FMS 360 Media Genres: Horror Films

Course Description: This class surveys the history, stylistic development and social reception of the horror film and its transformations from artistic and literary fantasy to movie house staple. Figures and characters from horror films permeate our culture as they depict culturally taboo behaviors and representations that are constructed to elicit a fear response from the viewer and have been appealing to audiences for over a century. In this course, we will look at a variety of films that represent the shifts in the genre from the gothic literature inspired silent film, through the "golden age" of monster movies, the slasher films of the 1970s-80s, the fusion of horror and comedy, and other key transitions in the genre. We will engage relevant scholarship to examine how these films engage discourse related to gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation.

Credits: 3

Instructor: Dr. Michelle Martinez (she/her)

**Contact Info:** michelle.j.martinez@asu.edu

Course Meets: Online

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the evolution of the horror genre
2. Think critically about the significance of horror films as a reflection of popular culture and social anxieties
3. Identify and articulate conventions and themes at work throughout the genre
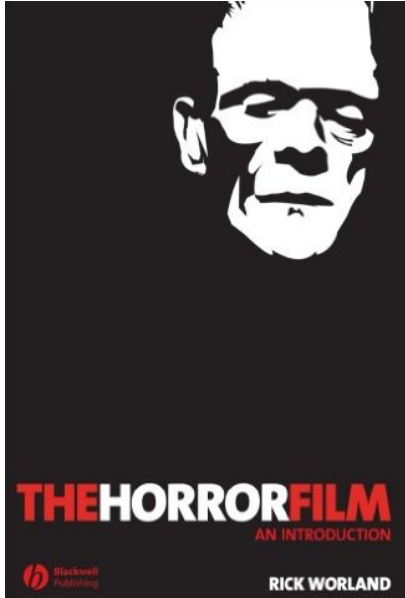
Rick Worland's The Horror Film: An Introduction is available in the ASU bookstore or on Amazon (in ebook form or paperback) and can be borrowed through the ASU library. You will also be reading a number of articles, all of which are available on Canvas.

Peter Turner's The Blair Witch Project (Links to an external site.) is available as an ebook through the ASU Libraries website.

Ancillary readings provided as PDF or via web link.

Screenings:

Screenings are required in the form of full feature length films as well as clips. Clips will be provided, however full feature screenings must be rented by student through streaming services and other places rentals are available.

Course Access:

Your ASU courses can be accessed through MyASU and asu.instructure.com; bookmark both in the event that one site is down.

Computer Requirements:

This is a fully online course; therefore, it requires a computer with internet access and the following technologies:

- Web browsers (Chrome (Links to an external site.), Mozilla Firefox (Links to an external site.), or Safari (Links to an external site.))
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (Links to an external site.) (free)
- Adobe Flash Player (Links to an external site.) (free)
- Webcam, microphone, headset/earbuds, and speaker
- Microsoft Office (Microsoft 365 is free (Links to an external site.) for all currently-enrolled ASU students)
- Reliable broadband internet connection (DSL or cable) to stream videos.

Note: A smartphone, iPad, Chromebook, etc. will not be sufficient for completing your work in ASU Online courses. While you will be able to access course content with mobile devices, you must use a computer for all assignments, quizzes, and virtual labs.

Help:

For technical support, use the Help icon in the black global navigation menu in your Canvas course or call the ASU Help Desk at +1-(855) 278-5080. Representatives are available to assist you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Student Success:

To be successful:

- check the course daily
- read announcements
- read and respond to course email messages as needed
- complete assignments by the due dates specified
- communicate regularly with your instructor and peers
- create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track
- access ASU Online Student Resources (Links to an external site.)

Grading:

Your grade will be determined based on the following grading schema:

Grade	Points Range
A+	300+
A	272 -299

A-	260 -271
B+	252 - 259
B	232 - 251
B-	220 - 231
C+	212 - 219
C	180 - 111
D	140 - 179
E	0-139

Submitting Assignments:

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, MUST be submitted to the designated area of Canvas. Do not submit an assignment via email.

