

Course Description:

We will examine American Gothic literature as a genre and a mode, from its beginnings at the turn of the 19th century through contemporary representations. In the first half of the course, we will survey “classic” American Gothic from the antebellum period; in the second half of the course, we will examine the emergence and development of “Southern Gothic.” The first objective of the course is to study this fiction as a response to and reflection of historical conditions, paying particular attention to the ways in which these novels work through problems of race, gender, class, and sexuality. The second objective of the course is to consider the use of genre as a tool of literary analysis and production, paying particular attention to how categorical choices condition the composition and reception of texts.