

COLT 312  
22011D 001  
HEROES, MYTHS AND LEGENDS  
FALL 2019  
MWF 12-12:50 pm  
THH 119

Michaele du Plessis  
Office: THH 174  
(in Taper Hall of Humanities, Comparative Literature Department, ground floor,  
southeast corner, near French and Italian Department)

Email: [duplessi@usc.edu](mailto:duplessi@usc.edu)

Phone: 323.854.2271 (my cell--please feel free to leave a text or a voicemail message if  
you need to contact me—it's my preferred means of communication)

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 2-3 pm, or by appointment

#### A NOTE ON PRONOUNS:

My preferred third-person pronouns for myself are: "they," "them," and "theirs" or  
"she," her," and "hers."

Please let me know if you have a particular pronoun preference and please let me  
know if your name is different from the one on the class roster.



**William Marshall in the title role of *Blacula*. William Crain directed this 1972 film.**

**Course description:**

We will track the fascinating figure of the vampire this semester to find out what the fascination of figures (shapes, rhetorical tropes) and of *this* figure in particular could be. How is the vampire different from other monsters (cyborgs, zombies, werewolves, fairies, ghosts)? Why do we enjoy the vampire's allure, composed of both beauty and death? (The dead rose turns up quite often as a signifier of vampires...) What textual strategies can we use for understanding vampire representations? How can vampires help us grasp narrative--and how can or does narrative help us glimpse vampires? How do sexuality, gender, race, nationality, class and ability intersect in the figures of vampires?

We will read and watch key selected texts (verbal and visual) in detail, elaborating their contexts. As we read, we will also develop and build our analytic skills—what strategies are useful in approaching themes and imagery, genres and forms?

**A note of caution:** since this is a class about vampires, some of the material may contain disturbing depictions of violence and sexuality, so be forewarned. If you find yourself unable to read/watch a particular text, feel free to let me know and I will do my best to accommodate you.

**Course goals:**

- \* to demonstrate the productiveness of genre and its limitations, in this case, the inexact category of “vampire fiction”
  - \* to explore ideas of boundaries and thresholds and the social structures and taboos that they shape
  - \* to critically reconsider forms of categorization—whether by literary genre or some other social/natural/cultural classification
  - \* to read some vampire texts (short stories, novels, paintings and illustrations. Film stills, films poems, etc.) by way of even beginning to think what different “canons” of vampire texts might be
  - \* to break down some of the complex cultural anxieties both soothed and irritated by the figure of the vampire
  - \* to explain how and why the figure of the vampire embodies fantasies of intersection (the living and the dead or female and male or the self and the other, for example)
- 
- \* to probe the responses you have to particular texts
  - \* to provide persuasive evidence for your response
  - \* to look closely at a text in a way that may reinforce or challenge your initial response
  - \* to learn to read texts in terms of both an overall problematic and detail
  - \* to consider the effects of form on meaning, especially in the case of fantasy narratives
  - \* to analyze how different kinds of media (verbal, visual, cinematic) have different effects for their particular presentation of the vampire
  - \* to understand texts in both their historical and artistic contexts
  - \* to sharpen and develop our skills of verbal analysis
  - \* to hone and develop our skills for verbalizing visual information in a precise and insightful manner
  - \* to apply with insight specific terminology for analyzing the visual arts and cinema
  - \* to practice writing skills both in shorter and longer essays
  - \* to demonstrate understanding with persuasive and thorough reference to precise textual evidence in clear and logically organized college-level prose, whether in class discussions, exercises or essays

**Course requirements:**

Students will write three 3-page papers and one 6-page paper. Students will each give one formal class presentation.

In addition, throughout the semester there will be a number of unannounced writing exercises in which students engage with class material.

Students' contribution to class discussion and level of preparation for class will also be taken into consideration when I calculate final grades.

