

AMERICAN SUPERNATURALISM
First Year Seminar, TCNJ, Fall 2013
 FSP 101-04 (T 5:30-8:20 in Soci 128)
SYLLABUS

Instructor: Dr. Mike Schwartz

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Office Hours / Contacting Me. I will be available to meet after class on Tuesdays (in our classroom). Email is the only way of reaching me outside of class. I usually check email at least once a day during the week. Note the missing “z” in my email address.

Course Website

Check our SOCS site frequently for all course documents, assignments, updates to our daily reading and writing schedule, class or office hour adjustments or cancellations, etc. It’s important to note that any scheduling or assignment changes on the website will supersede any handouts you’re given in class, including this syllabus.

Required Texts

American Supernatural Tales. Ed. S. T. Joshi. Penguin Classics, 2007. ISBN-10: 0143105043.

The Best of H. P. Lovecraft: Bloodcurdling Tales of Horror and the Macabre. Del Rey, 1987.
 ISBN-10: 0345350804.

The Dark Descent. Ed. David G. Hartwell. Tor, 1987. ISBN-10: 0-312-86217-2

Moby-Dick. Herman Melville. Bantam, 1981. ISBN-10: 0553213113.

The Gold-Bug and Other Tales. Edgar Allan Poe. Dover, 1991. ISBN-10: 0-486-26875-6.

Skeleton Crew. Stephen King. Signet, 1986. ISBN-13: 9780451168610.

We will be reading selected stories from the five short story collections, as well as a number of chapters in *Moby-Dick* (about 1/6 of the novel or so). NOTE: It's important to get **our specific editions** of these texts as 1. we'll be looking at many passages together in class, so our page numbers need to line up; and 2. we will be responsible for a number of supplementary readings (introductions, essays) contained only in these specific editions. All of the above texts are available in the school bookstore, and are also available used via amazon.com (or, better yet, directtextbook.com, which comparison shops lots of used text sites). At this point, though, you should have all the books in hand; not having a book yet is no excuse for missing a reading. If you don't buy at the bookstore, make sure you get our specific edition by verifying that the ISBN numbers match (see above). We will also view a number of films and television episodes in class. If you miss seeing any of these, it will be up to you to find and view them online. Additionally, we will be reading a few stories and important theoretical texts which will be available as **PDFs** on our SOCS site; see the syllabus for specifics. It is your responsibility to **print out hard copies** of each of these readings to read and bring to class.

Course Overview and Outcomes

America has long displayed a degree of contempt for its supernatural literature, often regarding such writing as being at odds with America's championing of rationality, skepticism, and pragmatism, as well as with its Judeo-Christian roots. Yet American supernatural literature has often been quite well-written, and many examples of such literature have worked their way into the American literary canon. Perhaps more importantly, such ghostly texts have been consistently popular among readers;

consider, for example, the new and recent crop of (occasionally) high-quality, supernatural-themed television shows and films. In this course, we will try to come to terms with America's ambivalent relationship with its supernatural literature by surveying the origins and evolution of such writing over the last 200-odd years. To more fully explore the breadth of American supernatural literature, we will discuss our texts from a variety of critical perspectives.

As you can see by taking a look at the last few pages of the syllabus, I have tried to organize the course, in a general sense, by theme. However, the first half of our course will roughly follow a chronological pattern, focusing primarily on nineteenth-century American supernatural fiction, and will culminate with two shorter formal essays. The second half will focus more on the twentieth century, our own creative writing, and our final course project.

Some specific questions we'll be dealing with in this course:

- What are the features of supernatural literature?
- What changes have occurred in supernatural literature over time?
- What is the relationship between modern supernatural stories and myth?
- Do any supernatural texts seem to be reacting or responding to former texts?
- What, perhaps, is uniquely “American” about the literature we are reading in this course?
- How is supernatural literature “meant” to affect us?
- What are some common metaphors or symbols encountered in supernatural literature?
- What are some of the various ways in which we might interpret supernatural texts? That is, in what ways might supernatural literature be responding to issues of history, politics, gender, sexuality, race, religion, psychology, or philosophy?

