

Course Information

Course Number/Section: FILM/WGST 694-600
Course Title: GENDER AND GENRE
Time: Thurs, 2:20-5:00
Location: LAAH 109
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Details

Instructor: Daniel Humphrey
Office: LAAH 212
E-Mail: danhumphrey@tamu.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 3—4:30pm and by appointment. (A zoom office “visit” can be easily arranged upon request to better fit students’ schedules.)

General Course Descriptions

Gender and Genre. (3-0). Credit 3. Exploration and analysis of the ways in which a single literary and/or film genre resonates with gendered perspectives and sexual subjectivity. May be taken two times for credit. Prerequisite: Graduate classification.

Focused Course Description, Fall 2024

*This semester we will focus on the **horror film** as it has been used to allegorize struggles related to male/female subjectivity and hetero/homosexual/queer desire, specifically through the idea of the “abject Other” and “monstrous-feminine,” asking ourselves how horror allows people to address the deepest and most profound fears and fantasies associated with gender and sexuality.*

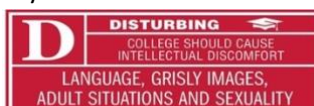
Course Prerequisite: graduate student standing.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- *Analyze* film and/or literary genres according to theoretical tools provided by feminist theory, queer theory, and other theories of gender and sexuality in the humanities and social sciences.
- *Use* those theories to *articulate* the ways in which gender and sexuality affects one’s understandings of works of literary and cinematic genres.
- *Evaluate* the ways in which genre conventions and tropes reinforce or challenge traditional or alternative forms of gendered and sexual subjectivity.
- *Write* critically and effectively about the above-mentioned issues in the form of historical/analytical graduate level college essays.

Nota bene: A number of the required films for this class feature scenes that some might consider distressingly violent, emotionally intense, and/or sexually explicit/disturbing. If this poses a problem, you should take another class. Horror films aim to horrify.



Textbook and/or Resource Materials

Required books:

- *Cat People (BFI Film Classics)* 2nd Edition by Kim Newman (Palgrave MacMillan: 2013)
- *Picnic at Hanging Rock (BFI Film Classics)* by Anna Backman Rogers (Bloomsbury Publishing: 2022)

Note: All books are available at no cost to you as e-books via the library's website. Visit: <https://catalog.library.tamu.edu/> to find them. They can be purchased at the University's bookstore. The others can be purchased via Amazon and other retailers.

Required short films:

All other required reading is available via the course's Canvas site.

Required films:

Most of the required films are available from streaming services available to you at no cost through the TAMU Libraries. Two will have to be rented to stream for a small fee. For the budget-conscious, those films are also available on DVD and/or Blu-ray at the Evans Annex reserve desk to check out for a brief period. See the week-by-week schedule for streaming sources and the Canvas page for this class for direct links to the films' streaming site options.

Grading Policy

Grading scale: A 100-90% B 80-89% C 70-79% D 59-69% E Below 59%

Grade Penalty for Academic Dishonesty:

Students found guilty of violating the A&M Honor Code in their work for this class, in other words cheating, will receive an F in the course. For more information on what constitutes a violation, see the Academic Integrity Statement and Policy near the end of this syllabus.

Graded Components

- 1. Major In-Class Presentation** 25 pts.
Graduate students will offer a 60-minute presentation/class discussion on one of the films and required readings in consultation with the professor. A handout and rubric will be provided.
- 2. Minor In-Class Presentations** 15 pts.
Graduate students will offer three mini presentations of ten minutes or so each on three different readings assigned to the undergraduates (and themselves) throughout the semester. For this, graduate students will simply offer an explanation of what the author has been trying to communicate and how it relates to the assigned film and the broader topic of the course.
- 4. Research and analysis term paper** 40 pts.
This paper requires an in-depth analysis of a film or aspect of the horror genre as it relates to sexuality and/or gender. A handout with details for this assignment and a rubric will be provided. Minimum 3,750 words not counting the Works Cited list. **Plagiarism will result in an F for the class.** Papers need to be uploaded to Turnitin via the link on the class' Canvas page by December 6 at 5PM.
- 5. Bibliography and prospectus for term paper and office visit** 5 pts.
Students must make an appointment for a twenty-minute meeting with the instructor regarding the final paper and turn in an **abstract** (one-paragraph description) and **annotated bibliography** at that meeting. Office visit should be scheduled by Oct 3 and take place before November 1.

6. Participation

15 pts.