**Grade assignment and distribution:**

First 3-page paper:	15%
Second 3-page paper:	15%
Classroom presentation	15%
3-page written development of your classroom presentation	15%
Final paper (6 pages):	20%
Unannounced writing exercises:	15%
Class preparation and participation:	5%

**Due dates for papers:**

The first 3-page paper is due in class as a hard copy and in Turnitin on Blackboard-- Wednesday, September 25.

The second 3-page paper due as a hard copy in class and on Turnitin on Blackboard — Friday, November 1.

The third 3-page paper based on your presentation is due approximately 10 days after your in-class presentation.

The final 6-page paper is due on the day of our final exam, Friday, December 13, 11-1 pm. All material must be submitted by the hard deadline of 1 pm on December 13.

The final paper must be submitted as an electronic copy on Turnitin on Blackboard.

**Required texts:**

Butler, Octavia.

*Fledgling*.

Grand Central Publishing (January 2, 2007).

ISBN-10: 0446696161  
ISBN-13: 978-0446696166

Gomez, Jewelle.

*The Gilda Stories.*

City Lights Publishers. NOTE: 25th Anniversary edition (March 29, 2016).

ISBN-10: 0872866742  
ISBN-13: 978-0872866744

Marryat, Florence.

*The Blood of the Vampire.*

Valancourt Books.

ISBN-10: 1934555657  
ISBN-13: 978-1934555651

Stoker, Bram.

*Dracula.*

Dover Publications; 1 edition (April 18, 2000).

ISBN-10: 9780486454016  
ISBN-13: 978-0486454016  
ASIN: 0486411095

Stoker's *Dracula* is also available at:

<http://www.bramstoker.org/novels/05dracula.html>

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/345>

<https://www.fulltextarchive.com/pdfs/Dracula.pdf>

and elsewhere on the web. Just make sure that your edition is a reprint of the 1897 edition.

**On Line/Online:**

PLEASE NOTE—I HAVE PROVIDED YOU WITH MORE THAN ONE LINK—THIS IS TO MAKE IT EASY FOR YOU TO FIND A LINK THAT DOES WORK, IF, FOR WHATEVER REASON, ONE PARTICULAR LINK DOES NOT.

Bürger, Gottfried August, "Lenore" in the translation by Dante Gabriel Rossetti.  
The line in question is line 132 in Rossetti's translation:

“We and the dead gallop fast through the night” — this is what the dead bridegroom William says.

<http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/1-1844.harvardms.rad.html>

For interest’s sake, thus recommended but not required:

Stewart, Bruce. “‘The Dead Travel Fast’: Deadly Transports in Bürger’s ‘Lenore’ and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*: A Quizzicality.”

[http://www.ricorso.net/rx/az-data/authors/s/Stoker\\_B/appx/Burger\\_GA.htm](http://www.ricorso.net/rx/az-data/authors/s/Stoker_B/appx/Burger_GA.htm)

### **Required Texts:**

Gautier, Théophile. “Clarimonde.” 1832.

Translated from French by Lafcadio Hearn.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/22661>

<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/g/gautier/theophile/clarimonde/>

[https://archive.org/details/clarimonde\\_0909\\_librivox](https://archive.org/details/clarimonde_0909_librivox)

---. “La morte amoureuse.” 1832. In French. (“The Loving Dead Woman” or “The Loving Dead” would be a more direct translation of Gautier’s title.)

<http://www.theophilegautier.fr/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/La-morte-amoureuse.pdf>

Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan. *Carmilla*, 1872.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/10007>

<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/lefanu/carmilla/index.html>

<https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Carmilla>

Polidori, John, “The Vampyre,” 1819. (Happy 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday, “The Vampyre”!)

[http://www.public.asu.edu/~cajsa/thevampyre1816/complete\\_text\\_vampyre.pdf](http://www.public.asu.edu/~cajsa/thevampyre1816/complete_text_vampyre.pdf)

(The link above is to a very rewarding project done by students—it contextualizes Polidori and provides commentary on his text.)

