

American Gothic Literature

online

Instructor

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Office Hours

MTWTF: 1-4 pm

Texts

American Gothic, From Salem Witchcraft to H.P. Lovecraft. Editor Charles L. Crow. Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Course Description

This course is a survey of Gothic American literature, a style which persists through the history of American literature from the Puritans to Steven King. The style makes appeals to the sense of terror, a response which America's first great philosopher approved of. Edmund Burke, in England referred to terror to define the sublime in his *Enquiry...into the Sublime and the Beautiful*. The greatest terror was for Burke the fear of death. The English art critic John Ruskin defended the Gothic in his books *Modern Painters* and *The Stones of Venice*. The Gothic for Ruskin suggested wonder as much as terror, but also deep time and a realistic depiction of the common man.

Later in England William Morris (and Elbert Hubbard in America) promoted the Gothic in arts and crafts as a way to resist industrialism and reclaim our humanity. The Gothic is a form of Romanticism, because it rejects the dominance of rationality in the classical art of the Renaissance. The interest in spiritualism, the unconscious, the occult, and the afterlife are a part of the long history of American literature. Before Edgar Allan Poe, there was Charles Brockden Brown. Yet Poe influenced all the authors of our anthology, from Mary Wilkins Freeman to H.P. Lovecraft--and Poe had an enormous effect on world literature, helping to define the art-for-art's sake movement. The Gothic also reflects well the waves of charismatic faith that have swept North America. The Gothic often is characterized by dichotomy dividing heaven from hell, good from evil. It also reflects a cultural division, as Gothic architecture can be said to be the



Edward Gorey

architecture of the north and classical architecture, the reasoned, balanced, harmonious architecture of the south. The Goths conquered Spain and North Africa, so they are not simply Germanic. And American Gothic literature, like Poe and Hawthorne, often refer to the literature of Spain, Arabia, and even Japan. One could argue it's a universal form.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to

1. Develop an awareness of the American literary tradition.
2. Understand issues in class, gender, and the environment in the development of American society as expressed through literature.
3. Use literature of the past as a means of critically understanding American society today.
4. Apply techniques of literary research and criticism to write about writing.
5. Use theoretical concepts in literature as a lens for interpretation and study current scholarship in literary criticism in English.
6. Understand the formal features, aesthetic concepts, figurative language, and tropes used in literature.

Graduate Program in English Learning Outcomes

ENGLISH (GRADUATE)

Graduate students will be able to

1. **SLO 1** – Students will demonstrate a critical understanding of the significance of major authors, literary works in different genres, and definitive literary movements in literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.
2. **SLO 2** – Students will demonstrate the ability to critically analyze and interpret literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.
3. **SLO 3** – Students will demonstrate the ability to conduct and utilize research methodologies in the study of literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.

Projects

I. Discussion Posts (500 points; 25 posts, 20 points each)

Submit five posts per week to the discussion board. The discussion post builds a community of readers and encourages all of us to read regularly. Some of the posts will be on topics other than the reading: the statement of purpose of the term paper and a draft of your first page for the term paper. The high number of posts makes sure you leave the class well read. You will be familiar with more literature.

The length of each post should be around 200 words, which should be about one to two paragraphs. Focus on raising questions, interpreting, and responding critically. To support and develop your ideas, use quotes. Another good strategy is to consider the reading through reference to other literature you know: inter-textual reading. I would like our posts to function like a conversation in which we respond to each other's ideas as well.

II. Term Paper (500 points; due on the last day of class—August 12)

The term paper can focus on one aspect of one work of literature or compare two works of literature. A statement of purpose should be posted to the discussion board at least one week before the paper is due. We will share ideas for papers and help each other through peer review and editing. Format: 12-15 pages; MLA style; analytical close reading—use quotes; consult scholarship on your topic and juxtapose your ideas to theirs.

PROJECTS	Due Date	%	Points
Posts to the class Discussion Board (25 in number)		50	500 20 pts each
Term Paper 12-15 pages in length	August 12	50	500
Total Points Available		100	1000

Deadlines

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments will be turned in at the end of the day on their due dates. All alternative arrangements must be approved before the relevant deadline. Late work without previous arrangement with me will only be accepted upon demonstration of extenuating circumstances.

