

Spring 2018
Tu 2-4:50 (CAC 333)

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COMM 363 Film and TV Genres: Fangs on Film

Since the publication of Bram Stoker’s original 1897 *Dracula* (and arguably before that), the vampire has represented, among many other things, a dark, repressed side of the human psyche that can’t ever be completely escaped. “Traditional” vampires—descendants of *Dracula*—don’t let trivial matters like morality or social acceptability get in the way of a good time. Vampiric pastimes might include, but are not limited to, violence, sexuality that violates social conventions, and necrophilia... yet in most incarnations of the figure, this mix of sex and death is presented as intoxicating and irresistible. What is it about demonic, blood-sucking walking corpses that has captured the imagination of so many different cultures? From the Hebrews’ Lilith to the Romanian *strigoi* and Vlad “the Impaler,” the vampire has been with us, in various forms, for ages. But the pictures of monsters that cultures paint vary widely—each society produces the vampire it needs or deserves.

This course focuses on the figure of the vampire in Western television and cinema. Forged in the fires of Freudianism, the vampire as it developed in Western culture over the course of the twentieth century is often interpreted as giving symbolic expression to humanity’s deepest, darkest fears and desires. We’ll explore the issues that preoccupy and define different historical and social contexts by examining the ways vampires change over the years, and what characteristics define their appeal in popular media. Along the way, we’ll look at how developments in film and television narrative, aesthetics, ideology, and industry manifest themselves in representations of the vampire.

Requirements (total of 100 points)

Participation/attendance	15 points
Weekly journals (total of 5, 5 points each)	25 points
Midterm paper (due 3/6)	25 points
Final paper/project (due 5/17)	35 points

Grading Scale

A: 94-100	B: 80-83	D+: 67-69
A-: 90-93	C+: 77-79	D: 64-66
B+: 87-89	C: 74-76	F: 0-63
B: 84-86	C-: 70-73	

Readings and Weekly Journal Assignments

Readings: Stacey Abbott, *Celluloid Vampires: Life After Death in the Modern World* is available in the bookstore and online; all other readings will be posted on Desire2Learn. All readings should be completed by Tuesday on the week they are listed.

Each week, a question for your journal assignment will be available on D2L; this question might address the readings, the screenings, or something we've discussed in class. During the semester, you are expected to turn in **FIVE** journal responses of 300-400 words each; these will be due to me at the start of class on Tuesday in **DROPBOX**.

Midterm paper

Guidelines for the midterm paper will be handed out and discussed in more detail by week 4.

Final paper

Your final research paper, which will be on the cultural significance of a vampire film/TV series of your choice, will be due Thursday, May 17. More details on the final paper will be provided after the midterm.

Presentations

Each student will have the option of doing a final presentation (10-15 minutes) for extra credit. More details on this option will be provided after the midterm.

Requirements for Written Assignments

Papers must be typed, in 12-point font, double-spaced, page-numbered, and stapled. I reserve the right to deduct points for violations of these requirements. Late papers drop by 10% for each 24 hours it's late, whether it's the weekend or a weekday (i.e., a 100-point paper one day late will be penalized 10 points before I grade it). Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis for personal emergencies, but **ONLY** if you ask me **IN ADVANCE** of the actual due date. This goes for the weekly journal assignments, as well.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory, and will be taken at the beginning of every class. If you are late, it is your responsibility to make sure I've marked you down as present. If you need to miss class for an emergency, let me know *in advance*. Absences will be excused on a case-by-case basis. You are allowed one unexcused absence, then after that each unexcused absence reduces your attendance/participation grade by one point (out of 15).

Class Environment

Students are expected to contribute to a respectful, productive learning environment. This includes being on time, being attentive, participating in class discussions, and being nice to everyone, regardless of their views. Technology is a big issue these days, but rest assured that it's pretty easy to tell whether a student is actually taking notes on a laptop or checking email/whatever. If you're going to use a laptop, please use it for class purposes only, and please turn your cell phone off. Also, no texting in class, please. Any violation of the above will impact your attendance/participation grade.

Guidelines for Assessing Participation Grades

--Tardiness; degree and frequency

- Not just frequency, but quality of comments. Is it evident that the student has done the readings and engaged with the material?
- Consideration for other students and their points of view
- Technology use: disrespectful or reasonable?

Disability Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP’s policies, check here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center and then contact me at the beginning of the course. I am happy to help in any way that I can. For more information, please visit the Disability and Assistive Technology Center, located on the 6th floor of the Learning Resource Center (the Library). You can also find more information here:

<http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>

Statement of Academic Integrity

UW-Stevens Point values a safe, honest, respectful, and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to succeed, we have developed a set of expectations for all students and instructors. This set of expectations is known as the Rights and Responsibilities document, and it is intended to help establish a positive living and learning environment at UWSP. Click here for more information:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Pages/rightsandresponsibilities.aspx>

Academic integrity is central to the mission of higher education in general and UWSP in particular. Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) is taken very seriously. Don’t do it! The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. For more information, see the UWSP “Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures” section of the Rights and Responsibilities document, Chapter 14, which can be accessed here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SRR-2010/rightsChap14.pdf>

I should add that if you use Wikipedia, or anything online, you have to CITE IT. I don’t care whether you use MLA or Chicago style citations, but please be consistent. When in doubt, CITE THE SOURCE. I cannot stress this enough. Consequences for plagiarism are severe: the first time a student is caught, they receive an F on the assignment, and the second time results in failure of the entire course.

