

DC 270 or MCS 348 Topics Supernatural Horror  
Winter Quarter 2015  
Wednesdays, 1:30 – 4:45  
14 East Jackson, 802

**Instructor: Shayna Connelly**  
**Office: CDM 504**  
**Office hours: W, R 10:30 – 12**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Horror films articulate our deepest cultural anxieties about conformity, identity, technology and control. Using supernatural horror as a guide, students reflect on what hauntings say about the human condition. Students explore the relationship between figurative and non-figurative ghosts in films about doppelgängers, ghosts, possession, haunted houses and clairvoyants. Students will also develop creative work utilizing techniques that create dread, fear or disgust in the audience. The course will look at the power of belief, the allure of fear in entertainment and the relationship between cinema, history and popular culture.

**PREREQUISITE: NONE**

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- To understand our attraction to dread, fear and disgust and why supernatural stories endure;
- To analyze cinematic techniques that inspire dread;
- To explore the relationship between cinema and culture through supernatural beliefs;
- To understand Freud's concept of *The Uncanny*, Derrida's 'hauntology', Freeland's 'art-dread' and the role of low-brow & high-brow culture in the discussion of the supernatural;
- To apply horror tropes and cinematic techniques in creative work that impacts an audience.

**TEXTBOOKS AND READINGS:**

*The Horror Film* Peter Hutchings

Additional handouts provided by instructor

**GRADING**

Grades will be given for each assignment. Late work will not be accepted for grading. An assignment worth 10 points (10%) is equal to one full letter grade. In my experience, students who neglect to turn in even one assignment have difficulty passing the class. Extra credit (up to a letter grade per assignment) will be given to students who meet with the instructor during office hours to get individual feedback of their work.

**GRADE BREAKDOWN:**

Response Papers	10%
Scene analysis	15%
Midterm creative assignment (Story, storyboards)	25%
Final (paper <u>or</u> short film)	35%

Research paper: (proposal 10%, rough draft 15%, final draft 10%)

Horror short: (pre-production 10%, rough cut 15%, fine cut w/sound design 10%)

In-class participation 15%

A = 100 – 93, A- = 92 – 90, B+ = 89 – 88, B = 87 – 83, B- = 82 – 80, C+ = 79 – 78, C = 77 – 73, C- = 72 – 70, D+ = 69 – 68, D = 67 – 63, D- = 62 – 60, F = 59 – 0.

**WEEK 1:****SUBSCRIBE TO NEWS ITEMS AND FAQ DISCUSSION BOARDS**

**1/7** DREAD, FEAR AND DISGUST: WHY HORROR?

READ HANDOUT 1: WILSON, *HAUNTED HABITABILITY*  
HOMEWORK: FEAR RESPONSE PAPER

**WEEK 2:**

**1/14** THE RISE OF THE MALEVOLENT HOUSE  
*THE HAUNTING* (WISE, 1963)

READ CHAPTER 2 HUTCHINGS: A WORLD OF MONSTERS  
HOMEWORK: FILM ANALYSIS  
DUE: FEAR RESPONSE PAPER

**WEEK 3:**

**1/21** THE FAMILIAR MADE STRANGE: FREUD'S UNCANNY  
*The Changeling* (MEDAK, 1980)

READ CHAPTER 3 HUTCHINGS: ALL IN THE MIND?  
HOMEWORK: MIDTERM CREATIVE ASSIGNMENT  
DUE: FILM ANALYSIS

**WEEK 4:**

**1/28** THE DEAD ARE AMONG US: DERRIDA'S HAUNTOLOGY  
*THE OTHERS* (AMENÁBAR, 2001)

READ CHAPTER 6 HUTCHINGS: THE SOUNDS OF HORROR

**WEEK 5:**

**2/4** THE MIND AS A HAUNTED SPACE  
*SESSION 9* (ANDERSON, 2001)

READ CHAPTER 5 HUTCHINGS: DEALING WITH DIFFERENCE  
HOMEWORK: FINAL RESEARCH PAPER OR HORROR SHORT PROPOSAL  
DUE: MIDTERM CREATIVE ASSIGNMENT

**WEEK 6:**

**2/11** NEITHER HERE NOR THERE: LIMINILITY & THE SUPERNATURAL  
*AUDREY ROSE* (WISE, 1977)

READ HANDOUT 2: THURSCHELL, *THE GHOST WORLDS OF MODERN ADOLESCENCE*  
HOMEWORK: WORK ON FINAL  
DUE: FINAL RESEARCH PAPER OR HORROR SHORT PROPOSAL

