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MAR 304.50: Modern Horror Film

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THE MODERN HORROR FILM

MAR 304.50

Online Course

Instructor: Nicholas Jenkins

E-Mail: profnickjenkins@gmail.com

Office Hours: Since this is an "Online Class" I have set aside time throughout the semester to answer emails. Typically I can get back to most emails within 24 hours. If you are having an emergency with something class related and cannot get a hold of me, please contact the Media Arts Office at **406.243.4540** and ask if they can locate me on campus.

"Read Marcus Aurelius. Of each particular thing ask: what is it in itself? What is its nature?"

- Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lecter

Course Description:

The horror genre is one of the most profitable in the history of filmmaking. It is lauded by some, rebuked by others, but enjoyed by millions. But what makes this genre of filmmaking so popular and powerful? Why does it endure in all forms of art? What is it about horror that draws so many people in and keeps them coming back? These questions as well as others we will attempt to answer in this 15-week online course. You will explore the changing landscape of the horror film since 1960, studying the movies in filmic terms (Acting, Directing, Cinematography, Music, etc...) and sociological importance. Through online discussions, selected readings, multimedia projects, and online lectures, we will seek to understand the often-controversial genre of horror.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Required Text:

The Horror Film by Peter Hutchings

ISBN-10: 0582437946 ISBN-13: 978-0582437944

This is NOT a *suggested* text. It is REQUIRED. I have scanned in the first two chapters and ONLY the first two chapters of the book to give you time to get it ordered and shipped. We do weekly readings from the text that you will be quizzed on and expected to understand for the exams.

Movies:

It will be your responsibility to acquire copies of all the required films we will be viewing. A list is provided on this syllabus in the "Schedule" section. Also there is a list on Blackboard with links to each movie's page on www.imdb.com. ALL of these films are available on Netflix (a few as Instant Streaming) as well as most local video stores. Also, Amazon.com has many of them on their instant streaming rental option.

You will also be required to have access to a computer that is capable of viewing Quicktime Movies and YouTube videos. In the Top of the Topics Outline section of this class on Moodle you will find **Introductory Videos** that will test your computer's ability to play videos. If you can view those movies, you'll have no problem with any of the media in the class. If you cannot view those movies, contact me immediately so I can help you find a suitable solution to the problem.

Course Expectations:

Students will develop the abilities to...

- Articulate how the Horror Film (and the Genre as a whole) Functions.
- Understand the Change that Horror Films Have Undergone Since 1960.
- Critically Analyze the Selected Films for Common Themes and Iconography.
- Critically Analyze the Selected Films for Sociological Relevance and Importance.
- Communicate Film Specific Ideas and Concepts About What Horror Is.

Course Requirements:

There are **150** points possible in this class. These points are divided into four categories.

1. Online Discussions
2. Weekly Assignments
3. Exams and Quizzes
4. Final Paper

Grading Guidelines:

I have sought to make grading as clear as I can. If you have any questions, please contact me.

1. Online Forums.

The Forum Discussions will be graded as follows:

•**Participation** – you will be required to make a certain amount of posts for each discussion as well as a certain amount of responses. Each discussion will list the requirements for participation at the start.

•**Vocabulary** – You will be expected to communicate your ideas using terms and ideas we have discussed in readings, assignments, and film lectures.

2. Weekly Assignments.

You will be expected to complete the assigned Learning Units within the given dates (usually a 7 day period). Each assignment is different but all of them are exercises used to gauge your understanding of the Horror Genre so I will be looking for...

•**Completion** – The Learning Units will be made available for a certain amount of time on Moodle and you will have until the Units are taken offline to complete them. Everything will be submitted on Moodle OR through Email. It will be clear in each assignment how that assignment should be submitted.

•**Vocabulary and Coherence** – You will be discussing ideas and concepts relating to the films we have watched. Be clear and concise.

3. Exams and Quizzes.

You will have Quizzes after every lecture and reading assignment. These are self-explanatory and are simply there to make sure you have a solid understanding of the material before we get into discussions. Quizzes will be "Multiple Choice" or "Fill in the Blank" type tests, while the Exams (a Mid Term and Final) will be Essay

4. Final Papers.

Papers will be assigned at the Mid Term. You will be doing a Synopsis, a Breakdown of the film based on readings, and an analysis of a Horror Film that we HAVE NOT covered in the class. Similarly to discussions and assignments, you will be expected to use Vocabulary and Concepts introduced in the class and articulate common themes and iconography.