Assignment due dates follow Arizona Standard time. Click the following link to access the Time Converter (Links to an external site.) to ensure you account for the difference in Time Zones. Note: Arizona does not observe daylight savings time.

Grading Procedure:

Grades reflect your performance on assignments and adherence to deadlines. Grades on assignments will be available within 72 hours of the due date in the Gradebook.

Participation in the discussion board, completion of quizzes, and a 4-5 page essay total 400 possible points.

Participation/Discussion Board (100 Points)

You are responsible for participating in the threaded discussions that take place in Blackboard. You should post substantive comments. You will be required to answer each question within each prompt. Once you have completed your own original answers, you must then respond to one classmate. These posts must keep up with the progress of the course. Engage the substance of the readings and screenings assigned to each lesson. Use scenes from the films and quotes from the readings to support the claims you make in your posts. The teaching team will keep track of your participation, including assessing the value of what you bring to this interactivity. Refrain from flaming or ad hominem comments. Be rigorous but constructive.

Critical Review Essay Part 1: Proposal (100 Points)

You will choose **two** films: one we have screened (or seen clips of) for class released **before 1968** and **one released after 1968** to perform an analysis of the films through an academic critical eye and to examine the changes in society and industry using one of the following:

Industrial Concerns—production code/ratings system/censorship; studio/budget constraints/ "B" movie; Significance of Academy Awards to Horror/Auteurism and horror; marketing/presold/target audience; shifts in form/effects/techniques; etc.

Representational Analysis—focusing upon issues of race; ethnicity; gender; sexual orientation; class; religion; culture; or intersections thereof and how these constructions reflect, refract and/or shape societal views, tensions and fears/moral panics.

You must use **at least two academic secondary sources** to support your claims OR to provide a lens or theory (ex: Carrol's taxonomy of monsters; Kristeva's abjection; Creed's castrating death mother; Clover's final girl; etc.) by which to perform your analysis. Follow MLA style guidelines.

For Part 1: Proposal, you must turn in a document that contains the following:
1. Your title, introduction and thesis statement.
2. An outline of the proposed paper.
3. An annotated bibliography with your proposed sources.

Critical Review Essay Part 2 (100 Points)

You will expand your work from Part 1 and develop it into a 6-8 page paper with works cited.

You must use **at least three sources total** (at least two of which are peer-reviewed, academic sources) to support your claims OR to provide a lens or theory (ex: Carrol's taxonomy of monsters; Kristeva's abjection; Creed's castrating death mother; Clover's final girl; etc.) by which to perform your analysis. Follow MLA style guidelines.

Your grade will be based on the clarity and relevance of your thesis statement, clear and concise writing, and adherence to the assignment guidelines. Your paper must be double-spaced, include one-inch margins all-around with a works cited attached.

Follow the appropriate University policies to request an accommodation for religious practices (Links to an external site.) or to accommodate a missed assignment due to University-sanctioned activities (Links to an external site.).

Communicating With the Instructor:

Community Forum

This course uses a discussion topic called "Community Forum" for general questions and comments about the course. Prior to posting a question or comment, check the syllabus, announcements, and existing posts to ensure it's not redundant. You are encouraged to respond to the questions of your classmates.

Email questions of a personal nature to your instructor. You can expect a response within 72 hours.

ASU email is an official means of communication (Links to an external site.) among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon email in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email regularly.

Please address each correspondence to Dr. Martinez, and sign the name you prefer to be called. Adhere to academic grammar and a professional tone in each correspondence.

All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU email account.

Course Schedule

Module 1: Scary Screens

Lesson 1: Horror as Genre

- Key terms, codes and conventions, genre monsters and characters, intertextuality
- Reading: "Chapter One: Undying Monsters" (Worland)
- Screening: Cabin in the Woods (2012)
- Website: "Why Do We Enjoy Scary Movies?"
- Clips: The Shining (1980); Halloween (1978); A Nightmare on Elm Street (1984)
- Short Videos: "5 Types of Monsters"
- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate.