Students are expected to come to class with three questions or discussion-inspiring comments per week about the assigned readings and/or films. There will be a number of in-class exercises that will count toward the participation grade as well. Students, *especially* graduate students, are expected to always participate meaningfully in the class based upon this rubric:

- **A** students are always prepared (with the reading done), answer when called upon, and participate actively in discussions and group activities *without monopolizing class time*.
- **B** students are prepared but reluctant to take initiative, answer questions only when asked, participate actively in group activities but passively in discussions (or vice versa), may express disrespect for other students and/or the instructor (using sarcasm, insulting language, disrespectful facial expressions, etc.)
- **C** students are not fully prepared, do not take initiative, and often are not able to answer questions when called upon; they participate scarcely in group activities/discussions and may engage in ways that demonstrate disrespect for other students or the instructor (using sarcasm, insulting language, monopolizing the time, etc.)
- **D** students are inadequately prepared and have difficulty answering even the most basic questions when called upon; their contribution to group activities and discussions are minimal, and they may engage in a way that demonstrates disrespect for other students or the instructor.
- **F** students are frequently asleep during class (or coming in and out of the room, zoning out, tuned out, etc.) and/or repeatedly monopolizing the class discussion or participating in a way that demonstrates disrespect for the other students or the instructor.

Note: Even though there are fewer graduate students in the class than undergraduates, this is your class, too. That said, please keep in mind that undergraduates are in the room and try to word your questions and comments in such a way that they don't feel excluded. In other words, do not try to impress the professor with academic jargon or name dropping. Do not assume everyone in the room knows who Michel Foucault is or what Freud's theory of the Death Drive entails. Do consider yourself a fellow scholar who, along with the instructor is helping the undergraduates learn. If graduate students wish to meet separately with the professor to discuss the reading, time can be arranged outside of class. There will also be times the TA handles a discussion with the undergrads while I meet separately with the graduate students to discuss topics related to the class.

Extra Credit – This class will offer some extra credit for students attending extra-curricular events related to the course topic, such as campus screenings of horror films or films related to gender issues or open lectures on related topics by visiting scholars, provided students offer verification of attendance and write short response papers. This will amount to no more than nine percentage points (9%) and may be as low as five (5%) based on the number of opportunities that emerge.

Late Work Policy: *Late work is not accepted without prior arrangement (before the due date) and an appropriate reason. All unexcused late work will be marked down 5% if late but still on the due date, and 10% per day thereafter.*

Work submitted by a student as makeup work for an excused absence is not considered late work and is exempted from this late work policy ([Student Rule 7](#)).

Course Schedule

August 22 (Week 1)

Introduction: What is a Genre/What is the *Horror* Genre?

August 29 (Week 2)

Horror and Historical Trauma

- Film Due: [Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari](#) [*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*] (Robert Wiene, Germany 1920, 76 min.) Kanopy.
- Reading Due: Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," Siegfried Kracauer, "Caligari," and Patrice Petro, "The Woman, the Monster, and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*."

September 5 (Week 3)

The Monstrous Other: Queer Fears in Early Hollywood Filmmaking

- Film Due: [The Old Dark House](#) (James Whale, US 1932, 72 min.) Kanopy.
- Reading Due: Harry M. Benshoff, "The Monster and the Homosexual," Benshoff, "Defining the Monster Queer in the Classical Hollywood Horror Film," Rhona J. Berenstein, "'It Will Thrill You, It May Shock You, It Might Even Horrify You': Gender Reception and Classic Horror Cinema."

September 12 (Week 4)

The Monstrous Self: Special Guest Horror Scholar Rick Worland

- Film Due: [Cat People](#) (Jacques Tourneur, US 1942, 73 min.) Various sources (check [justwatch.com](#)) and on disc at the library annex.
- Reading Due: Kim Newman, *Cat People (BFI Film Classics)*.

September 19 (Week 5)

The Queer Auteur: Special Zoom Guest: Curtis Harrington Expert Cain Miller

- Films Due: [Fragment of Seeking](#) (Curtis Harrington, US 1946, 13 min.) and [Night Tide](#) (Curtis Harrington, US 1961, 85 min.) Both titles are on Kanopy.
- Reading Due: Cain Miller, "'I Guess We're All a Little Afraid of What We Love': Curtis Harrington and Queer Avant-Garde Horror."

September 26 (Week 6)

Social Change/Social Trauma: Reactionary vs. Radical Horror in the 1970s

- Film Due: [The Texas Chain Saw Massacre](#) (Tobe Hooper, 83 min.) Various sources (check [justwatch.com](#)) and on disc at the library annex.
- Reading Due: Rick Worland, "Slaughtering Genre Tradition," Carol J. Clover, "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film," Chuck Jackson, "Blood for Oil, Crude Metonymies and Tobe Hooper's *Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974)."

October 3 (Week 7)

Objectification and Dematerialization: The Male Gaze and the Female Specter

- Film Due: [Picnic at Hanging Rock](#) (Peter Weir, Australia 1975, 107 min.) Various sources (check [justwatch.com](#)) and on disc at the library annex.
- Reading Due: Anna Backman Rogers, *Picnic at Hanging Rock (BFI Film Classics)*.

