

Comparative Literature 254: Horror and the Global Gothic, Spring 2020

Instructor: Dr. Guillermo Rodríguez-Romaguera (guille@email.unc.edu)

Office hours (336 Dey): W 10am-12pm by appointment



"I busied myself to think of a story . . .

One which would speak to the mysterious fears of our nature, and awaken thrilling horror — one to make the reader dread to look round, to curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart."

- Mary Shelley

What are you most afraid of? What curdles your blood and quickens the beatings of your heart? Who are the monsters that lurk beneath your bed? This course will explore how fear and horror are evoked through evocative words, shocking images and immersive sounds by applying key theories of the horror genre by Noël Carroll, Carol J. Clover and Barbara Creed to Stephen King's iconic 1986 novel *It*, the video game series *Layers of Fear* and four horror films from around the world. It will focus primarily on representations of monstrosity that have a basis in British Gothic literature but have been adopted by international filmmakers to represent culturally-specific horrors while provoking universal fears in their audiences. Films include Guillermo del Toro's *Cronos*, Alejandro Amenábar's *Thesis*, Hideo Nakata's *Ringu* and Agnieszka Smoczyńska's *The Lure*.

Note: Some of the films and readings we will examine necessarily feature disturbing scenes. Enroll only if you plan to engage such representations in a serious critical manner. This course satisfies the Visual & Performing Arts (VP) requirement. It also counts for the Global Cinema minor and the Film Studies concentration within the English major.

Required Texts

Stephen King, *It* (1986)*

Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or The Paradoxes of the Heart* (1990)

Carol J. Clover, *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (1992)

Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (1993)

*Available to purchase at the UNC Bookstore. All other texts are available in the Resources tab on Sakai.

Films*

Cronos (Mexico, 1993)

Thesis (Spain, 1996)

Pan's Labyrinth (Mexico/Spain, 2006)

Ringu (Japan, 1998)

The Lure (Poland, 2015)

*All films will be viewed in class, unless otherwise noted.

Video Games*

Layers of Fear (2016)

Layers of Fear: Inheritance (2016)

Layers of Fear 2 (2019)

*Video games will be played during class on Fridays.

Assignments

Discussion (50%)

Your discussion grade will be based on written responses to the viewing and reading assignments. These responses will be posted on the Sakai Discussion Board before class. In addition, once during the term, you will also be asked to lead class discussion with a partner for that week's assigned chapters from the novel as well as the accompanying film segment and theoretical reading. Expectations/criteria for responses and discussion leadership are detailed in [separate handouts](#).

You will also be part of a video game playing group of four students every Friday. On the week in which you are a discussion leader, you and your partner will be responsible for leading a brief reflection at the end of the gameplay in relation to the theoretical text discussed that week.

Final Project or Exam (50%)

For your culminating assignment in the course, you have the option of producing a video/creative project with a written component or take a traditional final exam during the Exam Period. Project and Final Exam expectations/criteria are detailed in [a separate handout](#).

Course Policies

Attendance

Discussion is the heart of this course, and we have much to learn from each other; therefore, it is imperative the all students be in class, on time to contribute ideas and reflections. Each absence beyond three (3) may result in a reduction of your final grade by one-third letter grade (A becomes an A-). Absences may be excused with timely, official documentation from the appropriate university office (i.e, the Dean of Students, *not* student health).

Late Policy

All work must be submitted on time to the proper place on Sakai. Work not submitted at the specified time is considered late unless we made prior arrangements or unless there is an extreme extenuating circumstance (such as severe illness/injury or a family emergency). Computer or printer failure is not an excuse. Work will be accepted up to 4 days late (yes, weekends and holidays count), with a 10% per day late penalty.

Conferences/E-mail

I am generally easiest to reach electronically. My e-mail address is listed on the front of the syllabus and is also available through Sakai. **I will respond to emails within 24 hours during the school week (M-F). Please refrain from e-mailing questions about an assignment due in fewer than 24 hours. In all other cases, if you do not receive a response within 24 hours during the school week, please re-send the message.**

Also, please do not send me drafts, homework, or any other attachments over e-mail unless I have specifically requested that you do so. You may submit passages from essays/assignments to review or a full draft with specific questions/concerns to respond to as long as it is at least 3 business days before the assignment is due.

