

## **First Seminar Program: Gothic Fiction: The Horror of the Divided Self**

**Fall Semester 2013**

Dr. Laura Kranzler

Office Hours: Forcina Hall 110, Wednesdays 4:30 – 5:30

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Required Texts: James Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confession of a Justified Sinner*; William Godwin, *Things as They Are; Or, the Adventures of Caleb Williams*; Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*; Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

**Course Goals:** The First Seminar Program at TCNJ is designed to stimulate students' intellectual interest in subjects that extend beyond the academic classroom. This course aims to improve students' critical reading and writing abilities by engaging them with a challenging and diverse range of readings. The course introduces students to college-level assignments and college-level expectations. One of the primary goals of the FSP program is to encourage students to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

**Course Description:** We will be asking provocative and controversial questions regarding the nature of identity and the boundary between self and Other. The uncanny experiences described in the texts often stem from conflicts in the Oedipal family, the expectations of gender roles and gender norms, and the tension between instinct and repression. Such tensions and conflicts often result in the fragmented psyche. We will ask ourselves how the tormented characters in these five Gothic novels might enable us to better understand about ourselves, others, and the world.

**Written Assignments:** The First Seminar Program is a writing-intensive course. Students are required to produce 20 pages of written work which will be assessed throughout the semester. There are **five** papers required for this course; each paper must be **at least four pages long**, including a final exam. Each paper is worth **15% of your final grade**. You will be given a list of questions from which to choose a subject for your essay, and you will have ample time to prepare and submit a draft, and to receive comments and suggestions which will enable you to write a polished, final version. **Four** of the five papers **must refer to at least one outside source**. And please note: **you must submit every paper in order to pass this class**.

**Presentations:** In addition to your five written papers, every student is required to prepare a 20-minute group presentation which will include some form of visual material. You will be given a list of topics to choose from: this list will include chapters from the

readings that you will be asked to present in connection with a text from contemporary culture. Your group is welcome to devise your own topic for discussion; just be sure to have it approved by me first. The aim of the presentation is to see how well you understand the reading, how competent you are at explaining it to others, how well you can relate what we read to contemporary culture, and how well you function in an environment of collaborative learning. You will have to present a **two-page written account** of your presentation. This project is worth another **15% of your final grade**.

**Class Participation:** We will be discussing difficult and controversial subjects in the classroom. Everyone is expected to contribute to class discussions in a **safe and supportive** environment. **Respectful** disagreement is welcome, and everyone's voice will be valued. The best way to understand the material is to talk about it with your peers, not just your instructor, and everyone learns the most when everyone has something to say. Therefore, your contributions to the class count for **10%** of your final grade.

**Late Papers and Resubmissions:** You are allowed **one** late paper this semester. Be sure to have the grace and the courtesy to let me know **in advance** that your paper will be late, and be sure to submit it at **the next class period**. If you do not have your paper ready to hand in at the next class session, it will **not** be accepted. Please refer to the above rule that everyone must submit every paper in order to pass this class. For those who submit their papers on time, they are allowed to rewrite and resubmit **one** paper if they feel they could do better. You deserve the chance to show you have learned how to improve your writing, but you must submit your rewritten work **one week** after you have received back the first version.

**Email:** My email address is listed above. I try to respond to emails within **24 hours**, though it often happens that I respond even sooner. Please note: any attachments you send must be in a **Word document**. I **cannot** access any other format.

**Attendance:** You are required to attend **every** class. If you miss a single class session, you will miss valuable information that will enable you to write a competent, passing paper. If you must miss class, please have the grace and the courtesy to let me know beforehand, if at all possible, and please be advised that missing **three or more classes** is grounds for withdrawal. In the event that the withdrawal date has passed and you miss your third class, you will **fail the course**.

**Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism, copying another student's paper, buying a paper from the Internet, copying and pasting from another source, quoting from others without appropriate citations, or collaborating with another person to produce your written work **will not be tolerated and will result in expulsion from the course**. I know how to Google as well as you, and I have been trained to decode literary texts: that means that I will know when your writing ends and another's begins. I hope to establish an accessible and supportive environment so that you can feel comfortable coming to me for extra help if you feel that you need it. Please know that your academic success is very important to me; if you feel unsure about what is expected, it is always much better to speak with me

than to try to cheat your way through. Please consult the TCNJ Academic Integrity website for more information at [http://www.tcnj.edu/\\_academic/policy/absence.html](http://www.tcnj.edu/_academic/policy/absence.html).

**Accommodations:** If you feel that you require accommodations as mandated by the American with Disabilities Act, please contact the Office of Differing Abilities Services at 307 Homan Hall, x 2571. There is also an Alcohol & Drug Education Program at 307 Holman, x. 2571, <http://adep.ages.tcnj.edu/>.

**Center for Academic Success:** This wonderful campus resource can be found at Roscoe West Suite 131, x 3452, <http://cas.pages.tcnj.edu>.