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Vampyre](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Vampyre)

<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/p/polidori/john/vampyre/>

Smith, Clark Ashton. "The End of the Story." 1930.

<http://www.eldritchdark.com/writings/short-stories/63/the-end-of-the-story>

**Required PDF on Blackboard:**

Pizarnik, Alejandra. "The Bloody Countess."

**Recommended Text:**

Penrose, Valentine. *The Bloody Countess*. Translated from French by Alexander Trocchi.

<https://www.scribd.com/book/257714502/THE-BLOODY-COUNTESS-Atrocities-Of-Erzsebet-Bathory>

**On reserve at Leavey Library:**

Ashida, Toyoo, director. *Vampire Hunter D*. Japan. 1985.

Clement, Jermaine and Taika Waititi, directors. *What We Do in the Shadows*. New Zealand. 2014.

Crain, William, director. *Blacula*. USA. 1972.

Kümel, Harry, director. *Daughters of Darkness* (original title, *Les lèvres rouges*). Belgium. 1971.

**Topics:**

With each text, I will give you a set of questions that encourage thinking rigorously, both in detail and in whole, about the text. You may select one of these questions as a possible paper topic. You are also free to construct your own topic after discussion with me.

**Essays:**

All essays will show evidence of your critical responses and interpretations of the texts you are analyzing. You may rewrite the first 3 essays for a potentially higher grade. You must do so within two weeks after you receive the graded essay. You will not have the chance to rewrite the final paper.

The three essays should be 3 pages long, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with numbered pages.

The final essay should be 6 pages long, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with numbered pages.

The essays are due in the due dates (obviously), unless you communicate with me beforehand and offer some urgent reason for extension.

*All essays must be submitted on Blackboard and in hard copy form in class.*

**Classroom norms and expectations:**

I expect that you will have a copy of the text.

I expect you to have read the complete text when we begin our classroom discussions of that text.

Be prepared and read ahead.

If, for whatever reason you are late, please enter the class as quietly and without disruption as possible. *Do not let the classroom door bang shut.* Find a seat as near to the door as possible, so that you do not take other students off-task.

Please respect your classmates and colleagues and do not talk while others are speaking. You are welcome to enter into discussions with each other and with me, but this has to be part of the open classroom conversation.

**Absences:**

In this class, I ask that you stay in touch and communicate with me as we progress and ask about work if you have any concerns, questions: do not “disappear” so that I need to track you down.

Please let me know (in person or via text, for example) if you are going to miss class.



Missing more than 3 classes unexcused in the course of the semester will have an impact on your participation grade.

It is very important that you check in with me about work from classes you may miss, so that you do not fall behind.

**Office hours:**

I keep office hours as part of my instruction—that time is for you to discuss any aspect of the course and your learning. I am also happy to arrange meetings outside the set office hours if our schedules conflict.

I expect at least one office visit from every student this semester as part of your participation grade.

**Using computers and devices in class:**

Computers, Kindles, smartphones and other devices are obviously an integral part of our learning environment.

I encourage you to take charge of your own learning in using these devices.

However, the focus should always be on learning—and sharing what you have learned.

It's very clear when students are using devices for reasons other than classwork.

**I will call on you if you seem to be off-task—please note.**

*Please avoid using social media while in class, unless such use pertains directly to what we are doing and can help everyone's learning.*

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems:**

**Academic conduct:**

Plagiarism--presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words--is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

**Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university.**

You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community - such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member - can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu/> describes reporting options and other resources.

### **Support systems:**

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

### **Student behavior:**

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. These strictures may extend to behaviors outside the classroom that are related to the course.

### **Students with disabilities:**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301

and is open 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

[http://www.sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home\\_index.html](http://www.sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html)

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1

Monday, August 26: Introduction.

Wednesday, August 28: Polidori, "The Vampyre."

