

CMN 4030: THE BRANCHES OF HORROR

3 Credits – Spring 2024

Time: Monday/Wednesday 1:00-2:15 - Buzzard 2442

Wednesday 7:00 – Buzzard 1501 (extra credit screening)

Instructor: Drew Britton

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Office: Buzzard 2535

Office Hours: Monday - 11:30-12:30, 2:15-3:15

Tuesday - 1:45-3:15.

Wednesday - 2:15-3:15

Thursday – 1:45-3:15

Or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: EJ Newton (ejnewton@eiu.edu)

Course Description & Objectives

Delve into horror through the exploration of its various subgenres and lesser-known titles, examining their impact on the culture as well as society. As a class, I hope that by the end of the semester we can...

- Have an understanding of horror, its potential for catharsis, and the genre's overall emotional impact.
- Identify various and specific trends within subgenres of horror.
- Critically analyze and dissect horror films well beyond the surface level viewing experience.
- Explore allegories and metaphors embedded within the genre and specific films.
- Collectively become a little bit braver.

Current Texts & Materials

There is no specific textbook but all required weekly readings are posted in the D2L content section.

Each week, you will be required to watch a film. You will need a laptop or television that supports streaming services in order to do so. Links for where to find all the films can be found in the D2L content section. However, I'll be conducting Wednesday night screenings. Attendance is purely optional but extra credit will be provided (see assignments below for details).

Academic Integrity and Honesty

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. Consequences of academic dishonesty range from failing of the course to expulsion from the university. There is a zero tolerance policy of plagiarism in this course. In addition, students are not allowed to use advanced automated tools (artificial intelligence or machine learning tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, or Dall-E 2) on assignments. Each student is expected to complete each assignment without substantive assistance from others, including automated tools. Considering this, all written assignments are run through A.I. detection services.

Late Work

Because we cover material in the course sequentially, it is critical that you complete each assignment on time. All assignments should be turned in on the day they are due. If an assignment is not turned in when noted, it will not be accepted. If you have any questions or are experiencing any difficulties with an assignment, please contact me before the assignment is due.

Response Time

Inquiring students can expect an e-mail response within a matter of 48 hours. All submitted assignments will be graded, along with feedback, and posted to D2L within a matter of 72 hours.

Students With Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Accessibility & Accommodations (OAA). All accommodations must be approved through OAA. Please stop by McAfee Gym, Room 1272, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

Academic Support Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Academic Support center (www.eiu.edu/success) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to McAfee Gym, Room 2230.

Grading Scale

100-90% = A

89-80% = B

79-70% = C

69-60% = D

59-0% = F

Assignments/Evaluation - 100 points total

Class Attendance & Participation (30%)

A large portion of your grade will be determined by your willingness to attend class, and actively participate. This is a very discussion heavy course that requires a lot of engagement. Therefore, be prepared to share your ideas and actively respond to the materials.

You will be allowed two absences; each absence thereafter will result in a 1% deduction from your attendance/participation grade. Additionally, every late arrival will count as a 0.5% deduction from your attendance/participation grade. If you are actively on your cellphone, I will not interrupt class. Instead, I will deduct 1% from your grade each time.

Film Screening Notes (15%)

During the weekly screening, take detailed notes. You can translate and upload a word document or take photos of your handwritten notes and upload the JPG. All entries must be submitted to the D2L Dropbox.

Film Quizzes (15%)

Following each screening, you'll take a 10-question multiple choice quiz through D2L to prove that you did in fact watch the film. You'll have ten minutes for each quiz and they must be taken within

the Respondus LockDown browser. However, if you attend the Wednesday night screening, you don't have to take the quiz. To find the quizzes: D2L > Assessment > Quizzes.

Midterm (20%)

Final (20%)

Wednesday Night Screening (extra credit)

Every Wednesday at 7:00pm in Buzzard 1501, I'll be hosting the weekly screening. This is for students who want to watch the film with their peers (bring whoever you'd like), want to save money from renting the film, or just don't have access to streaming. This is purely optional but if you attend, you don't have to take the quiz.

"I Just Couldn't" Essay

While required you give every film a chance, some people have their limits, and I will never force you to watch something you can't bear (for whatever reason). If you find yourself unable to experience the film, you are free to stop. But In lieu of watching the film/taking the quiz, you must submit to D2L a 300-word, properly formatted essay on the reasons why you couldn't. This will also be extremely informative to our post-screening discussions. Please don't abuse this privilege.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Monday 1/8 & Wednesday 1/10

Class Introduction

Read: Death, Grief, And Why Horror Films Truly Matter (D2L)

Read: Horror Films As A Reimagined Space For Healing (D2L)

Read: Should You Let Your Kids Watch Scary Movies? (D2L)

Week 2 – Monday 1/15 & Wednesday 1/17

"The Helicopter Mom Says It's Bad For You" – Gateway

No Class Monday

Lecture: The History & Branches Of Horror

Screening: *Freaky*

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 1/21, 11:59pm (if you didn't attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 1/21, 11:59pm