**WEEK 7:**

**2/18** POSSESSION: EVIL FOR EVIL'S SAKE  
*THE OMEN* (DONNER, 1976)

HOMEWORK: WORK ON FINAL  
READ CHAPTER 7 HUTCHINGS: PERFORMING HORROR

**WEEK 8:**

**2/25** OVERCOMING BELIEF: ARROGANCE, IGNORANCE, CLAIRVOYANCE  
*DON'T LOOK NOW* (ROEG, 1973)

READ CHAPTER 8 HUTCHINGS: MODERN HORROR AND THE 70S

**WEEK 9**

**3/4** HORROR VS. TERROR: THE IMPACT OF 9/11 ON HORROR CINEMA  
*SINISTER* (DERRICKSON, 2012) OR *OCULUS* (2014)

READ HANDOUT 3: O'HARA, *MAKING THEIR PRESENCE KNOWN*  
DUE: FINAL PAPER ROUGH DRAFT OR ROUGH CUT HORROR SHORT

**WEEK 10**

**3/11** THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT: SCARY MOMMIES AND HORRIFIC OFFSPRING  
*THE BABADOOK* (KENT, 2014)

READ HANDOUT 4: *HORROR AND THE MONSTROUS-FEMININE CREED & PRODUCTION & REPRODUCTION* O'FLINN

**WEEK 11/ FINALS WEEK:**

3/18 2:00 – 5:00 The Horror of Finals (Surprise Film Screening)

**\*\*\*\*\* FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE 3/18 @ 11:59 CST UPLOADED TO D2L \*\*\*\*\***

**OR**

**\*\*\*\*\* FINAL FILM DUE 3/18 @ 11:59 CST VIA WETRANSFER.COM \*\*\*\*\***

**COURSE POLICIES:**

In addition to the DePaul University course policies (see student handbook), the following policies apply to this course:

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES** – Students are responsible for meeting the expectations in the syllabus. The instructor will not remind students of assignment deadlines. In the event of an absence it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor for homework assignments. You are still responsible for getting the assignment details and turning it in on time.

**ETIQUETTE** – Students must practice respectful, professional behavior in person, online and via email communications. Part of respect in the classroom means being fully prepared for class and proofreading your work. I stop reading at the third typo/grammatical error.

**DISCUSSION GUIDELINES** – Active participation in class is expected from everyone. Students who are quick to respond or who have difficulty tolerating silence must help students who require more time to gather their thoughts by allowing them to speak. You will be downgraded for monopolizing discussions or always being first to respond to the teacher. Students who are more introverted are still required to speak in class. Please let me know how I can facilitate your participation in class.

**HANDOUT & ASSIGNMENT COPIES** – Handout and assignment copies are available on [d2l.depaul.edu](http://d2l.depaul.edu)

**READING ASSIGNMENTS** – Assigned readings are required. End of discussion.

**FILM VIEWING** – Students are required to watch the films in class. Leaving early or sleeping through a film will result in an absence. You cannot hide – I can tell what you're doing. Films screened in class (and a few more) are available to stream online at coltube. Go to <http://coltube.cdm.depaul.edu> and sign in using your campus connect information. Choose the correct course and term on the left in order to access films for the class.

**DEADLINES** – Late assignments will not be accepted for grading and written feedback will be given at the instructor's discretion. You will not be eligible for an A in the class unless you turn in all assignments on time.

**ATTENDANCE** – Attendance and attention in class are mandatory. Any absence (missing more than 15 minutes of class time per session) will impact your grade. Each student is allowed ONE absence (equal to two tardies) before your grade is affected.

**ILLNESS** – Do not attend class if you are ill (heavy cough, fever, vomiting) or think you might be coming down with something worse than a cold. If you show up visibly sick, you may be asked to go home. In order to prevent a consequence with the attendance and deadline policies, contact me by email prior to missing a class due to illness and continue to keep me updated until you return. Students are required to be proactive in keeping up with the coursework. Every situation will be handled according to individual circumstance at the instructor's discretion. Students with long-term illnesses (missing more than 1 week of class) should contact the Dean of Students office to inquire about a medical withdrawal.

**Absolutely no consideration will be given without advanced notice, even with a doctor's note.**

**INCOMPLETES** – No incompletes will be given.

**COMPUTER/SMART PHONE USE** – I can tell the difference between using your laptop to take notes and using it for other purposes. Turn off your phone during class. No screens allowed during film screenings.

**PLAGIARISM** – Plagiarism on assignments or cheating on exams are serious offenses and earn the student a failing grade for the class and can lead to an Academic Integrity Violation. Students are expected to understand what constitutes original research and how to use proper citation methods. All papers are automatically run through anti-plagiarism software turnitin.com.

**INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY** – Please email any time you have a question or concern about the class. I try to respond to email within 24 hours, but during evenings and weekends it may take me longer to respond. If you are contacting me at the last minute about an assignment, you may not get a response before the deadline and no extensions will be granted. If you are unable to meet during my offices hours, contact me to make other arrangements.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES** – Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted:

The Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at +1 (773) 325-1677, Student Center #370.

**ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS** – This course includes instructional content delivered via audio and video. If you have any concerns about your ability to access and/or understand this material in its default format, please notify me within the first week of the course so accommodations can be made.

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted:

The Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at +1 (773) 325-1677, Student Center #370.

**CONTENT CHANGES** – This syllabus may be amended as the course proceeds. You will be notified of all changes.

**ADDRESSING THE INSTRUCTOR** – Please call me by my first name in both emails and in person. If my kids' friends call me Shayna (rhymes with Dana), you can, too.