While this course is designed to introduce you to an area of literature, it might be worth more to you as a class in which you develop and hone your analytical skills. That is, this course is only minimally a historical or “survey” course; most of what we'll be doing in this class will be learning how to use a set of tools (various concepts and terminology gleaned from our limited study of literary theory, such as Freud's theory of the uncanny) to analyze texts (in this case, American supernatural literature). Many of the theories with which we'll come into contact might prove useful in other courses and even (!) beyond the school walls.

Although analytical writing is the primary focus of this class, we will, over the course of the semester, try our hand at writing supernatural tales inspired by and responding to the stories we'll be reading in class.

We will be developing writing and argumentative skills in many ways: by class discussion and group work; by learning to read texts “actively”; by composing many short, written assignments as well as longer formal essays; by workshopping/peer revision; by giving oral presentations; and by putting together a final, analytical report on one recent supernatural work of your own choosing.

By the end of this course, all students should be able:

- to articulate a personal response to a literary work
- to articulate responses that contribute to the understanding of literature and its relation to culture
- to identify and distinguish among various formal elements of works

- to reflect critically on how a literary work creates meaning and contributes to a reader's sense of self and culture.
- to make connections across works
- to write clear and cogent analyses of literary works in essay format
- to create and revise a literary work (short story)
- to respond sympathetically and reflectively to others' responses to literary and creative works, be they in speech or writing

Expectations

What I expect of you and what you can expect of me and one another:

- That you attend all classes
- That you arrive on time.
- That while you are in class, you focus your mind and energies on the tasks at hand, whatever they may be: working with your peers, discussing a reading, etc. Getting an education is an active process which requires your participation. If you don't show up--physically or mentally--then you won't be getting an education.
- That you express your concerns and questions rather than assume that I or your fellow classmates can read your mind. If I don't know that something's wrong, I can't help you fix it. If I don't realize that you don't understand something, I won't know to explain it in a different or better way.
- That you treat everyone in this class with respect and that we, as a group, work hard to make this a class where everyone feels safe to be themselves, express their views, try out new ideas, and make mistakes without fear of ridicule.

Formal Written Work

You will write **two short (about 4-5 pages) critical papers** for this course. The first will be a take-home essay (to be polished and submitted electronically) in which you compare and analyze a small number of texts according to some of Freud's theories about the "uncanny." The second paper will be written in class, and will attempt to provide a coherent, literary-historical perspective on the first 200 years or so of American supernatural literature. These two assignments will build to a **final, analytical research project (8-12 pages)** in which you will analyze a recent American supernatural text (story, novel, TV show, film) which has not been covered in class. This will be done by applying some of the theory we've encountered in class; by offering your own close readings of key scenes; and by comparing the text to a number of the texts we will have discussed in class over the course of the semester. Additionally, you will be writing an **original supernatural short story (7-10 pages)**.

Each writing assignment will have its own assignment document which will include a rubric outlining the specific expectations for that paper.

Shorter/Informal Written Work

An FSP is a writing-intensive class. Thus, in addition to our four "major" assignments, you will frequently complete short **written homework** assignments, both analytical and creative, which will often be submitted in **discussion forums on SOCS**. You will also frequently be providing **written comments** for each other's work.

All informal written work is graded on a full-credit/half-credit/no-credit basis. (Full credit, or a "check," counts as 100%. A "1/2" and a "0" should be self-explanatory.) If you satisfactorily complete 100% of your informal written work (or "homework") over the course of a semester (earning a full "check" on everything), your homework grade will be 100%, or 10/10; if you complete half of all homework assignments, your homework grade will be 50%.) **Late informal work--including written homework, SOCS discussion forum posts, and peer comments--will not be accepted under any circumstances, even in the case of an "excused absence" or a late course "add."** All written work including homework assignments and discussion posts, must be submitted online by its given deadline (usually the start of class on the day it is due) unless you are instructed otherwise. Additionally, you must submit **hard copies** of all take-home homework assignments (excluding discussion posts) in order to receive credit for them. All written homework and in-class assignments will count equally (as one "check") unless otherwise specified.

