

## **Ghost Stories: Throughout Time and Around the World**

Fall 2020

Prof. Tok Thompson

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Office hours: By zoom, Weds. 2:00-4:00, or by appointment.

Ghosts have played a large role in storytelling around the world, appearing as central characters in much of folklore, literature, and popular culture. Ghost stories invite discussions of the soul, and the afterlife, and appear in different forms in various cultures throughout time and around the world. Western classics (Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Henry James' 'The Turn of the Screw', Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, etc) make frequent use of ghost stories, as does literature from many civilizations (the famous Japanese *Tale of the Genji*, for example). Ghost stories have played an important role in other media, too, including films, songs, video games, and more. In this class we will examine ghost stories in folklore, literature, and popular culture in order to understand this genre's particular functions, lying as it does at the nexus of belief and entertainment.

### Course Requirements

Readings should be done *before* the class discussion of them. Assignments are to be turned in on time. Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and students are advised to follow the University's policy on academic integrity as articulated in the current edition of SCampus. Course attendance is mandatory: more than two unexcused absences will result in an automatic reduction of 5% per additional absence.

The grading will be as follows:

- 20 %: two collected ghost stories, fieldwork
- 10% short paper 1
- 10% short paper 2
- 10 % movie review
- 10% classroom participation
- 10% Midterm
- 30% Final

### The Current Pandemic

We will begin (and probably complete) this semester on an online basis. We will primarily use blackboard and zoom. Attendance is required: if you have some difficulty attending zoom class meetings, please reach out to me regarding these. We will try to keep this class experience as much like a real classroom as possible. Please come prepared to discuss readings, and participate fully in discussions.

## Schedule

Week	Topic	Due/Exams	Articles	Books/Films
1	Introductions: Stories, People, Ghosts, Belief		1	
2	Classical World			1 (Preface, chaps 1, 3, 6)
3	England		6, 7	
4	United States			5 (all)
5	Japan			3 (pp 1-42; selections), Film 1
6	Storytelling & belief: the legend.	1 <sup>st</sup> paper due Thursday Sept 24		2 (Intro, Chaps 1, 2)
7	Native American,	Midterm Tuesday, Sept 29	3, online selections	
8	College Ghosts/ Your ghosts			4 (chap 1, 2, 5, 6)
9	Celtic Dead/ Halloween		2	
10	Hispanic themes La Llorona, day of the dead		8, 9	
11	Ghostly themes: the unquiet dead	Collections Due!	4, 5	2 (chap 3) 4 (chap 7, 8) 6 (62-64)
12	Cinema, video games, etc.	Movie review due.		6 (chap 7)
13	Future of ghosts?	2 <sup>nd</sup> paper due Thursday, Nov. 12		6 (241-249)
<p><b>Final exam:</b> November 17, 4:30-6:30 p.m.</p>				

## Books

1. *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece.* Sarah Iles Johnston
2. *Alas, Poor Ghost! Traditions of Belief.* Gillian Bennett (\*ebook available through USC libraries.)
3. *Ghosts and the Japanese.* Toelken and Iwasaka (\*ebook available through USC libraries.)
4. *Haunted Halls: Ghostlore of American College Campuses.* Elizabeth Tucker (\*ebook available through USC libraries.)
5. *The Turn of the Screw.* Henry James (Out of copyright and widely available online; e.g. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/209/209-h/209-h.htm>)

Articles (will be made available via blackboard):

1. Shakespeare in the Bush. Laura Bohannon. 1971.  
[http://www.naturalhistorymag.com/editors\\_pick/1966\\_08-09\\_pick.html](http://www.naturalhistorymag.com/editors_pick/1966_08-09_pick.html)
2. Jack Santino. 1983. Halloween in America: Contemporary Customs & Performances. *Western Folklore* 42: 1-20
3. Rachel Attituq Qitsualik, "Anirniq: An Inuit 'Ghost' Story."
4. Linda Krumholz. 1992. The Ghosts of Slavery: Historical Recovery in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. *African American Review* 26:395-408.
5. Valk, Ulo. 2006. Ghostly Possession and Real Estate: The Dead in Contemporary Estonian Folklore. *Journal of Folklore Research* 43: 31-51
6. Charles Dickens: Christmas Ghosts, The Ghost Chamber, The Lawyer and the Ghost. (available copyright-free online)
7. Jacqueline Simpson. 2003. Repentant Soul or Walking Corpse? Debatable Apparitions in Medieval England. *Folklore* 114: 389-402.
8. Jones, Pamela. 1988. "There Was a Woman": La Llorona in Oregon, *Western Folklore* 47(3):195-211
9. The Day of the Dead, Halloween, and the Quest for Mexican National Identity. Stanley Brandes. *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 111, No. 442 (Autumn, 1998), pp. 359-380

**Statement for 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 your course instructor (or TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open from 8:30am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP

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

(213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX)

[ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu)

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General Principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, The Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:

<http://usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/> Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://usc.edu/student-affaris/SJACS/> Information on intellectual property at USC is available at: <http://usc.edu/academe/acsen/issues/ipr/index.html>