Terms of Enrollment

This syllabus is a contract. By taking this class, you agree to the policies listed here. I reserve the right to change the syllabus, but only within reason, and with notification to students.



Course Schedule

Week One: Blood-sucking Basics

Tuesday, 1/23 Introduction to the course; defining the vampire

Readings: --Garza, excerpts from *The Vampire in Slavic Cultures*

Week Two: The Vampire's Roots in Literature and Film

Tuesday, 1/30 The cultural origins of the vampire, from folklore to Stoker
Screening: *Nosferatu* (Murnau, 1922, 93 min)

Readings: --Abbott, Ch. 1
--Stoker, *Dracula* (first two chapters; chapters 3 and 4 optional)

Week Three: Classical Hollywood Cinema, Classic Dracula

Tuesday, 2/6 German Expressionism and discussion of *Nosferatu*
Screening: *Dracula* (Browning, 1931, 75 min)

Readings: --Abbott, Ch. 2
--Eisner, "The Symphony of Horror"

Week Four: Dracula from Lugosi to Lee

Tuesday, 2/13 Discuss Browning's *Dracula*; the 1930s, Universal Pictures, and the coming of sound; Hammer Horror and the B-movie; Dracula in the 1950s and 60s.

Readings: --Abbott, Ch. 3
--Wood, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film"
--Auerbach, "A Vampire of Our Own"
--Oates, "Dracula" (optional)

Week Five: Revisionist vamps: gender, sexuality, and race

Tuesday, 2/20 Female vampires from Carmilla to Hammer; Exploitation films and *Blacula*

Readings: --Abbott, Ch. 4, 8
--Lehman and Browning, "The Dracula and the *Blacula*"
--Zimmerman, "Daughters of Darkness"
--Creed, "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine" (optional)

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Week Six: Rebels Without a Pulse, Part I

Tuesday, 2/27 Vampires, rebellion, and counterculture in the 70s and into the 80s;
Screening: TBA

Readings: --Abbott, Ch. 5

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Week Seven: Rebels Without a Pulse, Part II

Tuesday, 3/6 Special effects, embodiment, and the construction of masculinity
MIDTERM PAPER DUE

Readings: --Abbott, Ch. 7, 9
--Gwenellian Jones, "Vampires, Indians and the Queer Fantastic" (optional)
--Schneider, "Suck... Don't Suck" (optional)

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Week Eight: Postmodern Vampires

Tuesday, 3/13 **Screening:** *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (Coppola, 1992, 128 min)
CARY OUT OF TOWN AT CONFERENCE; SCREENING HAPPENS ANYWAY

Readings: --Elsaesser, "Specularity and Engulfment"
--Sharrett, "The Horror Film in Neoconservative Culture" (optional)

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Week Nine: Vampires: Now with Feelings!

Tuesday, 3/20 The figure of the sensitive vampire, 1980s and 90s; discuss *Bram Stoker's Dracula*

- Readings:** --Wyman, "Primal Urges and Civilized Sensibilities"
--Corbin/Campbell, "Postmodern Iconography"
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Week Ten: SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, 3/27 **NO CLASS**

Week Eleven: Viral Vampires and Vampire Cyborgs

Tuesday, 4/3 Hybridity, technology, globalization, and a rejection of vampire forefathers

- Readings:** --Abbott, Ch. 11, 12
--Jordan, "Vampire Cyborgs & Scientific Imperialism"
--Berg, "Globalization and the Modern Vampire"
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Week Twelve: Vamps on TV, Part I

Tuesday, 4/10 Vampires from 60s-70s TV to the 1990s.
Screening: Episode of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* TBD

- Readings:** --Abbott, Ch. 10
--Tonkin, "Entropy as Demon: Buffy in Southern California"
--Dekelb-Rittenhouse, "Sex and the Single Vampire" (optional)
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Week Thirteen: Vamps on TV, Part II

Tuesday, 4/17 Discuss *Buffy*, postfeminism, and romantic entanglement with vampires
Screening: Episode of *True Blood* TBD

- Readings:** --Tyree, "Warm-Blooded"
--Subramanian, "*The Vampire Diaries* and Southern History"
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Week Fourteen: The Vampire as Global and Local Citizen

Tuesday, 4/24 Discuss *True Blood*, *The Vampire Diaries*, and the Southern Gothic; vampire communities, mainstreaming, and vamps who pay taxes

Readings: --Hardy, "Mapping Commercial Intertextuality"
 --Berg, "Globalization and the Modern Vampire"

Week Fifteen: Vampires in the oos: A Sparkly Moment in the Sun

Tuesday, 5/1 Teen girls and the vamps who love them: gender politics, fan practices, and *Twilight*'s monstrous morality
Screening: *What We Do in the Shadows* (Watiti, 2014, 85 min) or *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (Amirpour, 2014, 101 min) OR *Only Lovers Left Alive* (Jarmusch, 2013, 123 min)

Readings: --Bode, "Transitional Tastes"
 --Backstein, "(Un)Safe Sex"
 --Edwards, "Good Looks and Sex Symbols"
 --Cox, "Twilight: The Franchise that Ate Feminism"

Week Sixteen: Global Vampires Today: Doing my Dark Bidding

Tuesday, 5/8 Vampires, parody, and apocalypse

Readings: --Abbott, "How to Survive a Vampire Apocalypse"
 --Ward, "Vampires Don't Do Dishes"
 --Hastie, "Blood and Photons"

EXAM PERIOD: Thursday, May 17, 8-10am