

American Gothic: The Romance with the Uncanny

Dozent

PD Dr. Stefan L. Brandt, Guest Professor
Office Hours: Thursdays, 18-19, Room AR-H 206

Angaben

Hauptseminar, 2 SWS, ECTS-Studium, ECTS-Credits: 7, anmeldepflichtig

Unterrichtssprache: Englisch

Module: LCMS-BA-6.1 (Literaturtheorien) & 7.1 (Kulturtheorien); Magister AmL2 (Theorie, Geschichte und autorenspezifische Ausprägungen literarischer Gattungen); GHR 5.1 (Textsorten); GYM 7.1 (Literatur-, Kultur- und Medientheorie), BK 6.1 (Texte und Medien), Sek.I-B4 (Amerikanische Literatur), Sek.II-B4 (Amerikanische Literatur)

Zeit: Do 10:00 - 12:00

Raum: AR-K 122/23

Contents

In how far have 18th and 19th century Gothic narratives shaped our individual and national anxieties about the dark aspects of life? In how far have representations of horror succeeded in encoding our fears of the unknown, the supernatural, the irrational? Since its early stages in the 18th century, Gothic tales have dealt with the hidden aspects of the human psyche: fears of victimization, of a threatening sexuality, a loss of identity, a merging of the boundaries between self and other, reason and madness, civilization and barbarism, good and evil. This course will discuss the effects of the Gothic heritage on the development of a modern American self. We will begin with the dark romantic tales of Charles Brockden Brown, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Edgar Allan Poe, tracing the themes used in these texts up to the present. Our materials will include a few classic horror texts (*Sleepy Hollow*, *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE*) as well as postmodern variations of the theme (*GOTHIKA* and *THE SIXTH SENSE*).

Credit requirements

For 5 or 7 credit points: regular attendance and thoughtful participation in class (35%), an oral presentation as part of an expert group (25%), and a final paper (10-12 pgs. / 17-20 pgs.) (40%). There will be a few surprise quizzes on the readings to ensure that you keep up with the assignments. For 2 credit points: attendance & participation in class discussions (50%), oral presentation as part of an expert group (50%).

Deadline for Final Papers: Friday, July 27, 2007 There is no (!) extension of this deadline.

Syllabus:

- 12 April Introduction
- 19 April The Rise of American Gothic – Mysticism, Obsession and (Ir-)Rationality
Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland* (1798)
- 26 April Americanizing the Gothic Tradition – The American Revolution and After
Washington Irving, »The Legend of Sleepy Hollow« (1819)
- 03 May Dark Romanticism – The Power of the Unknown
Nathaniel Hawthorne, »Young Goodman Brown« (1835)
- 10 May Southern Gothic – Claustrophobia, Decline, and the Tragedy behind Closed Walls
Edgar Allan Poe, »The Fall of the House Usher« (1839); additional text: »The Pit and the Pendulum« (1842)
- 17 May Ascension Day
No class! Enjoy and relax!
- 24 May Female Gothic – The Terror of the Home
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, »The Yellow Wallpaper« (1892)
- 31 May Mysteries of the Living Dead – Realism and the Supernatural
Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw* (1898)
- 07 June Feast of Corpus Christi (Fronleichnam)
No class!
- 14 June Fictions of »Cosmic Pessimism« – Fantasy, Insanity, and the Mythology of Space
H.P. Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936)
- 21 June Colonial Gothic – Desire, Superstition, and the Carriibbean
Jacques Tourneur, *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943) - Screening
- 28 June The Modern Ghost Story – Exorcism and the Shadows of the Past
Shirley Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959)
- 05 July The Popular Gothic
M. Night Shyamalan, *The Sixth Sense* (1999)
- 12 July Aftergothic – Morality, Religious Fanaticism, and the Omnipresence of »Evil«
Mathieu Kassovitz, *Gothika* (2003)

All primary texts can be found online at <http://bsew.avmz.uni-siegen.de/> (click on PUBLIC, then look for course title). More primary and secondary material can be found in the »Semesterapparat Brandt« (Main Library, 2nd floor). The films needed for this seminar can be checked out over night (!) at the Sekretariat Anglistik, Room AR-H 213. (Please return DVD by 10 in the morning!)