Advanced English: Creative Writing - The Evolving Gothic, a Creative Approach through Literature and Film

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Academic year 2019-2020 - Language Department - Autumn semester.

This course is meant for students of the advanced C1 and C2 levels. Theme-based language classes aim at developing written and oral skills through the study of a specific topic.

Course Objectives

This is a 12-week course exploring the Gothic genre as a means of improving student understanding and use of English.

The course has three main objectives:

- Introducing students to the Gothic genre as it has evolved from the 18th c. to the present.
- Facilitating critical analysis of selected works in various media.
- Expanding appreciation of the genre through creative writing.

Course Description

In the first weeks of the semester, students will be introduced to the Gothic genre. Its tenets and characteristics will be identified so as to serve as signposts throughout the semester, guiding our analysis of selected works. Our particular focus throughout the semester will be the evolution of the vampire.

Together we will read selected poetry of Coleridge and Byron, the novellas The Vampyre by John Polidori and Carmilla by Sheridan Le Fanu and the novels Dracula by Bram Stoker and Interview with the Vampire by Anne Rice. In addition, students will be assigned supplementary readings in various sub-genres of the Gothic, i.e. Irish and American (Southern) Gothic.

A lesser focus will be tracing the evolving image of the vampire through selected films, such as F.W. Murnau’s Nosferatu (1922), Tony Scott’s The Hunger (1983) and Jim Jarmusch’s Only Lovers Left Alive (2013).

Other topics may include poetry, the Gothic in translation and its influence on other genres, such as the detective novel. Throughout, our analysis will center on identifying the Gothic elements in each work and exploring how these have evolved from the genre’s roots.
Finally, students will “practice” the genre by writing an original short-form piece of fiction or criticism. Time allowing, we will refine these original works via in-class workshops and readings.

**Organization**

Activities will cover the four language skills:
- Speaking.
- Writing.
- Listening.
- Reading.

While in-class discussion of course content will emphasize speaking (including pronunciation, stress, et cetera), preparation will require reading (assigned novels, stories, critiques and scholarly articles regarding the Gothic’s social/historical context); writing (both critical and creative), and listening (including film extracts, author readings and presentations).