Full "checks" are routinely given (on all informal assignments) if (1) it's clear you've done the assigned reading, and have based all arguments on **detailed specifics** from the reading; and (2) you meet all **requirements** of the assignment, including answering all questions and meeting word-count requirements. Basically, if you do your best, and it's clear you've done the reading, it's very easy to receive full checks. Polished writing & grammar is not a necessity for these informal assignments, although **you must always include a Works Consulted when submitting written assignments**, even "informal" ones like homeworks or rough drafts. (Exception: You don't need a Works Consulted for peer comments, SOCS discussion posts, or in-class writing. See elsewhere in this syllabus, and our MLA document, for more details on how to prepare a Works Consulted, and how this is different from a Works Cited.)

"Half checks" are usually given to those students who (1) rely too heavily on plot summary in their responses; (2) put only a half-hearted effort into meeting the requirements of the assignment, or "don't quite" meet all of the requirements (like forgetting to reply to a fellow student's post in a discussion board post); (3) use almost no specifics from the reading in their responses; (4) don't directly answer all of the assignment questions, or veer off on a major tangent.

"Zeroes" are usually given to students who (1) include no specifics from the assigned reading; (2) include specifics only from **other days'** readings; (3) fail to meet important assignment requirements; (4) submit their homework to the incorrect SOCS folder/dropbox, such as the "General" folder; (5) submit non-MS-Word computer files, or files ending with any extension other than .doc or .docx; or (6) neglect to include a Works Consulted at the end of their assignment.

Please be aware that, towards the end of the semester, I will give students an opportunity to complete an **optional extra-credit writing assignment**. Anyone may complete this assignment, and it exists in order to help you improve your homework (and overall) grade. (This assignment is your only opportunity to "make up" missed homework; this assignment exists because I don't accept late homework for any reason.)

Class Participation

In this class, most lectures from me will be on the brief side; rather, active and frequent participation **by you** in class discussion is at the heart of what we're trying to accomplish in this seminar. Yes, we're learning certain skills (rather than "just" acquiring knowledge about literary periods and a particular literary genre), but, more importantly, we're gaining practice at incorporating

these skills into your day-to-day life (academic and otherwise). I am speaking primarily about the skills of **analysis and argumentative persuasion**.

With that said, please understand that, if you are prepared to speak and contribute intelligently and appropriately **in every class**, you will almost certainly receive high marks for your class participation grade (assuming any formal oral presentations are of good quality; see below). **Please be aware that you will be called on, in every class, to give your impressions of the reading due for that class.** Your discussion of literature **may not be a plot summary**; you should assume we've all done the reading. While you can (and should) make reference to some of the specifics from the assigned reading, your **main goal in preparing for class discussion every day** should be to (1) provide an **analytical close reading** of a particular passage which has caught your eye; (2) **apply a theory** we've read or discussed to the text in question; and/or (3) **compare** some elements of the text to other authors or texts we've previously encountered as a class. Ideally, in the process, you will **raise some questions** that your peers might respond to in our regular class discussion.

To receive full class participation credit, you should be aiming to speak about all of the texts assigned for a given day; think "compare/contrast," with analysis of specific quotations. There should be ample opportunity for everyone to contribute at length in every class.

How to prepare for class discussion. When preparing for a particular class, underline passages that you find particularly engaging or (better yet) troublesome, and write down questions or issues you'd like to raise. For this class, always read with a pencil in hand; you can't write down questions and ideas for future essays if you use only a highlighter. While you're reading, or afterwards, do a little freewriting on the passages or comments you've marked, even if it (the freewriting) is just in the margins of your book or essay.

