

ENG 600
American Supernatural Literature
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The period between the Civil War and World War I is considered the heyday of American Realism. Oddly enough, it was also the period of the ghost story's greatest popularity, and most of the major realists also wrote about the supernatural. What was the connection between realism and occult fiction? What is realism? How might we read the supernatural in these texts? What made supernatural stories popular at this particular point in time?

Why an online course?

- An English course is, by definition, about writing as well as reading. Like students in a language immersion class, online students present themselves entirely through the medium they are engaged in studying. Every interaction with me, and every interaction with each other, is conducted in writing.
- The online environment provides time to think before responding to questions and ideas—a particularly useful feature for a class that demands hard thinking.
- Each student can work at his own pace during the week.
- Students can more easily juggle classwork with work/family/life obligations. In other words, working adults, single parents, and others who thought they could never manage the logistics of going back to school for a college degree, now can!

Requirements:

- Readings: Yes, there is a lot to read in a graduate-level English course, but at least most of it is fiction.
- Quizzes: You will be quizzed at least once on each reading. The quizzes should be easy if you have done the readings. In fact, you are welcome to use your books to answer them. If you try to get by by just skimming through the entire book to find the answer, you'll realize it's easier to just do the reading to begin with. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.
- Lectures: After you do the reading for the week, you should read my lecture. Make sure you have read each page listed for that week in the Table of Contents, which comes up when you click on the Lectures icon.
- Discussion Postings: In an online course, your postings account for a big chunk of your grade, as you'll see in the grading breakdown below. After completing each week's reading, you will click on the Discussion icon, where you will find directions for that week's postings. You are graded on postings in two ways:
 - 1) Postings/Participation Grade: You must make a minimum of three substantive postings per week. "Substantive" means that "me too" postings—where you say you agree with someone else's posting, or restate what someone else said in your own words—do not count as one of the three. Substantive postings are not short; A-level

postings are usually several paragraphs long. For more details on what makes a good posting, see the Discussion Participation Guide.

- 2) Portfolios of Best Postings: Twice during the semester, you will be asked to provide me with your three best postings to date, and your own written critique of these postings.
- Don't expect a response from me to each posting, since that would forestall your responses to each others' comments, and defeat the purpose of this assignment. I'll jump in as necessary to add to or help direct the discussion, but in an online course the primary responsibility for keeping the comments going rests with the students. Don't worry, even if I'm not saying anything, I'm reading everything.
- Background Essay: For this 3-5 page report, you will find background information that will help us all to understand the work under consideration that week.
- Research Essay: This 12-15 page paper must include at least four sources catalogued in the MLA Bibliography.

Note: For both essays, you will receive a separate assignment sheet with more details.

- Final Essay Exam: You will be given a critical essay and asked to relate it to the works we have read this semester.

Policies:

- Attendance: One way an online course differs from a traditional one is that courseware like Angel notes whether you open a page and how long you spend on it, and sends that information to me. This is helpful to me in determining whether someone has stopped participating. If this happens, don't be surprised if I send you an email asking where you've gone. If some life emergency arises which prevents you from taking part in class, let me know.
- Assignment Due Dates: Postings, quizzes, and essays are due by 5 pm Tuesday of the week they are assigned. **IF YOUR ASSIGNMENT IS LATE, YOUR FINAL GRADE FOR THAT ASSIGNMENT WILL BE DROPPED ONE THIRD OF A LETTER GRADE.** In other words, a B paper turns into a B-. After a week, the assignment category will be "locked," meaning you will no longer be able to submit your work. If something terrible is happening in your life let me know at least one class before the paper is due and we may be able to work out an extension. There will be no extensions on the final.

What you'll need:

Textbooks:

These books should all be available from our bookstore, but for those who like to order them online, here is all the information you need (the long number is the ISBN):

- Lundie, Catherine, *Restless Spirits: Ghost Stories by American Women, 1872-1926*, 1997 University of Massachusetts Press 1558490566
- Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, Reprint edition (January 1, 1991) Dover Publications 0486266842
- Emily Dickinson, *Selected Poems*, New edition (July 1, 1990) Dover Publications 0486264661
- Zitkala-Sa, *Old Indian Legends* (April 30, 2004) Kessinger Publishing 0766188876
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* 1997 Dover 0486298574

- Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* Reissue edition (October 1, 1983) Bantam Classics 0553211439
- Edith Wharton, *The Ghost Stories of Edith Wharton*, Reissue edition (October 10, 1997) Scribner; 0684842572
- Mary Wilkins Freeman, *The Wind in the Rosebush*, 1986 Academy Chicago Publishers, 0-89733-232-6
- Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, Rpt; 1994 Dover, 0-486-28196-5
- Charles Chesnutt, *Tales of Conjure and the Color Line: 10 Stories*, Dover

If you have questions:

- Any questions that would be relevant to other students, such as questions about a reading, should be posted on the Discussion space. If you have technical difficulties, see the Technical Support section, below. If you have questions or concerns that you don't want to post publicly, email me. You'll get a response right away if you email me during my virtual office hours, noted at the top of the syllabus (if there is a delay, it's because I'm interacting with another student). If you happen to be on campus, you can always stop by during my normal office hours, also noted at the top of this syllabus.

Grading:

- Background Essay 10%
- Research Essay 30%
- Quizzes: 10%
- Postings 20%
- Portfolios of Best Postings: 20%
- Final 10%

Check the My Grade icon for periodic updates on how you are doing.