Friday, August 30: "The Vampyre," concluded.

### WEEK 2

Monday, September 2: LABOR DAY. NO CLASSES.

Wednesday, September 4: Gautier, "Clarimonde."

Friday, September 6: Smith, "The End of the Story."

### WEEK 3

Monday, September 9: Stoker, *Dracula*, Chapters 1-5.

Wednesday, September 11: *Dracula*, Chapters 6-11.

Friday, September 13: *Dracula*, Chapters 12-17.

### WEEK 4

Monday, September 16: *Dracula*, Chapters 18-23.

Wednesday, September 18: *Dracula*, Chapters 23-27.

Friday, September 20: *Dracula*, concluded.

### WEEK 5

Monday, September 23: Ashida, *Vampire Hunter D*.

Wednesday, September 25: *Vampire Hunter D*, concluded.

**THE FIRST 3-PAGE ESSAY IS DUE IN CLASS AS A HARD COPY AND ON BLACKBOARD AT TURNITIN.**

Friday, September 27: LeFanu, *Carmilla* (please read the entire novella for the first class—it's only some 70 pages long).

### WEEK 6

Monday, September 30: *Carmilla*, continued.

Wednesday, October 2: *Carmilla*, concluded.

Friday, October 4: Pizarnik, "The Bloody Countess."

### WEEK 7

Monday, October 7: Kümel, *Daughters of Darkness*.

Wednesday, October 9: *Daughters of Darkness*.

Friday, October 11: *Daughters of Darkness*, concluded. Crain, *Blacula*.

#### WEEK 8

Monday, October 14: *Blacula*, continued.

Wednesday, October 16: *Blacula*, concluded.

Friday, October 18: FALL RECESS. NO CLASSES.

#### WEEK 9

Monday, October 21: Marryat, *The Blood of the Vampire*, Chapters 1-3.

Wednesday, October 23: *The Blood...*, Chapters 6-9.

Friday, October 25: *The Blood...*, Chapters 10-13

#### WEEK 10

Monday, October 28: *The Blood...*, Chapters 14-17.

Wednesday, October 30: Butler, *Fledgling*, Chapters 1-8, pp. 1-81.

Friday, November 1: *Fledgling*, Chapters 9-14, pp. 83-149.

**SECOND 3-PAGE PAPER DUE IN CLASS AS A HARD COPY AND ON BLACKBOARD AT TURNITIN.**

#### WEEK 11

Monday, November 4: *Fledgling*, Chapters 15-19, pp. 151-205.

Wednesday, November 6: *Fledgling*, Chapters 20-Epilogue, pp. 207-310.

Friday, November 8: Gomez, *The Gilda Stories*, reading schedule to be determined.

#### WEEK 12

Monday, November 11: *Gilda...*

Wednesday, November 13: *Gilda...*

Friday, November 15: *Gilda ...*

#### WEEK 13

Monday, November 18: Clement and Waititi, *What We Do In the Shadows*.

Wednesday, November 20: *What We Do...*

Friday, November 22: *What We Do...*

#### WEEK 14

Monday, November 25: Vampire Images—Vampires in the Paintings and Prints

Wednesday, November 27: THANKSGIVING. NO CLASSES.

Friday, November 29: THANKSGIVING. NO CLASSES.

#### WEEK 15

Monday, December 2: Vampire Images.

Wednesday, December 4: Vampire Images.

Friday, December 6: Vampire Images.

**THE FINAL 6-PAGE PAPER IS DUE AT THE TIME WHEN OUR EXAM WOULD HAVE BEEN (there's no exam in this class):**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, THH 119, 1 pm.**

**YOUR FINAL ESSAY/PROJECT MUST BE SUBMITTED ON BLACKBOARD AT TURNITIN. I DO NOT REQUIRE A HARD COPY FOR THIS FINAL PROJECT.**

**BY THIS TIME ALL WORK FOR THE CLASS MUST HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED.**