Grade Breakdowns Are As Follows:

Grade	Points	Percent
A	140 - 150 points and above	93 % and above

A-	135 - 139 points	90 - 92 %
B+	130 - 134 points	87 - 89 %
B	125 - 129 points	83 - 86 %
B-	120 - 124 points	80 - 82 %
C+	115 - 119 points	77 - 79 %
C	110 - 114 points	73 - 76 %
C-	105 - 109 points	70 - 72 %
D+	100 - 104 points	67 - 69 %
D	95 - 99 points	60 - 66 %
F	94 points and below	59 % and below

EXTRA CREDIT:

There will be a one time Extra Credit assignment at Mid-Term that entails a small paper. It will be the only Extra Credit in the class and I encourage EVERYONE to take advantage of it.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS CLASS

1. Visit this Moodle Page several times per week. Make sure you check for all recent announcements and DOUBLE CHECK that you have turned in all assigned work before the deadline. If you are unsure of whether or not an assignment or quiz has been turned in (as the gradebook can be difficult to read sometimes) feel free to email me and ask.

2. Devote time to your work. Not only should you be committing to THINK about what you write, but you should also proof your work before you turn it in to me. If I can't understand what you've written, then you won't get a grade for it. Also, be aware that if you misspell a filmmaker's name, or a vocabulary word, YOU WILL BE DOCKED POINTS.

3. Contact the instructor. Never feel as though you are bothering me with emails. It is my responsibility to answer your emails and help you with problems relating to this class, but it is **YOUR** responsibility to ask the questions. In fact, I recommend you email me at the start of the class just to make sure I am receiving your emails and responding to you.

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umd.edu/SA/vpsa/index.cfm/page/1339>

Schedule

Though fairly thorough, this list doesn't include all of the activities you'll be doing. You will notice that I ask you to watch the upcoming film BEFORE we begin the section on that film. When you finish the sections for one week, watch the film for next week.

ALL BLOCKS ARE ASSIGNED ON A MONDAY AND ARE DUE THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY AT MIDNIGHT!

August 26th - September 1st

Introduction to the Class

Where The Horror Film Started: Horror in the Movies to 1960

Discussion and Quiz on Early Horror History

Understanding the Filmic Lingo

Watch: PSYCHO (1960)

September 1st - 8th

Modern Horror Begins

Discussion and Quiz on PSYCHO

Watch: THE EXORCIST (1973)

September 9th - 15th

Discussion and Quiz on THE EXORCIST

Introduction to Psychoanalysis

Understanding Abjection

Watch: THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE (1974) in preparation for next week.

September 16th - 22nd

Discussion and Quiz on THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

Introduction to Sound In Horror

Watch: THE SHINING (1980)

September 23rd - 29th

Family And Horror

Discussion and Quiz on THE SHINING

Understanding Performance in the Horror Film

Watch: A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET (1984)

September 30th - October 6th

Discussion and Quiz on A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

Understanding Sexuality in the Horror Film

Watch: AUDITION (2000) in preparation for next week.

October 7th - 13th

Discussion and Quiz on AUDITION

Understanding Sexual Difference and Savage Cinema.

FINAL PAPERS Assigned

MID-TERM EXAM Goes Live

EXTRA-CREDIT PAPER assigned

Watch: THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE (2001)

October 14th - 20th

Discussion and Quiz on THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE

Understanding the history of Gothic Horror/Romance

Watch: The Blair Witch Project (1999)

October 21st - 27th

The Reality of Horror

Discussion and Quiz on THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT

Perception of Reality in Cinema Part 1

Watch: LAKE MUNGO (2008) in preparation for next week.

October 28th - November 3rd

Discussion and Quiz on LAKE MUNGO

Perception of Reality in Cinema Part 2

Watch: HOSTEL (2005)

November 4th - 10th

...And Beyond

Discussion and Quiz on HOSTEL

Postulating the Future of Horror

Watch: THE CABIN IN THE WOODS (2011)

November 11th - 17th

Discussion and Quiz on The Cabin in the Woods

Discussion on the ideas of sacrifice and why we need Horror.

Watch: Evil Dead (2013)

November 18th - 24th

Discussion and Quiz on Evil Dead

Addiction, Reboots and Remakes

Study for Finals.

November 25th - December 1st

Thanksgiving Break. No units assigned or due.

December 2nd - 9th

Final Exam Goes Live

Final Papers due