Additionally, each student may be responsible for informal oral presentations as well as a final oral presentation based on your final research project; details to follow later in the semester. Your performance here will contribute to your class participation grade. Class participation is also considered in any in-class group work we do.

Grade Breakdown

Informal Written Assignments: 10%

First (Take-home) Essay: 16%

Short Story: 18%

Class Participation: 10%

In-class Essay: 18%

Final Project: 28%

Format of Written Work

All written work (except any writing done in class) must be typewritten. All typed documents except discussion board posts must follow **MLA conventions** (for example, double-space; always use a Works Consulted page and a 12-point Times New Roman font; **set your margins to 1 inch, rather than the MS-Word-default 1.25 inches, all around your document**; don't use a separate title page, etc.; see <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/> as well as the MLA handout on our website for more details). **Final versions of all homework and formal writing must be submitted in person (hard copy) in class AS WELL AS to the appropriate SOCS folder by the correct due date and time.**

To reiterate: **All** written work, including informal assignments, must be submitted by the specified dates in the SOCS dropbox in order for you to receive credit/grades. Please note that **no paper or homework submissions made sent to me via email will be accepted** under any circumstances.

When submitting in SOCS, you must upload your work to the **appropriate assignment folder (rather than the “general” folder)**; please title your documents in the following way: [your name]_[assignment name]. **IMPORTANT: submit only MS Word documents. If a document is submitted as anything other than a .doc or .docx file, you will not receive credit for the assignment; at the least (for formal assignments), the assignment will be counted as late until it is submitted correctly. (This goes for any unreadable .doc files, too.)**

Late Work

A heavy penalty is imposed for late submission of your three, take-home, **formal** writing assignments (the short analytical paper, the short story, and the final project): one half-grade, or five points, off for each day the assignment is late. (A “day” begins immediately after a missed deadline; the second “day” begins 24 hours after the deadline; etc.) Remember that I require on-time submission of both electronic **and** hard copies for all such formal assignments; if you know you will be missing a class when a paper is due, hand in your essay early. And always print out your papers early; I don’t accept computer excuses. If you feel you might be late with an assignment, you may talk to me, **in person, at least one class before it is due**, to see about a possible extension (**you may not email me with requests for extensions**). There is absolutely no harm in asking for extensions, as long as it’s done responsibly and ahead of time. Again, late informal work (including homework assignments) will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Attendance Policy

Because this class is not a lecture class, in-class writing, discussion, group work, and workshopping/peer revision are central and required activities; you cannot fully “make up” a class by reading someone else’s notes or reading a chapter in a textbook. As a result, your grade is highly dependent on your attendance.

Because we meet only once a week, you are allowed but a single absence without penalty. Students who must be absent for medical (or religious, or other emergency) reasons should contact me **before** the class meeting, and should (after the class) check in with me and/or other students to discuss what you have missed. If you become sick or there is a family emergency after you have already used your one allotted absence, your grade will still suffer, so please be sure not to use your first absence simply to “cut” class. **For each absence after the first, your final grade in the course will be lowered one half grade (five points).** *If you must be absent from school for a week or more, you must contact the Office of Student Life (771-2201).* Please talk to me as soon as possible if you anticipate any problems with attendance.

In an extreme situation (where you have more than one of what might be considered “excused” absences, such as for religious holidays or extreme medical reasons), it is possible that allowances might be made, but in this case you must discuss your situation with me as soon as possible.

Please arrive to class on time, and do not leave early. I would prefer not to create a lateness policy, but reserve the right to do so if lateness becomes an issue. **If you are late to class**, it is fully

your responsibility to check in with me at the end of class to see that I've marked you present. (When in doubt, check in with me, of course.)

TCNJ's official position on attendance: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~recreg/policies/attendance.html>.

Accommodations

Any student who has a documented disability and is in need of academic accommodations should notify the professor of this course and contact the Office of Differing Abilities Services: (609) 771-2571 (<http://www.tcnj.edu/~affirm/ada.html>). Accommodations are individualized and in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992.

