 

Syllabus: WGSST 4527.01  
Studies in Gender and Cinema

Topic: Gender and the horror film

Autumn, 2018

# Course overview

## Classroom Information

Format of instruction: Lecture

Meeting Days/Times: Tues. and Thurs. 9:40-10:50

Location: 56 University Hall

## Instructor

Instructor: Dr. L. Mizejewski

Email address: [mizejewski.1@osu.edu](mailto:mizejewski.1@osu.edu)

Mobile phone number: 614-292-2467

Office hours: Tues. and Thurs. 11-2, 286d University Hall

## Course description

This course examines film texts and film history through a feminist lens, interrogating the intersection of gender, race, class, sexuality, and physical ability in the conventions of cinematic representation. This semester’s topic is the horror film, an especially rich genre for feminist study because of its focus on bodies and bodily difference, enabling these films to explore themes of sexuality, race, disability, and reproduction. Our dual approach will be attentive to these social issues as well as psycho/sexual theories of horror, so that we can analyze the horror film as a body genre, intrinsically attuned to questions of difference.

Our theme is the Frankenstein tradition, which has produced two significant film histories within the genre. On the one hand, it offers films focused on monstrous reproduction (*Rosemary’s Baby, The Ring, The Babadook, The Others, Get Out*), featuring dysfunctional families and disturbing mother-child relationships. On the other hand, this tradition is also the source of the serial-killer subgenre (*Psycho, Halloween, Scream*), in which mothers are notably absent and the monster has become domesticated and incorporated into modern life.

## Course learning outcomes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Course goals** | **Learning outcomes** |
| The successful student will be able to question dominant assumptions about what seems “natural” “human” and “normal by critically speaking, thinking, and writing. | Analyze texts using a feminist lens. |
| Identify the core arguments of key texts. |
| Apply different interpretive frameworks to texts. |
|  | Articulate clear and cohesive thoughts through writing. |
| The successful student will be able to engage films as aesthetic texts and as products of genre, studio, and cinema conventions as well as film and social histories. | Demonstrate close reading of films through examination of cinematic techniques and narrative development.  Analyze the impact of genre, studio, film, and cultural histories on individual films  Interpret a film or scene by applying film and feminist theories in conjunction with the skills above. |

## Course materials

**ESSAYS**: The assigned essays are available in the Readings file on Carmen.

**FILMS:** The assigned films are available on OSU’s media library streaming service: **drm.osu.edu**. These are the films you need to see, as well as their due dates:

Sept. 11: Hitchcock, *Psycho* (1960)

Sept. 20: Carpenter, *Halloween* (1978) (on Amazon video, it’s dated 2015)

Sept. 27: Craven, *Scream* (1995) streamable on Netflix

Oct. 9: *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (2016)

Oct. 18: Scott, *Alien* (1978)

Oct. 25: Polanski, *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968)

Nov. 1: Verbinski, *The Ring* (2002)

Nov. 6: Kent, *The Babadook* (2014) streamable on Netflix

Nov. 13: Bayona, *The Orphanage* (2007)

Nov. 15: Amenábar, *The Others* (2001)

Nov. 27: Rose, *Candyman* (1992)

Dec. 4: Peele, *Get Out* (2017) (the version with the alternative ending is also on the drm if you’re curious about it)

# Grading and instructor response

## Grades

--**Midterm and** **final exams, 20% each of final grade**. Both exams will cover films, readings, and class material, including in-class scene analyses. I will post a study guide on Carmen a week before each exam. The final exam covers material since the midterm.

**--Reading journals, 20% of final grade.** For each chapter or essay assigned, please post on the Carmen discussions page a short response to the reading. The posting should include

a) the page and paragraph number of the passage you are citing and

b) a two-three sentence explanation of why you think this passage is important, puzzling, provocative, or debatable. **See grading rubric on Carmen.**

--**Case study of the film you will write about for your course paper**, **15% of final grade, DUE Nov. 6.** A case study includes significant reviews of the film at the time it was released, a bibliography of the reviews, and a short essay examining how the film was presented and received. **See Case Study Guidelines posted on Carmen**.