If you would like more feedback, you should bring your draft to office hours. My office hours are listed on the first page of this syllabus. You must make an appointment in advance by e-mail if you plan to come to office hours. If you cannot make any of the times offered, please email me for an appointment at an alternate time.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a violation of the Student Honor Code. You must document all sources of information that you incorporate into your work. A person commits plagiarism when he or she represents someone else's ideas as his or her own. You should familiarize yourself with the honor code before turning in any assignments. Any cases of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with UNC policies.

Accessibility Statement

UNC-Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations for students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health struggles, chronic medical conditions, temporary disability, or pregnancy complications, all of which can impair student success. See the ARS website for contact and registration information: <https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/contact-us>

Counseling and Psychological Services Statement

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

Grading

Final letter grades are determined based on the following scale:

A (94-100)	A- (90-93)	B+ (87-89)	B (84-86)	B- (80-83)	C+ (77-79)
C (74-76)	C- (70-73)	D+ (67-69)	D (60-66)	F (below 60)	

I will use traditional rounding to determine grades that fall between whole values. Any mixed number with a decimal value of five tenths or higher will round up to the next whole number. (For example, 93.5 will round up to an A as a 94, but 93.4 will not.)

Classroom Environment

Creating a classroom environment that makes all students comfortable expressing their thoughts and ideas is critical. To that end, each student is responsible for exercising tolerance and respect for a wide variety of ideas and healthy intellectual disagreement. Our University philosophy supports this position, which fosters intellectual growth.

Course Calendar

You will view all films *during class* unless otherwise noted. All readings and responses should be completed *before class*. Video games will be played *in class*.

W January 8

- Welcome and Syllabus

F January 10

- In-class viewing & discussion: *A Night at the Movies: The Horrors of Stephen King* (2011)

M January 13

- Reading: *It* (1985) Chapters 1 & 2 – “After the Flood (1957)” & “After the Festival (1984)”
- In-class viewing & discussion: *Cronos* (Mexico, 1993)

W January 15

- [Response due](#) [Tuesday 5pm]
- Reading: Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or The Paradoxes of the Heart* (1990) Chapter 1

F January 17

- Playing: *Layers of Fear* (2016)

W January 22

- Reading: *It* (1985) Chapter 3 – “Six Phone Calls (1985)” and *Derry: First Interlude*
- [Response due](#) [Tuesday 5pm]
- Reading: Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or The Paradoxes of the Heart* (1990) Chapter 2

F January 24

- Playing: *Layers of Fear* (2016)

M January 27

- Reading: *It* (1985) Chapter 4 & 5 - “Ben Hanscom Takes a Fall” & “Bill Denbrough Beats the Devil (I)”
- In-class viewing & discussion: *Cronos* (Mexico, 1993)

W January 29

- [Response due](#) [Tuesday 5pm]
- Reading: Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or The Paradoxes of the Heart* (1990) Chapter 3

F January 31

- Playing: *Layers of Fear* (2016)

M February 3

- Reading: *It* (1985) Chapters 6 & 7 – “One of the Missing: A Tale from the Summer of ‘58” & “The Dam in the Barrens”
- In-class viewing & discussion: *Cronos* (Mexico, 1993)

W February 5

- [Response due](#) [Tuesday 5pm]
- Reading: Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or The Paradoxes of the Heart* (1990) Chapter 4

F February 7

- Playing: *Layers of Fear* (2016)

M February 10

- [No class meeting; Replaced by screening/discussion of *Pan's Labyrinth* on March 16]

W February 12

- [No class meeting; Replaced by screening/discussion of *Pan's Labyrinth* on March 16]

F February 14

- [No class meeting; Replaced by screening/discussion of *Pan's Labyrinth* on March 16]

