English 491: Senior Seminar in Literary Studies  
Women and the Gothic: Gender and Genre

Professor Meg Russett  
Taper 105, Thursdays 2-4:20  
Office hours M, W 10-11, 2-3; Thursday mornings by appointment  
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Texts (to purchase online):

Du Maurier, Daphne. *Rebecca* (Avon, ASIN B01M23QO5L)
Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan. *Carmilla* (Syracuse UP, 978-0815633112)
Oates, Joyce Carol. *First Love* (Ecco, 978-0880014571)
Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Norton, ASIN B00BP0P3JC)

Requirements:

1) Your presence, in body and spirit—no walking dead, please! “Presence” means being prepared by completing all readings (primary and secondary) before the corresponding class meeting. Informed participation (not just talking off the top of your head) can substantially improve your grade for the course, but more than one unexcused absence over the course of the term will lower it.  

2) One-page blog-style responses on the weekly readings, submitted to the instructor by email no later than Wednesday evening before the corresponding class meeting. Due every single week, beginning with the second week of class.  

3) One short (c. 5-page) descriptive and evaluative paper on a critical work assigned for the class (see schedule below for examples). Circulated to all class members by Wednesday evening before the corresponding class meeting. A template for this assignment will be circulated by the instructor.  

4) One short (c. 10-minute) oral report on a historical/contextual/theoretical topic suggested by the instructor (see provisional list below the schedule of readings).
5) A final “seminar paper” in lieu of a final exam. Seminar papers address a substantial interpretive topic with the aid of secondary research. They should be approximately 15 pages long; cite appropriate critical, theoretical, or historical material; and observe professional standards of documentation. Due at the end of the semester. 50%

Schedule of readings and assignments:

August 30: Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764); Emma Clery, from *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*


September 13: Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*; Eugenia Delamotte, from *Perils of the Night*

September 20: Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*; Diane Hoeveler, from *Gothic Feminism*

September 27: *Jane Eyre*, continue; secondary reading TBA


October 11: *The Woman in White*, continue; D. A. Miller, “Cage Aux Folles: Gender and Sensation in Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White*”


October 25: Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism”

November 1: Daphne Du Maurier, *Rebecca*; Michelle Masse, *In the Name of Love: Women, Masochism, and the Gothic*

November 8: Toni Morrison, *Beloved*; secondary reading TBA

November 29: Joyce Carol Oates, *First Love: A Gothic Tale; no secondary reading*

**Seminar papers due December 6**

**Suggested oral report topics:**

- Sigmund Freud et al, “The Uncanny”
- Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*
- Imperial Gothic (empire, race, monstrosity)
- Vampire lore
- Zombie lore
- Marriage and divorce law, 18th-19th century
- Women and property law, 18th-19th century
- Concepts and treatments of insanity, 19th century
- Hysteria before psychoanalysis
- Hysteria and/or after psychoanalysis
- Psychoanalysis and paranoia
- Paranoia and homsociality
- Gothic political theory: English common law, 18th c.
- Gothicism and the medieval revival in 18th c. literary criticism (Hurd, Warburton, Young)
- Gothic and neo-Gothic architecture
- 20th/21st century rewritings of *Jane Eyre*
- Gothic spectacle: 19th century drama and visual technology