The Writer's Place at The Tutoring Center (and Homework Requirement)

All students are strongly encouraged to make use of TCNJ's free **Writer's Place** (Roscoe West Hall 101; <http://tutoringcenter.pages.tcnj.edu/humanities/writers-place/>, 771-3325) frequently throughout the semester and your college career. Remember to make appointments early (though sometimes walk-ins are accepted); visit well before the assignments are due; and prepare as much as you can before the sessions: that is, bring in any drafts and prewriting, a copy of the assignment, and **specific** questions about your writing.

Additionally, each student is **required** to visit the Writer's Place (for an in-person tutoring session, **not** an online OWL session) at least once by **October 8**; this visit counts as a full homework assignment. Written evidence of your visit must be provided by you in class (when you hand in your Freud paper) for you to receive homework credit; remember to save the receipt you are given after the session (or get a handwritten note). Schedule your visit early in the semester; if you show up to the Writer's Place on 10/7 and find you can't book a time slot, you're out of luck (as far as the homework assignment goes).

Academic Integrity

The College of New Jersey is a community of scholars and learners who respect and believe in academic integrity. This integrity is violated when someone engages in any of the dishonest behavior described below.

Academic dishonesty is any attempt by the students to gain academic advantage through dishonest means, to submit, as their own, work which has not been done by them or to give improper aid to another student in the completion of an assignment. Such dishonesty would include, but is not limited to: submitting as one's own a project, paper, report, test, or speech copied from, partially copied, or paraphrased from the work of another (whether the source is printed, under copyright, or in manuscript form). Credit must be given for words quoted or paraphrased. The rules apply to any academic dishonesty, whether the work is graded or ungraded, group or individual, written or oral.

Failure to provide proper documentation can lead to several penalties, including failure in a course or expulsion from TCNJ. It is your responsibility to read about TCNJ policies for academic honesty and integrity, including procedures for disciplinary action and descriptions of what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty, at: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/integrity.html>.

Using Outside Sources and Collaborating

I will be giving you detailed instructions on the assignments as they come. I encourage you to use outside sources, work together, and get help with your writing. The following guidelines should make clear how to use sources and get help while still maintaining responsibility for your own ideas. If you would like further guidance, please let me know.

In your writing (and particularly in your first and final papers), you will frequently be drawing upon the words and ideas of others. In doing so, you must always acknowledge your sources--even when "only" paraphrasing--using acceptable methods of citation. **All** sources that have influenced your writing must be cited, including internet sources and ideas that are only paraphrased (rather than quoted word-for-word). Lack of proper citation suggests plagiarism. In this class, we will be using the MLA style of citation: specifically, all papers must have a "Works Consulted" (rather than a "Works Cited") section, and all quotations must be notated appropriately (see our MLA document for details).

"Adjusting" the language of a borrowed text is plagiarism, as is directly quoting "just a few words" without documentation. One also plagiarizes when he puts "borrowed" ideas in his own words without noting the ideas' origin. In our papers, there is nothing wrong with getting ideas from outside sources; in fact, you'll be required to do so on some assignments (though your thesis/main argument needs to be your own). So go ahead and cite any and all sources, including me or classmates, even if you don't quote them word-for-word. (In general, in college, you'll almost always want to "just" paraphrase a source, unless it's crucial for your assignment, you're analyzing a passage at length, or have some other pressing need to quote word-for-word.)