Assignment Notes: Unless otherwise specified, you are responsible for reading the entire book by the author named by the start of each week. Please also note that readings due are in addition to my lecture pages.

Date	Readings Due	In-Class Topics	Assignments Due	Notes
Week One: Introductions	Introduction: See readings in Week One module, plus W.D. Howells, "Introduction," from <i>Shapes that Haunt the Dusk</i> (on class site)	Orientation to this course and Angel	Discussion Posting	You'll find this reading and upcoming ones online, linked to the appropriate week's Lecture pages
Week Two: Supernatural	Freud, "On the Uncanny;"	supernatural vs. horror fiction	Quiz Discussion Postings	

Literature	H.P. Lovecraft, “Supernatural Horror in Literature” sections 1 and 2 only!			
Week Three: Twain, <i>A Connecticut Yankee</i>	Twain, Chapters 1-22; Twain, selected quotations (on class site); King Arthur in the popular culture of the 19th c. (including links to pre-Raphaelite paintings—on class site); Contemporary attempts to locate Camelot (on class site)		Quiz Discussion Postings	
Week Four: Twain, second half of <i>A Connecticut Yankee</i>	Twain, Chapters 23-end; “Twain and the Typesetting Machine,” on class site; Background essay on Twain		Quiz Discussion Postings	
Week Five: Research	“Resources on MLA Style;” “Directions for One-on-One Library Research Tutorial;” “Evaluating Sources;” “If You Are Having Trouble Coming Up with a Topic”	MLA Bibliography	Quiz Discussion Postings	
Week Six: Dickinson, <i>Selected Poems</i>	Dickinson, <i>Selected Poems</i> (entire); background essay		Quiz Discussion Postings	Have a working thesis for your research

	on Dickinson; Hear Dickinson's Poems Read Aloud" (link);			essay ready by now
Week Seven: James and Psychical Research	James, <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> ; Psychical Research and <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> ; "The Ambiguity of Henry James;" Background Essay on James		Quiz Discussion Postings	We will be using James next week only to compare to Atherton, so please have all of <i>Turn of the Screw</i> read for this week.
Week Eight: James and Atherton	reread James; Atherton, "The Bell in the Fog;" Gertrude Atherton Biography (link on site)		Quiz Discussion Postings	Spring Break 3/17-3/21 Although your break starts on Monday, I will accept postings and quizzes through Tuesday.
Week Nine: Research Essay	no new reading		Research Essay draft due (5-7 typed pages) and Portfolio of Best Postings due by 5 p.m. T 3/25	Spring Break
Week Ten: Zitkala-Sa; Wynne; Spofford	Zitkala-Sa, <i>Old Indian Legends</i> ; Zitkala-Sa, "Why I Am a Pagan" (link on site); "Wounded Knee" (link on site); Madelene Yale Wynne, "The Little Room," and Harriet Prescott Spofford, "The Amber Gods,"		Quiz Discussion Postings	

	(both on class site); Background essay on Spofford			
Week Eleven: Gilman	Gilman, <i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i> ; Gilman, “Why I Wrote <i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i> ,” “The Biographical Basis of <i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i> ”		Quiz Discussion Postings Research Essay Due by 5 p.m. T 4/8	
Week Twelve: Chesnutt	Chesnutt, <i>Tales of Conjure and the Color Line</i> ; website on Chesnutt; “Realism and the Supernatural;” “Charles Chesnutt’s Dilemma”		Quiz Discussion Postings	
Week Thirteen: Wharton	Wharton, <i>The Ghost Stories of Edith Wharton</i> ; Wharton, “The Fullness of Life” (on class site)		Quiz Discussion Postings	
Week Fourteen: Lundie	Lundie, <i>Restless Spirits</i>		Quiz Discussion Postings	
Week Fifteen: Freeman, Jewett	Freeman, <i>The Wind in the Rosebush</i> ; Jewett, “The Foreigner” (on class site)		Quiz Discussion Postings Second Portfolio of Best Postings due	
Final Due by 5 p.m.				See separate assignment sheet

Discussion Participation Guide

The following guidelines should help you understand how your discussion postings will be graded. This is an English class, so while I won't be deducting points for every minor typo, I do expect you to use proper grammar, spelling, etc. in your postings.

A-level Participation:

- Student made at least three postings on the discussion board, one of which was a response to that of a classmate.
- Student's postings responded to the questions posted by the professor.
- Student made substantive comments or posted questions that significantly enhanced the discussion and served to help move the conversation forward. These included follow-up questions, examples, and new perspectives.
- Student's comments provided evidence that he or she had read a substantial number of classmates' postings.
- Student showed evidence of having read, viewed, or completed the relevant assignments.
- Student's postings were constructive, and differences of opinion were expressed in a respectful manner.

B-level Participation:

- Student made at least three postings, but none was in response to that of a classmate.
- Student was responsive to the greater part of the questions posted by the professor.
- Student made comments or asked questions that contributed to the discussion and helped move the conversation forward. These included at least a few examples of follow-up questions, examples, or new perspectives.
- Student's comments provided evidence that he or she had read at least a few classmates' postings.
- Student showed some evidence of having read, viewed, or completed the relevant assignments.

C-level Participation:

- Student made at least two postings of a substantive nature.
- Student was responsive to at least two questions posted by the professor.
- Student's comments provided evidence that he or she had read at least a few classmates' postings, or had read, viewed, or completed some of the relevant assignments.
- Student's postings were constructive, and differences of opinion were expressed in a respectful manner.