

Literature of the Supernatural

Fall Semester 2019

Dr. McQuiston – emcquiston@heritagehall.com

Course Description:

In this course, we will examine stories about haunting—not just ghosts and other weird creatures, but places and people who cannot seem to escape their pasts. Our examination will range from some of the earliest narratives in the English tradition (like *Beowulf* and *Macbeth*), to some very recent works (like Alice Sebold's 2009 novel *The Lovely Bones*).

We'll consider these far-reaching questions, among others: What do ghost stories reveal about the forces and fears surrounding us in the modern world? How do these stories allow us to explore anxieties and fantasies involving identity, death, and sexuality that often seem taboo in our everyday lives? In addition to readings, coursework will also include response and research papers as well as a midterm and final exam.

Required Texts:

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth* (Folger Edition). 2003. ISBN 9780743477109

Jackson, Shirley. *The Haunting of Hill House*. 2006. ISBN 978-0143039983

Sebold, Alice. *The Lovely Bones*. 2009. ISBN 978-0316044936

Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol*. 1991. ISBN 978-0486268651.

Workload:

Any literature class requires a great deal of reading, and this one is no exception. I have done my best to keep the load manageable, and there will be regular quizzes to encourage you not to fall behind.

Frequent writing assignments of varying lengths and two major exams will also help you develop the skills you will need to be a successful literary scholar.

It is your responsibility to stay current with the posted assignment and reading schedules. Don't assume I will email you with reminders! Changes to those schedules may also be announced in class, so be sure to communicate with me if you miss a class session.

Major Projects:

As the semester goes on, you will develop strategies for identifying specific aspects or attributes of a given text, and become more sophisticated and confident in your ability to analyze what we read. You will write three shorter close-analysis papers (2-3 pages), and one longer formal research paper. Genres of composition will include expository and research writing, argumentative essays, close readings, and personal narratives.

Mid-term and final comprehensive exams reward your mastery of the course materials.

Class Policies:

- **Bring your book to class.** Literature courses don't work if you don't have the literature.
- Laptops are for class work **only**. Please exercise self-restraint.
- Cell phones must be silenced and put away during class. Those who text during class may be asked to surrender their phone for the remainder of the period.
- You are responsible for catching up on any material, assignments, and announcements you miss due to absence.

Email Etiquette

You are welcome to contact me outside of class by email. I try to respond to emails within 24 hours, or 48 on weekends; any email sent after 5pm will be answered the following day.

Grades

Grades are determined by dividing the total number of points earned during a marking period by the total number of points possible. Final grades are calculated as follows:

- Classwork and Daily Assignments: 15%
- Short Essays: 20%
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Term Paper: 30%
- Final Exam: 20%

Papers and other take-home assignments are due at the start of class. Late assignments are penalized at the rate of 10% per day, including weekends and holidays. If you have difficulty meeting a due date, you must inform me at least forty-eight hours before the assignment is due.

Lagniappe

You may hand in your Lagniappe Card in return for an extra 24 hours to complete any take-home assignment, without penalty. *This excludes quizzes, exams, presentations, or in-class writing exercises.*