Week 3 – Monday 1/22 & Wednesday 1/24

"I'm Not Crazy, You're Crazy" - Madness & Paranoia

Read: How Important Is It For Audiences To Trust Your Narrator (D2L)

Read: A Study Of Unreliable Narrators Throughout Film History (D2L)

Screening: *The Descent*

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 1/28, 11:59pm (if you didn't attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 1/28, 11:59pm

Week 4 – Monday 1/29 & Wednesday 1/31

“I’m Just Scared Silly” - Horror Comedy

Read: How The Horror-Comedy Film Genre Defined The Decade (D2L)

Read: The Plagues And Pleasures Of Horror Comedy (D2L)

Screening: *Sick of Myself*

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 2/4, 11:59pm (if you didn’t attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 2/4, 11:59pm

Week 5 – Monday 2/5 & Wednesday 2/7

“But I’m A Fan, And What The Fan Says Goes” - Sequels, Requels, Remakes, & Reboots

Read: The Face Of Toxic Fandom (D2L)

Read: American Remakes In New French Extremity (D2L)

Screening: *Maniac* (2012)

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 2/11, 11:59pm (if you didn’t attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 2/11, 11:59pm

Week 6 – Monday 2/12 & Wednesday 2/14

“Did You Lock The Door?” - Home Invasion

Read: No Safety: The Many Masks Of Home Invasion Horror (D2L)

Screening: *Funny Games* (1997)

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 2/18, 11:59pm (if you didn’t attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 2/18, 11:59pm

Week 7 - Monday 2/19 & Wednesday 2/21

“The Powers Of Evil Are Exalted” - Folk Horror

Read: A Fear Of The Folk (D2L)

Optional Recommended Viewing: Cursed Films Season 2, Episode 4: The Serpent and the Rainbow

Screening: *The Serpent and the Rainbow*

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 2/25, 11:59pm (if you didn’t attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 2/25, 11:59pm

Week 8 - Monday 2/26 & Wednesday 2/28

“You’re Just Sooo Smart” - Elevated Horror

Read: The Evils Of Elevated Horror (D2L)

Read: The Decade Of Grief Horror (D2L)

Screening: *The Lighthouse*

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 3/3, 11:59pm (if you didn’t attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 3/3, 11:59pm

Week 9 – Monday 3/4 & Wednesday 3/6

“I’m Gonna Be Sick” – Found Footage

Read: The Intelligence Of Found Footage Horror (D2L)

Screening: *Creep 2*

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 3/10, 11:59pm (if you didn’t attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 3/10, 11:59pm
Midterm Due Sunday 3/10, 11:59pm

Week 10 – Monday 3/11 & Wednesday 3/13

“You Get What You Deserve” – Japanese Horror

Read: The Global Spectres Of Asian Horror (D2L)

Screening: *Ichi The Killer*

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 3/17, 11:59pm (if you didn't attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 3/17, 11:59pm

Week 11 – Monday 3/18 & Wednesday 3/20

No Class – Spring Break

Week 12 – Monday 3/25 & Wednesday 3/27

“But Their Mouths Are Out Of Sync” - Italian Horror

Read: The Gruesome Brilliance Of 1980s Italian Horror (D2L)

Read: Chronicling The Death Of Italian Horror Cinema (D2L)

Screening: *The Beyond*

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 3/31, 11:59pm (if you didn't attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 3/31, 11:59pm

Week 13 - Monday 4/1 & Wednesday 4/3

“Boundaries, Crossed” - New French Extremity

Read: Fine Young Cannibals: In My Skin (D2L)

Read: Up Close And Personal With Self-Mutilation (D2L)

Screening: *In My Skin*

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 4/7, 11:59pm (if you didn't attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 4/7, 11:59pm

Week 14 – Monday 4/8 & Wednesday 4/10

“You Scream Like A Girl” - Queer Horror

Read: Your Favorite Horror Movie Is Queer Now. Is That a Good Thing? (D2L)

Screening: *Gothic*

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 4/14, 11:59pm (if you didn't attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 4/14, 11:59pm

Week 15 – Monday 4/15 & Wednesday 4/17

“I’m Falling Apart” - Body Horror

Read: The Enduring Appeal Of Body Horror (D2L)

Read: Body Horror And The Horror Of Having A Body (D2L)

Screening: *The Brood*

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 4/21, 11:59pm (if you didn't attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 4/21, 11:59pm

Week 16 – Monday 4/22 & Wednesday 4/24

“This Is Gonna Hurt” - Slashers

Read: How The Slasher Is Reclaiming the Horror Genre (D2L)

Screening: *The Golden Glove*

Streaming Platforms: Check D2L Content Page

Film Quiz due Sunday 4/28, 11:59pm (if you didn't attend screening)

Film Screening Notes due Sunday 4/28, 11:59pm

Final Due Monday, April 29, 11:59pm, D2L Dropbox