Lesson 02: Early Instances

- History, art and theater origins, German Expressionism
- Reading: "Chapter Two: A Short History of the Horror Film to 1945" (Worland)
- Screenings: The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)
- Website: "Why Our Brains Love to Be Scared"; "What is the Science Behind Fear?"
- Clips: Nosferatu (Links to an external site.)(1922); The Devil's Castle (1897); Frankenstein (Edison 1910)
- Short Videos: History of Horror
- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate.

Module 2: The Golden Age of Horror

Lesson 03: Vampire Dreams

- Literary origins, the body genre, The Uncanny, The Abject, sex and desire
- Reading: "Chapter 12: Demon Lover" (Worland)
- Screening: Dracula (1931)
- Website: "The Wild Evolution of Vampires from Bram Stoker to Dracula Untold"
- Clips: Dracula (1958); Brides of Dracula (1960); Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992);
- Short Videos: "The Vampire in Literature and Film"; "Spanish Dracula"
- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate.

Lesson 04: Frankenstein Goes to Hollywood

- Social reception, adaptation, horror as industry
- Reading: "Chapter Six: Frankenstein (1931) and Hollywood Expressionism" (Worland)
- Screenings: Frankenstein (1931)
- Website: "How Frankenstein Became Human"
- Clips: Bride of Frankenstein (1935); Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein (1948)
- Short Videos: "A History of Horror with Mark Gatiss pt 1" (excerpt 3:03-
- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate

Module 3: Nuances In Horror

Lesson 05: The Legacy of Lewton

- Val Lewton and RKO, Freudian influences, suggestive horror
- Reading: "Chapter Seven: Cat People (1942), Lewton, Freud and Suggestive Horror"(Worland)
- Screening: Cat People (1942)
- Clips: I Walked with a Zombie (1943); The Body Snatcher(1945); Isle of the Dead (1945)
- Short Videos: "Frame by Frame: Val Lewton"

- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate.

Lesson 06: Fifties Fright

- McCarthy era paranoia, Sci-Fi, conformity, gender
- Reading:"Chapter Eight: Horror In the Age of Anxiety" (Worland)
- Screening:Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)
- Clips: The Thing (1951); The Thing (1982); Invasions of the Body Snatchers (1978); The Day The Earth Stood Still (1951); The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920); Stepford Wives
- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate.

Module 4: Horror and the Production Code

Lesson 07: Hitchcock and The Code

- The Hays Code, Hitchock's Code Busting Style, The Death Mother, The Castrating Mother
- Reading: Chapter Three: pages 85-117(Worland)
- Screening: Psycho (1961)
- Website: History of Horror with Mark Gatiss pt 3 (excerpt)
- Clips: The Birds (1963), North by Northwest (1959), Vertigo (1958)
- Short Videos: "Top Ten Alfred Hitchcock Movies"
- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate.

Lesson 08: Romero and The Exploitation Era

- Zombies, race relations, societal refractions, exploitation films
- Reading: "Chapter Three: 1945 to the Present" (Worland)
- Screening: Night of the Living Dead
- Website: LAtimes.com: "George Romero" (tribute)
- Clips: The Texas Chainsaw Massacre(1974); Dawn of the Dead (1978); The Last House on the Left (1972)
- Short Videos: "George Romero's Zombies Explained"; "George Romero Talks Night of the Living Deadand Zombies"; "History of Horror with Mark Gatiss pt 3" (excerpt)
- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate.

Module 5: Horror and Gender

Lesson 09: Slashers and Splatters

- The final girl, suburban fears, the rise of a subgenre
- Readings: "Chapter 10: The Shape of the Slasher Film" (Worland)
- Screening: Halloween (1978)
- Short Video: "The Suburbs in Horror Films"
- Website: "Horror House: The Role of the Domestic Setting in Scary Movies"
- Clips: Friday the 13th(1980); Nightmare on Elm Street (1984)
- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate.