**--Course paper DUE Dec. 7 on Canvas Assignments page (4-5 pp)**, **25% of final grade**. This assignment asks you to analyze a film you have screened on your own (the one for which you prepared a case study) by using the same strategy we have used throughout the class: applying a social framework as well as one of the key feminist theories of the horror film. **See Final Paper Guidelines posted on Carmen.** **Also, please note that your thesis paragraph for the paper is due in class, paper copies, on Nov. 29.**

| Assignment or category | Points |
| --- | --- |
| Midterm exam | 20 |
| Final exam | 20 |
| Reading journals | 20 |
| Case study | 15 |
| Final paper | 25 |
|  |  |
| Total | 100 |

*See course schedule, below, for due dates*

## Late assignments

Late papers go down one half grade for each day late.

## Grading scale

93–100: A   
90–92.9: A-   
87–89.9: B+  
83–86.9: B  
80–82.9: B-   
77–79.9: C+   
73–76.9: C  
70 –72.9: C-   
67 –69.9: D+   
60 –66.9: D  
Below 60: E

## Instructor feedback and response time

### Contact Preference

### Please contact me by email. I will respond to emails within 24 hours on school days.

### Grading and feedback

Students can expect papers and exams to be graded and returned to you within one week. For the reading responses, I will provide feedback on the first set of responses within one week and then will give feedback again just before Autumn Break.

# Attendance, participation, and discussions

## Student participation requirements

--**Attendance is required**! You have two excused absences to use for medical or personal problems before your final grade goes down one-half grade: 3 absences = one-half grade; 4 absences=one full grade, etc. This means that you don’t need to notify me if you are absent because of a medical or personal emergency; you have two excused absences to deal with these problems. But DO keep doctors’ notes in case there are complications that will mean additional absences.

## Discussion and communication guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

* **Writing style**: Your reading journals can be written informally, but the papers should be academic essays, written clearly and without grammar or spelling errors that would make the paper difficult to read. See the guidelines on Carmen.
* **Tone and civility**: Please express your ideas respectfully during class discussions and listen carefully to others. We’ll work on this by learning how evidence and theoretical assumptions shape different interpretations of gender, race, class, and spectatorship issues in cinema.
* **Citing your sources**: See the paper guidelines for the two papers on how to document your sources. Also see the plagiarism statement later in this syllabus.
* **Backing up your work**: When you write your reading journals, it’s a good idea to write them out in a Word document and then paste them to the discussion page.

# Course schedule

**I. The Frankenstein Tradition**

Aug. 21: Introduction

Aug. 23: Readings: Spines, “Horror Films and the Women Who Love Them”

and Grant, “Introduction”

clips: Whale, *Frankenstein* (1931)

Aug. 28: Reading: Grant, “James Whale’s Frankenstein”

Introduction to *Bride of Frankenstein*

Aug. 30: Whale, *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935)

Reading: Hall, “Making Monsters”

Sept. 4: Reading: Young, "Here Comes the Bride"

**II The Frankenstein Tradition and the Slasher Film**

Sept. 6: Introduction to *Psycho*

Reading: Freud, "The Uncanny"

Sept. 11: Hitchcock, *Psycho* (1960)

Sept. 13: Readings: Hemmeter, “Horror Beyond the Camera” and Williams, "When the Woman Looks"

Sept. 18: Reading: Williams, “Film Bodies”

Introduction to *Halloween* (1978)

Sept. 20: Carpenter, *Halloween* (1978)

Sept. 25: Readings: Clover, "Her Body, Himself" and

Tony Williams, "Trying to Survive"

Sept. 27: Craven, *Scream* (1995)

Readings: Karlyn, “*Scream*, Popular Culture, Feminism’s Third Wave” and Wee, “Resurrecting and Updating the Teen Slasher”

Oct. 2: **MIDTERM EXAM**

**III. Transgendering Frankenstein**

Oct. 4: Reading: Stryker, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein”

Clips, *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975)

Oct. 9: *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (2016)

Oct. 11 **Autumn Break**

**IV. Frankenstein Legacy and Monstrous Reproduction**

Oct. 16: Creed, "Horror and the Monstrous Feminine"

Oct. 18: Scott, *Alien* (1978)

Doherty, "Genre, Gender and the *Alien* Trilogy"

Oct. 23: Intro lecture on *Rosemary’s Baby*

Davies, “The Psychological Horror of Roman Polanski”

Oct. 25: Polanski, *Rosemary's Baby* (1968)

Reading: Fischer, "Birth Traumas"