October 10 (Week 8)

Women and Horror: Creators/Consumers

- Film Due: [Suspiria](#) (Dario Argento, Italy 1977, 98 min.) Kanopy. Also screens October 1 at 7PM at The Queen Theatre in Bryan.
- Reading Due: Charlotte Gough, "The Ballerina Body-Horror: Spectatorship, Female Subjectivity and the. Abject in Dario Argento's *Suspiria* (1977)," Joshua Schulze, "The Ornamental and the Monstrous: Exploring Feminine Architecture in Dario Argento's *Suspiria* (1977)" and Martha Shearer, "The Secret Beyond the Door: Daria Nicolodi and *Suspiria*'s Multiple Authorship," Aaron Smits, "Cognitive and Philosophical Approaches to Horror."

October 17 (Week 9)

Abjection: Subject/Object/Horror

- Film Due: [Alien](#) (Ridley Scott, US 1979, 117 min.) Criterion on Demand.
- Reading Due: Julia Kristeva, "Approaching Abjection," Barbara Creed, "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection."

October 24 (Week 10)

Gender, Body Horror, Historical Consciousness

- Film Due: [Possession](#) (Andrew Zulawski, France/West Germany 1981, 124 min.) Kanopy.
- Reading Due: Alison Taylor, *Possession (Devil's Advocates)* [Excerpts], Christopher Sharrett, "The Horror Film as Social Allegory."

October 31 (Week 11)

Monstrous Masculinity in 21st Century Cinema

- Film Due: [El espinazo del diablo](#) [*The Devil's Backbone*] (Guillermo del Toro, Spain/Mexico 2001, 106 min.) Alexander Street.
- Reading Due: Ann Davis, "The Beautiful and The Monstrous Masculine: The Male Body and Horror in *El espinazo del diablo* (Guillermo del Toro 2001)."

November 7 (Week 12)

Feminist Horror Comes of Age

- Film Due: [A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night](#) (Ana Lily Amirpour, US 2014, 101 min.) Kanopy.
- Reading Due: Joanna Mansbridge, "Consuming Bodies, Abject Spaces: Ana Lily Amirpour's Transcultural Expressionism."

November 14 (Week 13)

The Horror of Motherhood, the Horror of Childhood

- Film Due: [The Babadook](#) (Jennifer Kent, Australia/Canada 2014, 94 min.) Kanopy.
- Reading Due: Paula Quigley, "When Good Mothers Go Bad: Genre and Gender in *The Babadook*" & Adolfo Aranjuez, "Monstrous Motherhood: Summoning the Abject in *The Babadook*," Matt Hills, "Horror Reception/Audiences."

November 21 (Week 14)

The Horror of Identity in a Gendered World

- *I Saw the TV Glow* (Jane Schoenbrun, US 2024, 100 min.) Swank. Link available soon.
- Reading Due: Robin Means-Coleman, *Horror Noire: Studying Blacks and Horror Films*," other TBD essays.

University Policies

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, which of course incur no penalty, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Course Specific Attendance Policy: Since this class meets only once a week, a single absence equals a full week's lost face-to-face instruction, a considerable detriment to the students' learning experience and to class cohesion. Nevertheless, students are allowed two unexcused absences. Beyond that, students will be docked 8% of the semester's total possible points for each unexcused absence. Missing half a class (by leaving at the break or arriving during or after the break) counts as half a class missed and is therefore a 4% loss on the final grade.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing available resources and services on your campus.

Students who need someone to talk to can contact Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) or call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988) or at [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org) [Links to an external site.](#)

Additional Course Policies

Fostering a Supportive, Inclusive, Diverse, Respectful Space

Respect is one of the six Aggie Core Values. It is my intention to cultivate a learning environment where the rights, dignity and wellbeing of all members of the campus community are respected. This includes a commitment to fostering an inclusive classroom for the expression of diverse identities and beliefs and cultivating a positive learning climate where all students feel safe, comfortable, and ready to learn. I trust you to foster a safe and respectful environment for the discussion of diverse performances and sensitive topics. I encourage, support, and value the expression of diverse points of view, experiences, and expertise, but will not tolerate condescending, insulting, hateful, or sarcastic remarks about other individuals, cultures, groups, identities, or belief systems.

The recording of lectures/class discussions (video or audio) is expressly forbidden without approval.

USE of AI for course assignments: There may be situations and contexts within this course where you will be asked to use AI tools to explore how they can be used. Outside of those circumstances, AI tools is not allowed to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work (assignments, activities, responses, etc.) that is part of your evaluation in this course. Infractions of this rule may result in course failure.

Students are responsible for checking their official TAMU email accounts at least once every day for updates on the class (such as last-minute room changes or class cancellations) and are responsible for all material sent to them via email. **Please note:** Emails are not considered private communication. As a result, I cannot discuss your grades with you via email.

Finally, office hours are the best way for me to get to know you. I encourage you to drop by to say hello.

I have read and understand all information on this syllabus and agree to the policies in place for this class.

Name Printed

Date

Signature