Lesson 10: Monsters Among Us

- Marketing, religious themes, social reception, woman as monster
- Reading: "Chapter Four: Monsters Among Us" (Worland);
- Screening: The Exorcist(1973)

- Clips: Carrie (1976); The Conjuring (2013)
- Short Videos:
- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate.

Module 6: Horror with a Side of Comedy

Lesson 11: Comical Horror

- Genre blending balance, intertextuality, camp
- Readings: "Chapter Eleven: Slapstick Horror"
- Screening: Re-Animator (1985)
- Clips: Shaun of the Dead (2004);Scream (1996); Gremlins (1984)
- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate.

Lesson 12: Intertexual Demons in National Cinema

- National Cinema, Hollywood's Peripheral, The "Man Alone" Trope, Meta-Horror
- Reading: Allan Cameron on New Zealand Horror Films
- Screening: What We Do in the Shadows (2014)
- Clips: Bad Taste (1996); Black Sheep (2000)
- Short Videos: "A Vampire's Guide to Vellington"; "The Making of Bad Taste"
- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate.

Module 7: Modern Conventions

Lesson 13:   Less Is More Scary

- Found footage; internet marketing and mythology; docu-horror;
- Reading: The Blair Witch Project (Turner) Chapters 2 and 4
- Screening: The Blair Witch Project (1999)
- Website: www.theblairwitch.com
- Clips: Cloverfield; Paranormal Activity; Trollhunter
- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate.

Lesson 14: Horror as Social Commentary

- Social commentary; Race, Canon and Genre;
- Readings: "How Get Out Deconstructs Racism for White People" (Romano)
- Screening: Get Out (2016)
- Clips: Key and Peele
- Discuss: Answer each question and engage with your classmates in discussion and debate.

ASU Online Course Policies

View the ASU Online Course Policies (Links to an external site.)

Accessibility Statements

View the ASU Online Student Accessibility (Links to an external site.) page to review accessibility statements for common tools and resources used in ASU Online courses.

If any other tools are used in this course, links to the accessibility statements will be listed below this sentence.

Syllabus Disclaimer

The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. Remember to check your ASU email and the course site often.

Disability Accommodations

Qualified students with disabilities who will require disability accommodations in this class are encouraged to make their requests to me at the beginning of the semester either during office hours or by appointment. Note: Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is required. Disability information is confidential.

Establishing Eligibility for Disability Accommodations: Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) should contact DRC immediately. Students should contact the Disability Resource Center on the campus that your class is being held. DRC offices are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday. Check the DRC website (Links to an external site.) for eligibility and documentation policies.

Policy Against Threatening behavior

All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student (whether on-or off campus) must be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. If either office determines that the behavior poses or has posed a serious threat to personal safety or to the welfare of the campus, the student will not be permitted to return to campus or reside in any ASU residence hall until an appropriate threat assessment has been completed and, if necessary, conditions for return are imposed. ASU PD, the Office of the Dean of Students, and other appropriate offices will coordinate the assessment in light of the relevant circumstances.

Title IX

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs (Links to an external site.).
As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling (Links to an external site.), is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO LEARN WHEN YOU ARE HUNGRY, UNSAFE, OR INSECURE ABOUT YOUR WELLBEING.

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, who lacks a safe and stable place to live, or who is grappling with concerns such as mental or physical health, loss and grief, justice system involvement, immigration status, or persistent discrimination, violence, or trauma, including sexual violence (Links to an external site.), and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact one or more of the following for support:

ASU [Dean of Students (Links to an external site.)](#) - Student Advocacy and Assistance (480-965-6547)
ASU [Counseling Services (Links to an external site.)](#) (480-965-6146 or after business hours, 480-921-1006)
ASU [Campus Safety (Links to an external site.)](#)
The local agencies that provide emergency food boxes, meals, and fresh produce are listed [here (Links to an external site.)](#).

Land Acknowledgement

We want to acknowledge that Arizona State University sits on the original homelands of the Yavapai, Akimel O'odham and Hohokam peoples. It is our intention to honor and respect the many Indigenous peoples connected to the land that is the locus of this course.