

Introduction to Gothic Fiction

Do you read
efficiently
in English?

¿Te gustan las historias de terror, el suspenso psicológico, los monstruos, las casas embrujadas o los objetos malditos?

Entonces este curso es para ti.

A lo largo de siete semanas exploraremos algunas de las obras más representativas de la literatura gótica en lengua inglesa y descubriremos cómo sus temas siguen presentes en muchas de las historias que consumimos hoy: desde el cine y las series hasta los videojuegos y la cultura popular.

Leeremos cuentos de autores como Edgar Allan Poe, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, W. W. Jacobs y Robert Louis Stevenson, y los pondremos en diálogo con episodios seleccionados de la serie *Masters of Horror*. Hablaremos de locura, identidad, dobles, monstruos, deseo, muerte, culpa y todo aquello que hace del Gótico uno de los géneros más fascinantes de la literatura.

Más que un curso sobre historias de miedo, este es un espacio para descubrir cómo el horror nos ayuda a reflexionar sobre nuestras obsesiones, nuestros miedos y nuestra manera de entender el mundo.

¿Qué haremos en clase?

- **Leer y analizar** cuentos breves en inglés.
- **Ver y discutir** episodios seleccionados de *Masters of Horror*.
- **Comparar** literatura y medios audiovisuales.
- **Conversar y debatir** completamente en inglés.
- **Desarrollar** habilidades de lectura crítica y análisis cultural.

¿Este curso es para mí?

Si tienes un inglés avanzado y te interesan la literatura, el cine, las series, los videojuegos y la cultura popular, este curso es para ti.

No necesitas haber estudiado literatura previamente. Solo curiosidad, disposición para leer en inglés y ganas de descubrir por qué el Gótico sigue siendo una de las tradiciones más influyentes de la cultura contemporánea.

SYLLABUS

Introduction to Gothic Fiction

Course Description

This course offers an introduction to Gothic fiction through the study of short literary works and selected episodes from the television anthology *Masters of Horror*. Beginning with the origins and evolution of the Gothic tradition, students will explore its defining themes, conventions, and narrative strategies before examining how these elements continue to shape contemporary horror.

The course focuses on key Gothic motifs such as madness, the divided self, monstrosity, forbidden knowledge, and the return of the dead. Through close reading, class discussion, and comparative analysis, students will examine the relationship between literary texts and audiovisual adaptations, identifying both continuities and transformations in the Gothic imagination from the nineteenth century to the present.

Designed for advanced English language learners, the course also aims to strengthen critical reading, analytical writing, and oral discussion skills while expanding students' literary vocabulary and cultural knowledge.

General Objective

To introduce students to the principal themes, conventions, and historical development of Gothic fiction through the analysis of short literary works and contemporary audiovisual adaptations.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- **Identify** the defining characteristics of Gothic fiction.
- **Explain** the historical development of the Gothic tradition.
- **Analyze** Gothic literary texts using appropriate literary terminology.
- **Compare** literary works with their contemporary audiovisual counterparts.
- **Recognize** recurring Gothic themes across different historical periods.
- **Develop** critical interpretations supported by textual evidence.
- **Communicate** literary analysis effectively in both written and spoken English.

Methodology

The course combines literary analysis with audiovisual studies through an interactive and discussion-based approach. Each unit includes the close reading of a short literary text and the screening of a selected episode from *Masters of Horror*. Classroom activities include guided discussions, comparative analysis, collaborative work, and short analytical writing assignments designed to develop critical thinking and advanced reading skills.

Weekly Schedule

TOPIC 1

What Is Gothic Fiction?

Reading

Introductory essay (to be assigned)

Screening

Selected audiovisual excerpts

Topics

- Origins of Gothic fiction
- Gothic vs. Horror
- The Gothic imagination
- Fear and the Sublime
- Gothic settings
- Gothic conventions

TOPIC 2

The Evolution of the Gothic

Reading

Introductory essay (to be assigned)

Screening

Selected audiovisual excerpts

Topics

- The supernatural
- The uncanny
- The Gothic hero
- Gothic monsters
- Psychological horror
- From Gothic fiction to modern horror

TOPIC 3

The Haunted Mind

Reading

The Yellow Wallpaper —
Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Screening

Dreams in the Witch-House

Topics

- Madness and perception
- The unreliable narrator
- Dreams vs. reality
- Haunted spaces
- Isolation
- Psychological terror

TOPIC 4

The Monstrous Double

Reading

William Wilson — Edgar Allan Poe

Screening

Jenifer

Topics

- The Doppelgänger
- Identity
- Obsession
- Moral conflict
- The divided self
- Psychological horror

TOPIC 5

Desire and the Body

Reading

To be determined

Screening

Deer Woman

Topics

- The monstrous feminine
- Desire and transgression
- The Gothic body
- Folklore
- Civilization vs. instinct
- Revenge

TOPIC 6

The Forbidden Object

Reading

The Monkey's Paw — W. W. Jacobs

Screening

Cigarette Burns

Topics

- Forbidden knowledge
- Cursed objects
- Obsession
- Wishes and consequences
- The return of the repressed
- Moral ambiguity

TOPIC 7

Death Never Ends

Reading

The Body Snatcher —
Robert Louis Stevenson

Screening

Homecoming

Topics

- Death and resurrection
- Guilt
- The past returns
- Ethical transgression
- The uncanny body
- Social criticism

Assessment

Percentage	Component
20%	Participation and class discussion
20%	Weekly reading responses
20%	In-class analytical activities
40%	Final comparative essay

Required Readings

- Introductory essays (provided by the instructor)
- ***The Yellow Wallpaper*** — Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- ***William Wilson*** — Edgar Allan Poe
- Reading to be determined
- ***The Monkey's Paw*** — W. W. Jacobs
- ***The Body Snatcher*** — Robert Louis Stevenson

Required Screenings

- Selected introductory audiovisual excerpts
- Selected introductory audiovisual excerpts
- *Dreams in the Witch-House*
- *Jenifer*
- *Deer Woman*
- *Cigarette Burns*
- *Homecoming*

Recommended Bibliography

- Botting, Fred. Gothic.
- Hogle, Jerrold E., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*.
- Punter, David. *The Literature of Terror*.
- Spooner, Catherine. *Contemporary Gothic*.

Course Policies

Students are expected to complete all assigned readings before each class and actively participate in discussions. Regular attendance is essential, as the course relies heavily on collaborative analysis and in-class activities. All written assignments must represent the student's own work and follow the principles of academic integrity.