Distance Education Statement

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

Student Responsibilities Statement

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the [Student Handbook](#) and the [Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog](#) and for abiding by the [University rules and regulations](#). Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

Blackboard

If you confront technical issues which interfere with your ability to use Blackboard, contact the LTAC (Lobo Technology Assistance Center) at 432-837-8888 or <https://techassist.sulross.edu>

Accommodating Students with Disabilities and Counseling Services

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a

request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu or ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

SRSU Library Services

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine. Offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Dishonest acts, such as plagiarism (using words or a specific author's ideas from another source without acknowledging the source) or collusion (having other people write parts of your paper for you), may result in an "F" on the assignment and may lead to a disciplinary hearing conducted through the office of the Dean of Students, which could result in suspension or expulsion from SRSU. If you have questions about whether your use of other sources (such as books, websites, friends, or Writing Center tutors) is fair or not, please ask before turning in the work that you have a question about.

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

Tutoring at the English Department's Online Writing Center

The English Department provides tutoring through Blackboard Collaborate. I will assign extra credit for major assignments receiving feedback from the tutors in the English Department's Online Writing Center.

Tutoring Center

[The Lobo Den Tutoring Center](#) offers FREE tutoring support to help you excel in your courses. Whether you need assistance in Writing, Math, Science, or other subjects, we're here to help!

Important Information:

- **Drop-in and Scheduled Appointments:** Flexible options to fit your needs.
- **Hours of Operation:** Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
- **Workshops:** Attend our regularly hosted academic workshops on STEM topics and professional development, often in collaboration with specialized faculty.
- **Location:** BWML Room 128.
- **Contact Us:** For more information or to book an appointment, email tutoring@sulross.edu or call (432) 837-8726.

Looking for additional support?

- Tutor.com offers FREE 24/7 online tutoring in over 200 subjects, including specialized support for ESL and ELL learners with native Spanish-speaking tutors.
- Access Tutor.com via Blackboard: Log in to your Blackboard account to get started anytime, anywhere.

Take advantage of these valuable resources to boost your confidence and performance in your classes. We look forward to helping you succeed!

Incompletes

Incompletes will only be granted if there is a valid reason why the student is unable to complete the course work due health, accident, or family emergency and at least 50% of the course assignments are completed.

COURSE CALENDAR

Dates	Readings	Due Dates
Week 1		
7.7	Cotton Mather	
7.8	Crevecour	Post 1 on Mather
7.9	Charles Brockden Brown	Post 2 on Crevecour
7.10	Washington Irving	Post 3 on Brockden Brown
7.11	John Neal	Post 4 on Irving
Week 2		
7.14	Nathaniel Hawthorne	Post 5 on Neal
7.15	Henry Longfellow	Post 6 on Hawthorne
7.16	Edgar Allan Poe: short story	Post 7 on Longfellow
7.17	Edgar Allan Poe: Poem	Post 8 on Poe story
7.18	Melville	Post 9 on Poe Poem
Week 3		
7.21	George Lippard	Post 10 on Melville
7.22	Rose Terry Cooke	Post 11 on Lippard
7.23	Emily Dickinson	Post 12 on Cooke
7.24	Louisa May Alcott	Post 13 on Dickinson
7.25	Research Term Paper	Post 14 on Alcott
Week 4		
7.28	Ambrose Bierce	Post 15 Statement of Purpose of Term Paper
7.29	Henry James	Post 16 on Bierce
7.30	Sarah Orne Jewett	Post 17 on James
7.31	Kate Chopin	Post 18 on Sarah Orne Jewett
8.1	Drafting Term Paper	Post 19 on Kate Chopin

Week 5		
8.4	Mary Wilkins Freeman	Post 20 Introductory Page for Term Paper
8.5	Edith Warton	Post 21 on Mary Wilkins Freeman
8.6	Robert Chambers	Post 22 on Edith Warton
8.7	Frank Norris	Post 23 on Chambers
8.8	H.P. Lovecraft	Post 24 on Norris
Week 6		
8.11	Writing and editing term paper	Post 25 on Lovecraft
8.12		Term Paper Due
8.13	No Final	