

Dr. Mary Ann O'Farrell  
Course description

ENGL 642: Topics in Genre  
The Gothic and Its Manifestations

Tuesday 6-9, Spring 2019

For a long time, it has been axiomatic that the Gothic is a mode reflective of social, cultural, and psychological anxieties about sex, gender, and sexuality; about race and ethnicity; about class; about political, social, and demographic shifts; about the unmentionable terrors in domesticity; about technologies of various kinds; about environmental crises; about the consequences of Empire; about the fact and experience of embodiment. (Whew!) Accordingly, this class will attend to the way the Gothic has performed that reflective work and to the way it has been understood to do so. But it will want also to give full attention to the plentiful attractions of the Gothic as a popular mode, to the appeal of the eerie, the haunted, the squishy, the squelching, the monstrous, the cowering, the decaying and the decayed. It will, in other words, examine the Gothic as an aesthetic, sometimes friendly to and sometimes in tension with the uncanny, the sublime, the realistic, the techno-, the cyber-, the “of manners,” and so on. Readings will include classic Gothic British and American novels and stories, but will also include more contemporary texts, allowing us to think about what is happening when the Gothic recurs. Our considerations will include appearances of the Gothic in visual and other media.

Feel free to drop during office hours (Wed 11-1:30 during fall semester 2018) or to email me ([maof@tamu.edu](mailto:maof@tamu.edu)) to talk about the class.

The course will satisfy these distribution requirements:

- One course in any literature, 1800-the present
- One course organized around concepts, issues, or themes (as opposed to courses organized primarily according to chronological period)