M February 17

- Reading: *It* (1985) Chapters 8 & 9 – “Georgie’s Room and the House on Niebolt Street” & “Cleaning Up”
- In-class viewing & discussion: *Thesis* (Spain, 1996)

W February 19

- [Response due](#) [Tuesday 5pm]
- Reading: Carol J. Clover, *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (1992) Intro & Chapter 1

F February 21

- Playing: *Layers of Fear: Inheritance* (2016)

M February 24

- Reading: *It* (1985) *Derry: The Second Interlude* & Chapter 10 – “The Reunion”
- In-class viewing & discussion: *Thesis* (Spain, 1996)

W February 26

- [Response due](#) [Tuesday 5pm]
- Reading: Carol J. Clover, *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (1992) Chapter 3

F February 28

- Playing: *Layers of Fear: Inheritance* (2016)

M March 2

- Reading: *It* (1985) Chapters 11 & 12 – “Walking Tours” & “Three Uninvited Guests”
- In-class viewing & discussion: *Thesis* (Spain, 1996)

W March 4

- [Response due](#) [Tuesday 5pm]
- Reading: Carol J. Clover, *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (1992) Chapter 4

F March 6

- In-class viewing & discussion: *Thesis* (Spain, 1996)

SPRING BREAK

M March 16

- Reading: *It* (1985) *Derry: The Third Interlude* and Chapters 13 & 14 – “The Apocalyptic Rockfight” & “The Album”
- In-class viewing & discussion: *Ringu* (Japan, 1998)

3:30-7:30pm – Screening/Discussion of *Pan's Labyrinth* @Undergraduate Library Room 205
[This replaces class times on February 10, 12 & 14 and April 1 & 3]

W March 18

- [Response due](#) [Tuesday 5pm]
- Reading: Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (1993) Intro, Chapters 1 & 2

F March 20

- Playing: *Layers of Fear 2* (2019)

M March 23

- Reading: *It* (1985) Chapters 15 & 16 – “The Smoke-Hole” & “Eddie’s Bad Break”
- In-class viewing & discussion: *Ringu* (Japan, 1998)

W March 25

- [Response due](#) [Tuesday 5pm]
- Reading: Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (1993) Chapter 3 & 4

F March 27

- Playing: *Layers of Fear 2* (2019)

M March 30

- [Video Equipment/Editing Tutorial Final Project](#) [Meet at MRC Media Lab in the UL]

W April 1

- [No class meeting; Replaced by screening/discussion of *Pan's Labyrinth* on March 16]

F April 3

- [No class meeting; Replaced by screening/discussion of *Pan's Labyrinth* on March 16]

M April 6

- Reading: *It* (1985) Chapters 17 & 18 – “Another One of the Missing: The Death of Patrick Hockstetter” & “The Bullseye” and *Derry: The Fourth Interlude*
- In-class viewing & discussion: *Ringu* (Japan, 1998)

W April 8

- [Response due](#) [Tuesday 5pm]
- Reading: Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (1993) Chapter 5 & 6

M April 13

- Reading: *It* (1985) Chapters 19, 20 & 21 – “In the Watches of the Night,” “The Circle Closes” & “Under the City”
- In-class viewing & discussion: *The Lure* (Poland, 2015)

W April 15

- [Response due](#) [Tuesday 5pm]
- Reading: Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (1993) Chapter 7, 8 & 9

F April 17

- Playing: *Layers of Fear 2* (2019)

M April 20

- Reading: *It* (1985) Chapters 22 & 23 – “The Ritual of Chüd” & “Out,” *Derry: The Final Interlude* and “Epilogue: Bill Denbrough Rides the Devil (II)”
- In-class viewing & discussion: *The Lure* (Poland, 2015)

W April 22

- [Response due](#) [Tuesday 5pm]
- Reading: Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (1993) Chapter 10 & 11

F April 24

- In-class viewing & discussion: *The Lure* (Poland, 2015)
- Course Evaluations

T April 28

- Final Exam @12 Noon (Regular Classroom)
- [Final Projects](#) due at Exam time