

University of Pittsburgh
Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures
SLAV 0880: Vampire: Blood and Empire (Online Hybrid)

Fall 2018
Day and Time: Online, with 3 Saturday sessions
Room: Cathedral of Learning G18
CLS: 24038

Instructor: Dr. Erin Alpert
Email: era17@pitt.edu
Office hours: Phone or Skype (by appointment)

Objectives

This course examines the phenomenon of vampirism in verbal and visual culture from different periods in various cultures (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Russia, Serbia, France, England, America). Why do vampires capture the imagination especially of Anglophone readers and viewers? What qualities does the vampire incarnate? Which historical events or customs have triggered particular enthusiasm for depicting the undead? How has the depiction of the vampire evolved over centuries? Our discussions will address these and related issues as we analyze stories, novels, films, legends, fairy tales, and historical studies, focusing on vampires from a variety of critical perspectives and contextualizing the works in the cultures that produced them.

Course Goals

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Discuss the nature and function of the vampiric figure in what we loosely consider "traditional" cultures, and how these have changed as they have been incorporated into popular culture.
- Analyze vampiric texts along the broad lines of theoretical perspectives, e.g. psychoanalysis.
- Analyze the vampiric texts and figures in terms of gender and sexuality in society.

Form of the Course

This is an online hybrid course. This means that the bulk of the course will be conducted online. Here you will find course materials, communicate with your instructor and your classmates, and find information on and submit all tasks and assignments. You should access the course website frequently and check your messages at least once per day. In addition, we will meet face to face on three Saturdays over the course of the semester. We will use this time to screen films and film clips, and we will discuss them in the context of the readings we have been doing for the course. If you cannot come to the Saturday sessions, and/or will not have regular access to the internet, you should rethink taking this class.

Attendance

Since this is predominately an online course, you are free to study at the place and time of day of your choice (with the exception of the Saturday sessions and the exams), as long as you complete each assignment by midnight on the due date. You have to complete your readings in time to participate in the online discussion, and your discussion grade will depend on the thoroughness of your participation on the discussion boards. This means that you need to log into the course

website every day, or at least once every two days. The best way to succeed in the course is to keep up with the reading to ensure that you are posting thoughtful comments and questions during the week for which the reading is assigned.

Workload

This is not an easy class. I will give you as much help as I can, both in introducing the material, moderating discussion, and answering questions, but I expect this course to challenge you. You should plan on an average of at least twelve hours a week for study and activity work, but some of you may spend considerably more time than that, particularly if you very actively involved in the discussion boards.

Technology and Skills

I expect you to have at least basic computer skills, such as the ability to use a mouse and keyboard, use word-processing software, use an internet browser, etc. You must also have access to an internet connection and browser.

Email Policy

Each student is issued a University email address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This email address may be used by the University (and me) for official communication with students. You are expected to read email sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve you from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an email forwarding service that allows students to read their email via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their email from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If email is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University email address. Therefore, please check your Pitt email regularly; “I didn’t get it,” or “It must have been lost” are not acceptable excuses for missing pertinent information. Please manage your email quota to ensure that you continue to receive important messages.

Course Website

This course was developed using a web course tool called Blackboard. All course materials, tasks, assignments, exams, etc. (except for the required books) will be online. You will use your main Pitt account to log in to the course at CourseWeb (<http://courseweb.pitt.edu>). This course site will be available to you from the first day of the term.

If you haven’t used Blackboard before, in order to get started with a Blackboard course, please see the Blackboard Student Manual at <http://library.blackboard.com/ref/ac6a8266-81c9-423f-a187-6cf4f7a505b7/index.htm>. If you need further help, the Pitt Technology Help Desk Team provides technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can be reached at 412-624-HELP, helpdesk@pitt.edu, or <http://technology.pitt.edu/Help.aspx>.

Interaction with the Instructor

I will communicate with you primarily through the discussion boards and through email. I will monitor the discussion boards all week, asking follow-up questions and responding to student posts as necessary. I will also respond to individual concerns and questions through email; my address is era17@pitt.edu. Unless something unusual arises, I will check the discussion boards and my email at least once a day on weekdays, usually during typical working hours. Late night or weekend emails will likely have a longer wait time for a response. I highly suggest looking at each week's assignment on Monday or Tuesday, even if you cannot complete it until later, to make sure you have time for all your questions to be answered.

Course Requirements and Grading

Students are required to:

- Complete the assignments scheduled (readings, films, quizzes, discussions)
- Participate actively and intelligently in discussions
- Take two scheduled exams

Your grade in this class will be made up of the following:

- Reading Quizzes = 20%
- Reflective Questions = 15%
- Class Discussions = 35%
- Exams = 30% (equally weighted – 15% each)

Exams will consist of multiple choice and essay sections. The multiple choice portion **MUST** be completed at the CIDDE testing center. You will need to plan ahead and check their hours the week of your exam. Visit their website for more information:

<http://www.cidde.pitt.edu/administration/testing-centers/>

The essay section is open book / open note and may be completed at home on your own time, as long as it is submitted by the deadline.

I expect you to have a good command of the English language and be able to express yourselves clearly. Although typos are an unavoidable part of life, I expect you to proofread and spell-check your posts and all other assignments **before** you submit them.

Late Work: Late work may be submitted for partial credit, depending on how late the assignment is turned in. In order to receive any credit for late work, the student must notify the instructor when the work has been submitted and is ready to be graded. Otherwise, the late work will receive a 0.

