

# Approaches to the Other: A Thematic Course (BMNAN01200A)

by Ildikó Limpár

## Week 1 (February 9)

Introduction

## Week 2 (February 16)

William Shakespeare: *The Tempest* (play; cc. 1610)

- **Preparation beside reading:** mark/collect the lines in *The Tempest* that emphatically characterize Caliban
- **Presentation topic:** freak show

## Week 3 (February 23)

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley: *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus* (Gothic novel; 1818)

- **Preparation beside reading:** refresh your memory about Romanticism and Gothicism
- **Written task:** Consider Victor Frankenstein as a foil to another character in the novella (e.g. the Creature, Robert Walton, Elizabeth Lavenza or Henry Clerval). Choose one case and explain briefly in what ways we may see him as a foil to your chosen character.
- **Presentation topic:** John Locke's and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's philosophies on education; (Locke: *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*; Rousseau: *Emile, or On Education*)

## Week 4 (March 2)

Neil Gaiman: *Coraline* (horror novella; 2002)

Sigmund Freud: "The Uncanny" (essay; 1919)

- **Preparation beside reading:** mark/collect examples of the uncanny in the novella based on Freud's essay
- **Written task:** Choose one example of the uncanny based on Freud's essay and explain in about one page what importance that uncanny element has in the novella

## Week 5 (March 9)

*The Turn of the Screw* (novella; 1898)

### Consultation on the individual projects

- **Preparation beside reading:** mark/collect the examples of scenes in which the governess believes there is a ghost involved
- **Written task:** Give one significant example of James's use of deliberate ambiguity and offer two different interpretations of the example (in about a page).

## Week 6 (March 16)

Lovecraft "The Call of Cthulhu" (1926)

Lovecraft: *The Outsider* (1921)

### Consultation on the individual projects

## Week 7 (March 23)

Edgar Allan Poe: "The Purloined Letter"

Arthur Conan Doyle: "The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire"

Neil Gaiman: "A Study in Emerald"

- **Written task:** Explain the importance of the theater plays (title, poster text) mentioned in "A Study in Emerald" in relation to the themes of the short story

**Week 8 (March 30)-Week 9 (April 6):** Spring break

### **Week 10** (April 13)

#### **Presentations on the literary vampire:**

Bram Stoker: *Dracula* (1897)

Anne Rice: *Interview with the Vampire* (1976)

George R. R. Martin: *Fevre Dream* (1982)

Barbara Hambly: *Traveling with the Dead* (1996)

Stephanie Meyer: *Twilight* (2005)

### **Week 11** (April 20)

Neil Gaiman: "Snow, Glass, Apples"

Richard Matheson: *I Am Legend* (novella)

- **Written task:** Consider one of the titles and explain in a page what significance you attach to it in relation to the work's themes/content.

### **Week 12** (April 27)

Susan Collins: *The Hunger Games* (The first book of the dystopian trilogy; 2008)

- **Preparation beside reading:** mark/collect a number of lines in the book that characterize Capitol people in contrast with district people
- **Written task:** Are the Capitol people victims or victimizers? Both? Give your basic arguments concerning this issue in about one page.

### **Week 13** (May 4)

Watching *Alien* (Part III; 1992)

- **Preparation:** Brace yourselves—aliens are coming... :-)

### **Week 14** (May 11)

Discussing *Alien*

Conclusions

#### **CLASSWORK:**

- Active participation in class (three absences are allowed), reading the pieces to be discussed thoroughly and coming to class prepared, and consulting with me on your assigned project that will have an outcome in the form of an oral presentation as well as a written scholarly essay.

#### **ORAL PRESENTATION:**

- **Compulsory:** one of the classes is dedicated to vampire literature, so each one of the students will be assigned one novel to give an oral a presentation and write a scholarly essay on the monster theme in the text. The presentation should be 20-25 minutes long. The presentations will be followed by a short discussion period, when anyone may comment on the presentation and ask questions from the speaker. After all presentations have been delivered, we will draw conclusions.
- **Voluntary:** You may volunteer to give a short (cc. 10-minute-long) presentation on a topic offered during the semester. This optional presentation may be used to replace one of your short written assignments; but if you choose to write both written assignments, the oral presentation will count as extra classwork.

## WRITTEN WORK:

- Handing in **two short written tasks** and an **end-term paper**. You need to hand in the short homework assignments at the beginning of the class that they are due as a typed and printed document. If for any reasons you cannot be present in the class for which you have written your homework, you may hand it in without negative consequences on the next occasion you attend the class (but no later than that). The deadline for the end-term paper is **week 12, April 27**. You need to hand in the end-term paper as a typed and printed document unless you may not be present in class. In that case, you need to email the paper as an attachment to [limparildiko@gmail.com](mailto:limparildiko@gmail.com) (use “doc” extension) by 12:30 p.m. on April 27, and hand in your printed document no later than the class next week. (This will not count as late submission as long as I have the emailed document sent to me on time.) Late submission will result in losing one point from your essay mark. I accept end-term papers no later than 12:30 p.m. on May 11 (**week 14**), handed in on paper.
- **The end-term paper** should be 5-6 pages, double space, 12 pt., Times New Roman, normal margin of cc. 2 cms. You need to use at least three pieces of scholarly secondary literature properly cited. (Preferred style is MLA.) **Plagiarism is not tolerated** and results in automatic failure. Do not forget to cite your primary sources properly, too.
- **Essay topic for the end-term paper:** same as the topic for your compulsory oral presentation **OR** any other novel (that was originally written in English and was not discussed in class) in which the monster theme may be explored. You need to consult with me on your chosen essay topic before starting on the project.
- **Important information on accessing course-related information and reading material:** I will create a closed Facebook group for the course to help communication. In order to join the Facebook group, you need to mark me as friend on FB. I will let you in the group. (Then you can “unfriend” me in case you don't really want to meet me on FB – no offense :-)).
- **Marking** depends on: compulsory oral presentation (20%), short written homework and class work (40%) end-term paper (40%).