



ITL 412 - THE IDEA OF ITALY IN LITERATURE: Italy & The Gothic

CSUIP, Florence **Fall 2017-2018** Mon./Wed. 9:00-10:20

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Office Hours:

Teacher's Room (Refugio's Office) or the CSU Library. Hours: Mon./Wed. 8:00 – 9:00 by appointment (just before class but you **must** let me know beforehand as I will not come in without a scheduled appointment). Also my e-mail, phone number and Skype address are printed above for your convenience. Feel free to friend me on Facebook if that's easier, I'm not proud.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will chiefly explore the texts and films of English and American authors that use Italy and Italian settings in a Gothic context. We will study the Gothic genre as a distillation of English and American authors' romanticized impressions of Italy, its people and landscape, and how Italy came to represent what Perseus Bysshe Shelley calls "The tempestuous loveliness of terror." This material should provide us with ample fodder to discuss the geopolitical, psycho-sexual, racist, feminist/misogynist and homophobic (haemophobic?) implications of Anglo-American culture's habit of breeding its monsters in far-off lands, particularly Italy.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Beyond attendance, preparation (**in the form of completing the assigned readings**), and participation in the class discussions, you will also be required to 1.) Write two 5-7 pp. papers on topics of your own invention (within the rubric of this class, *Gothic literature*), which hopefully comes out of our in-class discussions and/or the reading of critical writings upon the texts we will be studying. Your paper should explore some aspect of a Gothic text, the Gothic romance in general, Romantic literature's use of the Gothic, the Victorian revival of the Gothic, or even a contemporary Gothic topic. Since I allow re-writes the sooner you hand in this paper the better. Its absolute final due date for all written work is during the final exam period. These papers are ostensibly due one week/two class after the class has discussed the text upon which you choose to write and will count for **44% (per paper)** of your overall grade. 2.) Give an oral presentation on a topic related to the genesis of the literary Gothic (to be arranged on the first day of class) **This presentation will count for 8% of your grade**. The **other 4% of your grade** will come from a self-evaluated declaration of how much reading you did for the class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Our objectives will be three-fold: Primarily we will focus on Gothic texts that use Italy as a setting, gaining a familiarity with the genre's authors, their works, and the various textual strategies that the literary movement of which they were representative employed. Secondly, we will enrich our knowledge of the Anglo-American attitude towards Italy and Italian culture through the texts by examining them in their cultural and historical contexts. Lastly, beyond simply digesting this material in your written work, I would like to invite students to work on their rhetorical and essay writing skills by inviting you to re-write your papers based on my comments as well as allowing me to look over and comment upon

your written work in advance of its due date. Combining these three-fold objectives, the measurable objective of this course will be to make its students capable of writing a coherent and knowledgeable critical literary essay on any aspect of a Gothic literary text.

A NOTE ON METHOD: I do not believe that I (or anyone else) can coerce or cajole anyone into “learning.” Rather I believe that intellectual progress is made through the sharing and discussion of reactions and interpretations. Therefore this course will be conducted as a seminar and be totally dependent upon your individual contributions and courtesy. Obviously, then, it is absolutely necessary that each of you take control of your own education not only for your own sakes, but also in accordance with your responsibility to the rest of those participating in this course. You must both keep **up with the reading and begin the process of digesting the material by coming to class with something either to say or ask about it. I strongly recommend that you take notes while reading with both questions and observations and that you come to class prepared to challenge and/or benefit from the group’s discussion.** You cannot depend on me to lecture on material that you have not read, nor will I accept the role of monitor for your reading or policeman for discourtesy to the class during the discussions. Concerns of this kind should be voiced and dealt with by the community during the class sessions. Remember that I am only one in a group of people here to explore and learn from this very interesting group of texts.

That said, I am extremely available both in class and out to offer my expertise and experience to help you digest and write about this material. (I also have a lot of experience living, studying, and teaching here in Florence and I offer a sympathetic ear to culture shock concerns as well.) I am usually available on line or by appointment and very open during the in-class discussions to address both my methods and the materials of our study if the group as a whole is in agreement as to the utility and feasibility of altering them. All of this is said only to clarify from the start my particular approach—based on the assumption that we are each mutually dependent individuals demanding of respect and ultimately responsible for our own intellectual progress—and to allow the greatest flexibility in our proceeding so that the most appropriate and useful materials and methods are addressed in this course.

CLASS CALENDAR

- Nov. 6 Course Introduction and distribution of materials and assignments.
- Nov. 8 **The First Gothic Story**
 Sir Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), chapters 1 & 2
 Oral Report: Walpole’s Strawberry Hill: Gothic architecture & text.
- Nov. 13 Sir Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), chapters 3-5
 Oral Report: Shakespeare, *Hamlet* and/or *Macbeth*.
- Nov. 15 Sir Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) Summation.
 Oral Report: Haunted Houses, Castles and Dungeons: Gothic Space.
- Nov. 20 **Ann Radcliffe, the Shakespeare of the Gothic Romance**
 Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* (1796), Vol. I
 Oral Report: Ann Radcliffe, Lady Novelist.
- Nov. 22 Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* (1796), Vol. II
 Oral Report: Romance vs. Novel.
- Nov. 27 Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* (1796), Vol. III
 Oral Report: Female Gothic/Male Gothic.
- Nov. 29 Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* (1796)
 Oral Report: Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*.
- Dec. 4 **Gothic Grows Up**
 Matthew G. Lewis, *The Monk* (1796), Chapters I & II
 Oral Report: Matthew “Monk” Lewis, boy wonder.