Some students are afraid they don't have anything to say in an essay and turn to web-based sites such as *Wikipedia*, *Cliff Notes*, or *Spark Notes* that pre-digest a work for them. Not only are these sites sources of hackneyed interpretations that will get you no credit, they also can prevent you from learning to trust your own thinking and analysis. These, as well as unidentified or non-authoritative web sources, are generally worse than using no sources at all. If you would like to read others' opinions, I can help you find good outside sources. You can also discuss your work with peers, folks in the Writer's Place, or me. **While I advise against using sources such as *SparkNotes*, *Wikipedia*, *CliffNotes*, or *The Explicator*, you are still obligated to cite these sources if you do get information from them for whatever reason.**

Acknowledging help with papers: You are welcome and encouraged to get help with your papers, either from the Writer's Place or from fellow students or tutors. Such helpers may read your work to help you explore your ideas and to point out potential problems. Do remember that you are obligated to acknowledge their help in your Works Consulted by means of an alphabetical entry such as the following:

Johnson, Becky. Writer's Place Tutoring Session. FSP 101-04. Ewing: The College of New Jersey. 14 October 2013.

Schwartz, Michael. Conversation (Office Hours). FSP 101-04. Ewing: The College of New Jersey. 28 October 2013.

Smith, Frank. Comments on My Rough Draft. FSP 101-04. Ewing: The College of New

Jersey. 4 November 2013.

Collaboration: As you can see, I encourage you to discuss your ideas for papers with your classmates. However, cooperation must not extend to the actual writing of the paper. I will consider papers with similar outlines, organization, evidence, or phrasing to be evidence of excessive collaboration. Authors of such papers will be considered to be engaging in academic dishonesty (see above).

On October 8, we will be discussing plagiarism at length (with examples).

Course Schedule

NOTE: Check the "Welcome" page of our SOCS site often for updates, assignments, other documents, items "TBA," etc. All of the following is subject to change; anything appearing on our site supersedes this schedule. All of the reading assigned for a given day must be done prior to class with one exception: you don't have to read stories we'll be reading in class (these will be indicated as such in the schedule below). Below, **Joshi** refers to *American Supernatural Tales*, **Hartwell** to *The Dark Descent*.

T. 8/27. **Discussion of syllabus and course.** Additionally, in class, we will read, discuss, and respond in writing to two stories: H. P. Lovecraft's "**The Outsider**" (1926) (27-32 in Lovecraft) and Norman Partridge's "**The Hollow Man**" (1991) (Joshi 421-29).

T. 9/3: **No class** (classes follow Monday schedule).

T. 9/10. **Supernatural Horror: What Lies Beyond the Veil?** Read Stephen King's "**The Mist**" (1980) (24-154 in King), chapters 42 and 43 of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851), and the first two pages (ix-x) of the **introduction to S. T. Joshi's *American Supernatural Tales***. Additionally, read the following two PDF documents, both available in the Resources area of our SOCS site: the final chapter (24) of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, and Clive Bloom's essay "**Horror Fiction.**" I strongly suggest taking careful, detailed notes on the Bloom essay; it will help you greatly in preparing for your upcoming in-class essay. (It is also suggested, but not required, that you read chapters 79 and 93 of *Moby-Dick*.) In class we will hopefully be screening the 1962 *Twilight Zone* episode "**Little Girl Lost**" (written by Richard Matheson).

T. 9/17. **The Beginnings of American Supernaturalism / The Romantic Dreamer.** Read Poe's "**The Fall of the House of Usher**" (1839) (read the version in **Joshi**, pages 23-44), H. P. Lovecraft's "**Dreams in the Witch-House**" (1933) (318-49 in Lovecraft), and the following chapters from *Moby-Dick*: 1, 3, 4, 10, 23, and 35. Also read a few more pages (x-xiii) in the **introduction to S. T. Joshi's *American Supernatural Tales***. In class we will read aloud Washington Irving's "**The Adventure of the German Student**" (1824) (Joshi 1-8).

