might also use the short space as a way to engage with a small point, one particular passage, or to connect your assigned reading to something outside the classroom. **Please note that I will not have specific deadlines for these but you will need to have all five in by the end of the course.** I will check BBLearn daily to see if you have uploaded a response. My feedback will be brief on the responses; if you'd like more detailed feedback (if, for instance, you're interested in turning one into a final paper), then come visit me in my office.

My grading of each short response essay will be based on:

- 1) the quality of its argumentation or line of thought (most important!);
- 2) its effective as well as economical use of references and secondary literature;
- 3) stylistic features such as clarity, coherence, rhetorical elegance, etc.;
- 4) language use and form, i.e. the absence of grammatical or vocabulary errors, typos, formatting errors, mixed fonts, etc. as well as adherence to the MLA style convention.

Participation (20%):

I'm sure you will all participate and I don't need to grade you to encourage you to do so. But giving you a participation grade is a way for me to reward you for your work over the course of our 2 weeks together. Ideally, you will speak and/or ask questions in *each and every class*. You should arrive with at least one possible discussion question, which I may call upon you to read aloud. I'd also recommend that you arrive to class with notes about your reading. Please do not speak over your fellow students, but try to help move our discussion forward productively and supportively. I will also work to create an environment in which you all feel comfortable speaking and asking questions.

Presentation (10%) and Proposal (5%)

Students will be required to give a **15 minute** presentation on June 28. Proposals for these presentations are due by June 26 during class; I will give you feedback that afternoon. The proposal should be about 300 words and explain what you plan to present for your conference presentation.

The proposal should say what you are going to say, and interest your audience in hearing you say it. Here's how:

Telling the audience about what you will say:

- Identify the subject of your paper—the question or problem it raises.
- Locate the subject in terms of a field of scholarship—who/what provides the intellectual context for the question the paper raises.
- Sketch your main argument(s).

Making it interesting:

- Devise a title that is descriptive and inviting.
- Consider finding words that are accessible to both specialists and non-specialists in the field.
- Plan the abstract as a single paragraph that is unified (i.e. one topic) and coherent (i.e. ideas flow continuously). Two paragraphs are OK so long as the abstract as a whole is unified/coherent.
- Edit it carefully for grammar, punctuation, typos, etc.

Once I have approved your proposal, in the penultimate session of this course, we'll hold our own conference in which you will have the chance to present and discuss your ideas with your classmates and conference attendees. This will be open to faculty and graduate students who may be interested in hearing our work. Each student will have the chance to field questions from the audience. *Please be sure to manage your time wisely; you will be cut off if your presentation is too long.*

You should place your argument within a critical school of thought and think about the stakes of your claims. We'll talk more in class about what this means. To encourage questions and comments from your fellow students, you will want to invite them in: speak clearly, engage with your audience, and, most importantly, present a clearly articulated argument. Following your presentation, you should also be prepared to answer questions.

Your presentation will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- 1) Central idea clearly expressed
- 2) Quality/sophistication of idea and line of argument
- 3) Performance including use of media and audience engagement
- 4) Use of secondary criticism and/or references to on-going academic debates

Final essay (40%):

For the final essay for the course, you are expected to develop your own topic. This essay should deliver an original critical perspective and argument in relation to one or more of the themes and texts we will have looked at over the semester. You can integrate ideas from your presentation (and in fact are encouraged to do so) but your paper should demonstrate that you have developed and expanded your thinking further. Please note that this is a **research paper** and you should carefully use criticism and/or theory; your works cited should have **at least six** sources, in addition to your primary texts. Papers should be approximately **18-20 pages**.

You could think of this paper as a draft of a scholarly article, or, potentially, as the beginning of your MA thesis (or non-thesis). You have nearly a month to work on your essay following the conference presentations. I will be free for consultation during this time and I urge everyone to speak with me as they transform their conference presentation into their critical essay. After we break as a class, I will also be available to consult with you about your critical essay via telephone, email, Skype, or in-person discussion. Indeed, the structure of this class demands that we remain in touch during this time so that I can advise you on your progress.

An A essay contributes something new and unique to scholarly conversations about an author, text, or field of study. The A paper articulates a clear argument and supports that argument with insightful observations from the text. It is well-researched and clearly in dialogue with other scholarship. This paper is persuasive and engaging; it has a distinctive voice that speaks with clarity and authority about its subjects. It has no grammatical, usage, punctuation or spelling errors. A B paper usually falls short for either stylistic or substantive reasons. That is, it may have formal errors, disjointed paragraphs, illogical areas, and/or awkward moments; or, it may be weak in some of its arguments. Still, a B paper is above average and consistently strong. A C paper is basically acceptable, but may be weak in voice, lacking in depth, generic in its use of language, or problematic in formal components. I do not expect any of you to get below a C.

My grading of the long essay will be based on:
the relevance of the central claim it makes or question it poses and then answers.
And 1) - 4) as above.

Late Policy:

First, please do your best to avoid handing in a late essay. You know the deadlines now, so please plan ahead. I will deduct 5% per day that a paper is late, including weekends. If your essay is more than a week late, the most you can get for your grade will be 50%.

MLA-Style Resources:

All papers must follow MLA style; *I will not accept any other style of citation.* For help learning the style, visit the Purdue Online Writing Lab's MLA webpage:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

Plagiarism:

I will not tolerate plagiarism in this course—no exceptions. If I discover plagiarism, I will give you a failing grade for the course and refer you to the Dean of Students.

According to university and departmental policy, plagiarism is claiming someone else's work (either ideas or words) as your own. Plagiarism includes:

- Copying, quoting or paraphrasing documents of any kind without proper and explicit citation of sources.
- Use of another person's words or ideas with attribution and explicit citation.
- Submitting another person's work as your own.
- Cowriting work with another scholar and claiming it as solely yours.
- Submitting work for this course that you have previously submitted for a different course, in part or in full.

If you have any questions about what I consider plagiarism, how to cite your work, or university and department policies on plagiarism, please see me.

Accommodations:

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have documented temporary or permanent disabilities. All accommodations must be approved through Disability Support Services located in the Bruce M. Pitman Center, Suite 127, in order to notify your instructor(s) as soon as possible regarding accommodation(s) needed for the course. Contact info for DSS: 885-6307 / cdar@uidaho.edu. Website: www.uidaho.edu/current-students/cdar.