

Horror History

Course overview:

Tales of horror have been part of our cultural experience from the dawn of written language, and the ongoing success of series like *The Walking Dead* and films like *Get Out* and *A Quiet Place* show the genre is just as central today. Horror History will trace the roots of the genre from earliest literature to the present, and focus on the interplay between fear and culture, considering how various themes and sub-genres may be manifestations of both our deepest fears and darkest urges. The course is strongly recommended for mature students, as emotionally challenging concepts will be discussed. Students will need parental permission to watch R-rated films during the last units of the course.

Scope & Sequence

Units of Study	Description	Materials & Assessments	CC ELA Standards
Ancient Roots	An examination of the beginnings of horror that considers cultural and biological connections. From roots in the 'fight or flight' response to manifestations in mythology, folk tales, and religion, we examine how fears manifest themselves in literature. Special attention to the relationship between culture and horror, and the demonization of what we don't understand.	See attached unit outline	RL 1-4, 10, 11 RI 1-4, 10 W 1 a-e, 2 a-f, 4-7, 10 SL 1 a-e, 4, 6 L 1-3, 5, 6
Gothicism	The darker sibling of Romanticism, this unit will cover horror literature in western culture. Stories & poetry will be the focus, with the unit primarily covering the 19 th century from Poe and Mary Shelley, to Stoker, Wilde, and Conan-Doyle. H.P. Lovecraft will be a 20 th century extension in this unit.	See attached unit outline	RL 1-7, 10, 11 RI 7, 10 W 3 a-f, 4, 5, 10 SL 1-4, 6 L 1-6

<p>Film & Popular Culture to the 1950s</p>	<p>A study of how film, radio, and television have created popular imagery of horror. Beginning with the Edison production of <i>Frankenstein</i>, students will get a tutorial on classic horror film with focus on German expressionism (<i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i>, <i>M.</i>, <i>Nosferatu</i>, etc.), Early U.S. silent film work featuring Lon Chaney (<i>Phantom of the Opera</i>, <i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i>, <i>He Who Gets Slapped</i>), the Universal classics (also Tod Browning's <i>Freaks</i> at MGM, and RKO's <i>King Kong</i>), and atomic age films of the 1950s (<i>Them</i>, <i>The Thing</i>, <i>The Blob</i>).</p>	<p>See attached unit outline</p>	<p>RL 1-7, 10, 11 W 3 a-f, 4-9 SL 1-6 L 1-3, 4, 6</p>
<p>Race & Gender</p>	<p>A look at the development of horror as a manifestation of its time and place, and in-roads made by women and people of color in the later 20th century. (That's a nice way of saying that popular media has been primarily run by white men, and portrays their point-of-view). Tales of domestic horror like <i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i> and short stories by Shirley Jackson, to 70s films such as <i>Rosemary's Baby</i> and <i>The Stepford Wives</i> will be used to examine the growth of women's voices. Works by black writer Octavia Butler will be offered, along with a consideration of Jordan</p>	<p>See attached unit outline</p>	<p>RL 1-6, 10, 11 W 1, 4, 9, 10 SL 1 a-e, 6 L1-3, 6</p>

	Peele's films <i>Get Out</i> and <i>Us</i> .		
Horror Around Us	Starting as early as tales of Indian massacres and the lurid 'confessions' and 'Penny Dreadfuls' of the Victorian era, the way media has handled real-life crime has influenced horror. Here we look at how true crime has shaped horror, developing in sub genres like serial killer procedurals, medical horror, and disaster films. How these trends manifest in pop-culture hits like <i>The Walking Dead</i> will also be covered.	See attached unit outline	RL 1-7, 10, 11 W 1, 4, 9, 10 SL 1, 3, 6 L 1, 2, 3, 6
Horror Project	A significant piece of the course will be each student's individual project. Options for creative writing, film-making, media studies, or sociological/psychological studies are offered. Students will create a 15 to 20 page work, or the equivalent thereof.	See attached unit outline	Standards showcased depend on students project designs; see unit outline.