T. 9/24. **Freud's "Uncanny" and More Dark American Romanticism: The Tragic Knight.** First read pages 109-112 in Allan Lloyd-Smith's "**Nineteenth-Century American Gothic**" (PDF available on SOCS--note that this PDF has extra copies of pages 112-13 stuck in the middle for some reason); pay close attention to Lloyd-Smith's ideas about what forces helped inspire/produce early American supernatural writing. Next read Nathaniel Hawthorne's "**Young Goodman Brown**" (1835) (132-141 in Hartwell) and "**The Man of Adamant**" (1837) (PDF on SOCS). Then receive a heavy dose of Captain Ahab by reading, in *Moby-Dick*, chapters 28, 30, 36, 37, 96, 113, 119, and 133-135 (as well as the Ahab-free epilogue). To get ready for work on our first paper, get started on Sigmund Freud's 1919

essay "**The Uncanny**," available as a PDF on our site, by reading the few paragraphs I've indicated in Part I (pages 123-34: only about five paragraphs). Bring your Lovecraft to class, too, as we will be reading, out loud, the Poe-inspired early Lovecraft tale "**The Music of Erich Zann**" (64-71).

T. 10/1. **The Psychological Ghost Story and the "Uncanny."** Today we will be discussing our first paper. To prepare, first **read the paper assignment** (which will be up in the Resources area of SOCS). Then continue in Freud's "**The Uncanny**," reading the indicated selections from Parts II and III (pages 135-59 in our PDF). Take careful notes on all of the uncanny "triggers" Freud discusses, what they have in common, and why *they*, in particular, create the feeling of the uncanny. Next, read the following stories: Poe's "**The Black Cat**" (1843) (108-115 in Poe), Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "**The Yellow Wallpaper**" (1892) (460-71 in Hartwell), Henry James's "**The Real Right Thing**" (1899) (101-116 in Joshi), and H. P. Lovecraft's Poe-inspired "**The Rats in the Walls**" (1923) (we may as well read the version included in Hartwell--pages 431-44--since you're already carrying *The Dark Descent* to class for the Gilman story). In Lloyd-Smith's "**Nineteenth-Century American Gothic**," read pages 113-15 (Poe) and 119-20 (James and Gilman); read, too, about James on page xv of Joshi's **introduction to *American Supernatural Tales***. In class we will be reading aloud, and working closely with, Poe's "**The Tell-Tale Heart**" (1843) (74-78 in Poe). In case we are not feeling "unstable" enough after all of that, we will also hopefully be screening in class the classic *Twilight Zone* episode "**Nightmare at 20,000 Feet**" (1963, written by Richard Matheson).

T. 10/8. **The Weird Tale.** Read Robert W. Chambers's very creepy "**The Yellow Sign**" (1895) (79-100 in Joshi), H. P. Lovecraft's seminal weird tale "**The Call of Cthulhu**" (1928) (72-97 in Lovecraft; be sure to read this version, as this story is also included in Hartwell and Joshi), and Fritz Leiber's "**The Smoke Ghost**" (1941) (629-40 in Hartwell). Read the wonderful introduction to Lovecraft and the Weird Tale, "**Heritage of Horror**" (vii-xxii in Lovecraft), by Robert Bloch, a disciple of Lovecraft's and one of the writers we'll be reading later in the semester. Additionally, in order to help prepare for the upcoming in-class essay, finish Joshi's **introduction to *American Supernatural Tales***, which takes us from Lovecraft to the present day (xv-xxii). Finally, bring along *Skeleton Crew* and *Moby-Dick* to class, as we will be reading out loud short selections from each: King's "**The Reaper's Image**" (1969) (363-70) and parts of **chapter 59 of *Moby-Dick*, "The Squid."** In class we will be discussing academic integrity and plagiarism; I am hoping that we will also have time to screen the 1999 *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episode "**Hush**."

Thursday 10/10: Rough draft of Freud paper draft due on SOCS by 11:59 p.m.