Class Participation (Discussion Board): Participation is an essential part of this course. You **MUST** participate in the course's discussions. Class discussions will take place in the Discussion Board of Blackboard for each module. I will post discussion questions to start each thread. These questions will be mainly about the assigned readings and your interpretations of them. I will also post follow-up questions and clarifying posts as the week goes on. Lessons will be posted by midnight on Mondays and your discussion board posts will be due at midnight the following Sunday. Please begin posting your responses early in the week so that you can respond to each other's comments.

Each post must have content to count towards your grade assessment; simply writing “Yes, I agree” or other such comments is insufficient. I will assess each student’s participation in each module for a weekly discussion grade. I will consider post length and number of posts, but I will also judge posts on thoughtfulness, thoroughness of understanding, depth of analysis, and how much each post contributes to the discussion at hand, moving it forward in useful and interesting ways.

C grades will be awarded for adequate participation—if a student has met the basic requirements of saying five things over two threads, but the posts have not been particularly thoughtful or thorough, or demonstrate that the student has not read carefully or considered the readings with any real effort. A grades will be awarded to students whose posts are well-reasoned, carefully written, demonstrate careful reading and considered analysis, and contribute something particularly useful to the class’s understanding of the subject. B grades, of course, will fall in between. Extra participation (more than five posts, as described above) is not necessary to earn an A grade, but I will consider extra participation (that is useful and on-topic) in my weekly assessments.

I want to emphasize that just because thorough reading and thoughtful analysis will be rewarded with better grades, it is **not** a detriment to you to ask questions or to admit that you found something in the reading unclear. Great questions can be just as helpful to discussion as great answers, and useful, thought-provoking questions can help to earn As. And even if your question does not seem extraordinary, please feel free to ask it—asking questions, even basic questions, about a topic will **NEVER** hurt your grade (unless it is clear that you have not read the week’s assignment and are asking questions about it to try to avoid doing so). Questions are often very useful to fellow students who were too shy to ask the same things themselves, or who did not realize that they were not understanding something completely.

Bear in mind that even though you may not participate in every discussion thread, I expect **ALL** students to read through **ALL** of the threads each week. For exams, you will be responsible for knowing **ALL** of the information on the **ENTIRE** board, even discussion threads you did not participate in.

Finally (and I hope this goes without saying), the discussion boards are our classroom, and I expect you to behave as you would in any other class (i.e., be respectful and courteous to one another).

Disability Policy

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, please notify both me and Disability Resources and Services by the second week of the term. They will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call 412-648-7890 (voice or TDD) to schedule an appointment. The Internet address is <http://www.pitt.edu/~osaweb/drs/drs.html> and the office is located in the William Pitt Union, Room 216.

Academic Integrity

I expect every student to rigorously follow the guidelines laid out in Pitt's *Handbook on Integrity* regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc. Please take the time to visit the University's Academic Integrity Policies (<http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html>) and Procedures (<http://www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-03-02.html>) regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc. I will also provide additional information about plagiarism on Blackboard. I take an extremely dim view on academic integrity violations, and violators will be penalized to the full extent possible. If plagiarism occurs, I will proceed under the assumption that you have read these websites and committed a violation in spite of it.

Readings

Some readings will come out of the required reading materials, but some will be found online at links provided to you. Your reading assignments for each unit will be posted on CourseWeb. You should procure copies of:

Raymond McNally and RaduFlorescu: *In Search of Dracula*, ISBN: 0395657830

Nina Auerbach and David Skal: *Dracula: Bram Stoker*, ISBN: 0393970124

Anne Rice: *Interview with the Vampire*, ISBN: 0345337662

Alan Ryan: *The Penguin Book of Vampire Stories*, ISBN: 0140124454

You will also need to watch the following films over the course of the semester:

The Dark Prince

Nosferatu (1922)

Dracula (1931)

Nosferatu (1979)

Dracula (1979)

Bram Stoker's Dracula

Interview with the Vampire

Shadow of the Vampire

Most of the films are part of the media collection in the Stark Media Services center in the Hillman Library. You are responsible for viewing the appropriate film during the appropriate time. You also have the option to watch the films on Netflix if they are available there or purchase your own personal copy to watch.

Assignment Schedule

All assignments are to be completed and submitted by midnight on the due date listed.

Introductions and Unit 1 **due September 2:**

No additional readings

Unit 2.1 **due September 9:**

East European Vampires; Russian Peasant Beliefs and Practices; The Greek Vampire

Unit 2.2 **due September 16:**

McNally & Florescu: 15-42; 60-103 - In search of Dracula;
Dark Prince (**Film:** 2000)

- Unit 3 **due September 23:**
The Vampyre; Cabin 33
- Unit 4.1 **due September 30:**
Dracula pages 1-159; Purity and Danger...
- Unit 4.2 **due October 7:**
Dracula pages 160-252; Foul Things of the Night;
Kiss Me with Those Ruby Lips 444-59
- Unit 4.3 **due October 14:**
Dracula pages 253-327;
Suddenly Sexual Women in Bram Stoker's Dracula 411-421
- Unit 5 **due October 21:**
Dracula: The Unseen Face in the Mirror; The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the
Anxiety of Reverse Colonization; Vampire Religion; Vampire in the Mirror: The
Sexuality of Dracula
- Unit 6 **due October 28:**
Films: Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror (1922); Dracula (1931)
- Exam 1 **due November 4**
- Unit 7 **due November 11:**
The Nature of Horror; **Films:** Dracula (1979); Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992)
- Unit 8.1 **due November 18:**
Interview with the vampire (book)
- Unit 8.2 **due November 25:**
Interview with the vampire (**film**) ; Ann Rice, the Querying of Culture
- Unit 9 AND Unit 10 **due December 2:**
Film: Shadow of a Vampire
- Final Exam **due WEDNESDAY December 12**