

CMST 3013: Topics in Film
Focus: The Horror Genre
Department of Communication Studies
Fall 2018
MWF 12:30-1:20 (Coates 220)
Lab Wednesday 6-8:50 pm (Coates 214)

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Course Description: This course surveys the horror film—its themes, stories, and monsters. We cover a range of films: from German Expressionism to the classic 1930s horror films of Universal to independent cult classics to the mainstream films of today. This course is multimethodological. We consider a variety of ways films have been analyzed and theorized, from contextualizing the films in history, to considering the films as works of art, to tracing the ways race and/or gender get imagined/represented in certain films, to highlighting the general themes that dominate the genre. Because this is a communication studies course, we will pay special attention to the way(s) that the horror genre, as an aesthetic act, communicates particular cultural obsessions, fears, and anxieties in particular historical moments. The course is worth 4 credit hours; it includes a lab for film screenings every Wednesday night from 6-8:50 p.m.

Objectives: By the end of this course, you should:

1. Be able to read a film and what it is trying to communicate more closely.
2. Have specific knowledge about the development of and historical trends in the genre.
3. Be familiar with several important and/or ground-breaking horror films.
4. Be knowledgeable of several approaches to analyzing/theorizing film.

There are no required texts in the course. The sixteen films screened on Wednesday evenings serve as texts. We will place several reading assignments on Moodle over the semester. Please read when assigned.

Assignments

Film Screening Points	260 points
Film Discussion Points	220 points
Test #1	100 points
Test #2	100 points
Test #3	100 points
Sweding Assignment	100 points
<u>8 Reading Quizzes (will drop lowest 2)</u>	<u>120 points</u>
Total	1,000 points

Grading:

980-1,000	A+
921-979	A
900-920	A-
880-899	B+
821-879	B
800-820	B-
780-799	C+
721-779	C
700-720	C-
680-699	D+
621-679	D
600-620	D-
0-599	F

Description of Assignments:

Film Screening Points: This course includes a screening lab on Wednesday evenings. While you may be able to find many of these films online, you should attend the screenings with your classmates. One of the joys of watching film is experiencing it with others who may or may not share your opinions/responses/reactions. In addition, the screenings force you to watch the films from beginning to end without hitting the pause button to text, prepare food, or go to the restroom. The screenings encourage careful attention; they are more akin to seeing the films in a theater. Screening attendance is worth 20 points per screening. You will not receive full credit if you arrive late or leave early. You may bring a friend from outside the class. Just don't be disruptive. And just like in the theater, turn cell phones OFF!

Film Discussion Points: There are 13 film discussions during this course. They are worth 20 points each and cover the film(s) shown in the previous lab. At the end of the semester, we drop the lowest 2 (this includes those you may have missed and/or skipped) and add the rest for an overall possible 220 points. We will discuss the films and how they relate to the class. Naomi will take attendance. You will receive 17 points JUST for being present. But those who contribute to the discussion in meaningful ways will receive 20 points. Of course, those absent will receive zero points. These discussions are fairly straightforward. Just pay attention to the films shown and relate them to the topics in the course!

Sweding Assignment: Toward the end of the semester, you will work with a small group to "swede" one of the films we have screened. "Sweding" is a term that describes remaking the film with limited resources. I will provide an outline on sweding later in the semester. This is a fun and challenging project; it is worth 100 points.

Reading Quizzes: Sometimes you will be responsible for a reading placed on Moodle. In those cases, there will be a short quiz at the beginning of class. Each quiz is worth 20 points. (There will be eight total.) We will drop the bottom two grades. The total is worth 120 points.

Tests: There will be three multiple-choice tests over the course of the semester. Each is worth 100 points.

Attendance: Attendance is absolutely necessary. While we will not take attendance in class on Mondays and Wednesdays, the only way to get the notes is by being here and participating in the lectures and discussions.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1	Aug. 20 Aug. 22 LAB Aug. 24	Introduction to course/Five Recurring Themes The Beginnings of Horror and German Expressionism The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920) & Nosferatu (1922) Film Discussion #1
Week 2	Aug. 27 Aug. 29 LAB Aug. 31	Classic Monsters/Contemporary Categories The Monster as Icon (The Case of King Kong) Frankenstein (1931) & King Kong (1933) Film Discussion #2
Week 3	Sept. 3 Sept. 5 LAB Sept. 7	LABOR DAY– NO CLASS Anthropomorphism/Theriomorphism/Val Lewton Cat People (1942) Film Discussion #3
Week 4	Sept. 10 Sept. 12 LAB Sept. 14	Mid-Century Threats Darwin’s Influence/Primordial Fear/Bizarre Love Triangle Creature From the Black Lagoon (1954) Film Discussion #4 (Naomi will lead)
Week 5	Sept. 17 Sept. 19 LAB Sept. 21	TEST #1 Little Red Riding Hood Psycho (1960) Film Discussion #5
Week 6	Sept. 24 Sept. 26 LAB Sept. 28	How Norman Changed Everything! How George Romero Changed Everything! Night of the Living Dead (1968) Film Discussion #6
Week 7	Oct. 1 Oct. 3 LAB Oct. 5	Continued Zombie Discussion (Naomi) Generic Convergence Rosemary’s Baby (1968) FALL BREAK – NO CLASS
Week 8	Oct. 8 Oct. 10 LAB Oct. 12	Film Discussion #7 The Stalker Film The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (1974) & Halloween (1978) Film Discussion #8 (Naomi will lead)
Week 9	Oct. 15 Oct. 17	TEST #2 Stephen King

	LAB Oct. 19	The Shining (1980) Film Discussion #9
Week 10	Oct. 22 Oct. 24 LAB Oct. 26	Discussion of Sweding Projects Naomi Lecture on The Blair Witch Project The Blair Witch Project (1999) Film Discussion #10
Week 11	Oct. 29 Oct. 31 LAB Nov. 2	Zombies R Us Sweding Brainstorm/Planning Day 28 Days later (2002) Film Discussion #11
Week 12	Nov. 5 Nov. 7 LAB Nov. 9	The Final Girl Gore/Alexandre Aja High Tension (2003) Film Discussion #12
Week 13	Nov. 12 Nov. 14 LAB Nov. 16	Time to Swede Time to Swede Get Out (2017) Film Discussion #13
Week 14	Nov. 19 Nov. 21 LAB Nov. 23	Time to Swede THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS
Week 15	Nov. 26 Nov. 28 NO LAB Nov. 30	Sweding Screening Sweding Screening Sweding Screening & Wrap Up

*****Course Policies:**

1) Upon arrival to class, please turn off all electronic devices. If a cell phone or other device interrupts the class, I will ask you to leave the class for that day. Naomi will do the same during labs; 2) You may invite friends to attend the labs with you unless they are disruptive. At that point, they will be asked to leave; 3) Please be respectful of the other students during class and the labs; 4) Please see me before or after class or during my office hours if you have any issues you would like to discuss; 5) I reserve the right to add to the course policies over the course of the semester if the need arises.

Naomi and I look forward to a great semester and to sharing our love of the horror genre with you.

The Americans With Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office for Disability Services (112

Johnston Hall) so that such accommodations may be arranged. After you receive your accommodation letter, please meet with me to discuss the provisions as soon as possible.