T. 10/15. **"Body" as Monster: Julia Kristeva, Abjection, and Fear of the Feminine.** Today we will be considering these themes as we look mainly at three stories: one romantic, one weird, and one modern. For a pretty accessible introduction to psychoanalytic theorist / cultural critic Julia Kristeva, first read Barbara Creed's essay "**Kristeva, Femininity, Abjection**" (PDF on SOCS). Then, armed with these ideas, read Poe's "**Ligeia**" (1838) (1-13 in Poe), Robert E. Howard's "**The Slithering Shadow**" (1933) (PDF available on SOCS), and Stephen King's "**The Raft**" (1982) (278-306). Bring *Moby-Dick* to class for the last time, as we will be reading out loud selections from chapters 94, 95, 133, and 134 (no need to read ahead of time). For Kristeva own words, you may want to take a glance through the "**Powers of Horror**" PDF available on SOCS (optional!). Additionally, by today you will receive comments from me on your Freud rough draft.

Sunday 10/20. Final version of Freud paper is due on SOCS by 11:59 p.m.

T. 10/22. **Halloween Party / Review for In-Class Essay.** Prior to class, read Allan-Lloyd Smith's discussion of gothic humor and "macabre detailing" in "**Nineteenth-Century American Gothic**" (bottom of 115 to mid-117) as well as David J. Schow's pretty-darn-funny "**Last Call for the Sons of Shock**" (1994) (431-49 in Joshi). We will also screen Joss Whedon's film *The Cabin in the Woods* (2011) and review for the upcoming in-class essay. Hard copy of Freud paper due today in class.

T. 10/29. **No class.**

T. 11/5. **In-Class Essay.** No new reading due for today. I suggest re-reading all of the critical essays we've read so far (Bloom, Lloyd-Smith, Creed, Freud, Bloch, Joshi) as well as going over class notes.

T. 11/12. **Modern American Horror: Thinking about Writing Styles.** As we focus on writing our short stories, read Stephen King's introduction to *Skeleton Crew* (17-23). Thinking more about style and story construction and less about theme and literary history, read Harlan Ellison's "**The Whimper of Whipped Dogs**" (1973) (118-31 in Hartwell), Shirley Jackson's "**The Beautiful Stranger**" (1968) (874-79 in Hartwell), and Richard Matheson's "**Long Distance Call**" (1953) (277-91 in Joshi). In class we will read out loud Matheson's "**Born of Man of Woman**" (1950) (513-15) as well as screen the Matheson-written *Twilight Zone* episode based on "Long Distance Call," "**Night Call**" (1964). (The *Twilight Zone* episode entitled "Long Distance Call" has nothing to do with the Matheson story.)

T. 11/19. **Modern Responses to Lovecraft / More on Style.** Keeping our focus on style and story building, we'll take a look at three different modern takes on Lovecraft: Stephen King's "**Gramma**" (1984) (464-94 in King), Karl Edward Wagner's "**Sticks**" (1974) (209-24 in Hartwell), and Caitlin R. Kiernan's "**In the Water Works (Birmingham, Alabama 1888)**" (2000) (457-72 in Joshi).

Sunday 11/24. Final version of short story due on SOCS by 11:59 p.m.

T. 11/26. **Approaching Our Final Project: Close Analysis of a (Single) Modern American Horror Text.** For today, read two stories in Hartwell, Thomas M. Disch's "**The Roaches**" (1965) (312-20) and Charles L. Grant's "**If Damon Comes**" (1978) (268-77). In class, we will approach these two stories as if we were writing "final papers" about each, coming up with a sample thesis, paper organization, works to compare, etc.

T. 12/3. **Final Class. More Prep for Our Final Project. Student Evaluations.** As we did on 11/26, we will continue discussing and planning our final papers by working with two stories: Robert Bloch's "**Black Bargain**" (1942) (189-208 in Joshi) and Ray Bradbury's "**The Crowd**" (1943) (167-74). I would also like us to analyze a short visual text (TV episode, etc.) which I'll put up to a vote. We will also conduct student evaluations in class.

Final exam period: Our final project will be due (as a hard copy and on SOCS) at the appointed time and date for our final exam. Brief oral presentations of final projects will be given during the exam time; details TBA. There will be no formal final exam for this course.