Oct. 30 Intro lecture on *The Ring*

Nov. 1: Verbinski, *The Ring* (2002)

Reading, Holland, "Morality In A (TV) Box”

Nov. 6: **CASE STUDIES DUE TODAY**

Introduction, Kent, *The Babadook* (2014) Buerger, “Maternal Indifference, Ambivalence and the Abject in *The Babadook”*

Nov 8: *The Babadook* (Kent, 2014)

Kidd, “Umbilical Fears”

Nov. 13: Introduction to *The Orphanage* and *The Others*

Nov. 15: Bayona, *The Orphanage* (2007) Delgado, "The Young And The Damned" and “Yesterday’s Children”

Nov. 20: Amenábar, *The Others* (2001)

Briefal, “What Some Ghosts Don’t Know”

Nov. 22: HAPPY THANKSGIVING

**V. The Frankenstein Tradition and Racism as Horror**

Nov. 27: **MOVIE QUIZ**: *Candyman* (Rose, 1992)

Reading: Briefel and Ngai, “How Much Did You Pay for this Place?”

Nov 29: **THESIS PARAGRAPH DUE IN CLASS**

Dec. 4: **MOVIE QUIZ**: *Get Out* (Peele, 2017)

Reading: Weston, “Get Out”

**Dec. 7, 8 a.m. FINAL EXAM, NOTE CHANGE OF TIME**

**FINAL DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF COURSE PAPER**

# Other course policies

## Academic integrity policy

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 33355487). For additional information, see the [Code of Student Conduct](https://trustees.osu.edu/assets/files/RuleBook/CodeStudentConduct.pdf).

As defined in University Rule 3335-31-02, plagiarism is “the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas.” It is the obligation of this department and its instructors to report **all** cases of suspected plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. After the report is filed, a hearing takes place and if the student is found guilty, the possible sanctions range from failing the class to suspension or expulsion from the university. Although the existence of the Internet makes it relatively easy to plagiarize, it also makes it even easier for instructors to find evidence of plagiarism. It is obvious to most teachers when a student turns in work that is not his or her own and plagiarism search engines make documenting the offense very simple. Always cite your sources’ always ask questions **before** you turn in an assignment if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism. To preserve the integrity of OSU as an institution of higher learning, to maintain your own integrity, and to avoid jeopardizing your future, **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE!**

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

* The Committee on Academic Misconduct web pages ([COAM Home](http://oaa.osu.edu/coam.html))
* Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity ([*Ten Suggestions*](http://oaa.osu.edu/coamtensuggestions.html))
* Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity ([www.northwestern.edu/uacc/8cards.htm](http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/8cards.html)

## Accommodations for accessibility

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options.  To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services.  After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

## Student Support Policies and Resources

**Mental Health Services.** As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life’s Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting [ccs.osu.edu](http://ccs.osu.edu/) or calling [614­-292-­5766](tel:%28614%29%20292-5766). CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at [614­-292-­5766](tel:%28614%29%20292-5766) and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-­800­-273-TALK or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/).

**Title IX.** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at [http://titleix.osu.edu](http://titleix.osu.edu/)or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at [titleix@osu.edu](mailto:titleix@osu.edu).

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as an instructor. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on Ohio State’s campus with the University. Students may speak to someone confidentially by calling 1-866-294-9350 or through the [Ohio State Anonymous Reporting Line](https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/7689/index.html).

**Recovery Support.** The Collegiate Recovery Community (CRC) is a supportive peer community on campus for students in recovery from a substance use disorder or who may be currently struggling with substance use.  The CRC is located in room 1230 of Lincoln Tower and meets regularly on Wednesdays at 5pm. Stop by or visit [go.osu.edu/recovery](http://go.osu.edu/recovery) or email [recovery@osu.edu](https://email.osu.edu/owa/redir.aspx?SURL=vDpMgLEDYgenszJNzTEC9x_MIbVa4wFE5yl-foogkndPJWf5pKbSCG0AYQBpAGwAdABvADoAcgBlAGMAbwB2AGUAcgB5AEAAbwBzAHUALgBlAGQAdQA.&URL=mailto%3arecovery%40osu.edu) for more information.

**Student Advocacy.** The Student Advocacy Center can assist students with appeals, petitions and other needs when experiencing hardship during a semester. Learn more at <http://advocacy.osu.edu/>.

# Bibliography

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