- Dec. 6 Matthew G. Lewis, *The Monk* (1796), Chapters III-V
Oral Report: Gothic's representation of Catholicism.
- Dec. 11 Matthew G. Lewis, *The Monk* (1796), Chapters VI-IX
Oral Report: Shakespeare, *Othello*
Oral Report: Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* and other monsters
- Dec. 13 Matthew G. Lewis, *The Monk* (1796), Chapters X-XII
Oral Report: The Italian Novel and the Gothic: Alessandro Manzoni's *The Betrothed*.
- Dec. 18 **Romanticism and Gothic**
John Polidori, "The Vampyre" (1819) 📖
George Gordon, Lord Byron, "A Fragment" AKA "Augustus Darvell" (1819) 📖
Oral Report: Telling Scary Stories at the Villa Diodati.
- Dec. 20 John Keats, "A Dream after reading..." & "La belle dame sans merci" (1819) 📖
Percy Bysshe Shelley, "The Tower of Famine," (1820) & "On the Medusa of Leonardo..." (1819) 📖
Oral Report: Gothic Verse.
- Dec 22-Jan 7 **WINTER BREAK**
- Jan. 8 **American Gothic**
Edgar Allan Poe, "The Assignment" (1835) "The Oval Portrait" (1842) 📖
Oral Report: Edgar Allan Poe, an all-American tragedy.
- Jan. 10 Edgar Allan Poe, "The Masque of the Red Death" (1842), "The Cask of Amantillado" (1846) 📖
Oral Report: American Gothic.
- Jan. 15 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter" (1844) 📖
Bret Harte, "Selina Sedilia" (1865) 📖
Oral Report: Nathaniel Hawthorne's Italy.
- Jan. 17 Henry James, "The Last of the Valerii" (1874)
Oral report: Mad Scientists and Science Fiction, a New Sub-genre.
- Jan. 22 Henry James, "The Last of the Valerii" (1874) 📖
Oral Report: Henry James' Italy.
- Jan. 24 **Italian Vampires**
Ann Crawford, "A Mystery of the Campagna" (1887) (e-mail)
Oral Report: The Female Vampire and the Succubus.
- Jan. 29 F. Marion Crawford, "For the Blood Is the Life" (Written 1900, published 1911) 📖
Oral Report: Vampires in Folklore.
- Jan. 31 Mary Elizabeth Braddon, "Good Lady Ducayne" (1896) 📖
Oral Report: The Literary Vampire.
- Feb. 5 Angela Carter, "The Tiger's Bride" (1979) 📖
Oral Report: The Postmodern Gothic.
- Feb. 7 Paper writing seminar or make-up day in case we fall behind.

Final exam class (**Feb 12 - 15 TBA**): Make up class or course summation. Last chance to hand in papers.

General Attendance Policy 2017-2018 (for classes that meet twice a week)

Attendance to all CSU courses is mandatory. Two unexcused absences are allowed during the semester but more than two unexcused absences will lower your grade (excused absences will be accepted for serious medical reasons or emergencies) as follows: 3 unexcused absences, lowers one letter grade; 4 unexcused absences, lowers two letter grades; 5 unexcused absences, lowers 3 letter grades. More than **five unexcused absences could result in failure of the course.**

In order not to disrupt the class, punctuality is required. Students are expected to be in class at the beginning of the class hour; any delay exceeding **five** minutes will be considered an absence.

Dates of mid-term and final exams **can not** be changed for individual travel plans or personal needs. Students should take note of the dates and hours of the midterm and final exams and plan their trips after the last exam. It is important to inform friends and relatives about these exam dates so that no tickets are purchased for you that will interfere with these exam dates. **Missing the midterm or the final exam could result in failure of the course.**

During the academic year photocopies and other material may be distributed in class by the instructors. Students who were not in class are responsible for getting the material from their classmates and making their own photocopies.

Other class policies:

Use of the computer in class is restricted to oral presentations, unless previously approved by the professor.

Eating is **NOT** allowed in class.

Cellular phones must be **turned off** or placed on *silent mode* during class.

Other class policies:

To avoid distracting those interested in the class discussions, neither eating nor sleeping is allowed in this class. Please also try to attend to all bathroom needs before we begin and therefore avoid getting up and down and disturbing our seminar discussions.

Look on the bright side; no dress code will be enforced.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Sir Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto (Note: Although this is easily available in one of the collections of gothic novels, there are also good recent scholarly editions with lots of fine bibliography and a superior introductions offered by both Broadview and Penguin publishers.)

Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian*

Matthew G. Lewis, *The Monk

Selected short stories and poems These are marked on the calendar with a 📖 and are provided in the photocopy packet available at Copisteria X, Via San Gallo, 72 red. Tel: 055/215367.

*Walpole can also be found (along with Thomas Beckford's *Vathek* and Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*) in *Three Gothic Novels* issued by Penguin Books. Walpole and Lewis can also be found (again along with *Vathek* and *Frankenstein*) in the Oxford Press' *Four Gothic Novels*. All of these books have been ordered at Paperback Exchange and may also be found in other bookstores or libraries in Florence.

All of these texts were originally composed in English