



**SENATE COMMITTEE ON CURRICULAR AFFAIRS**  
**COURSE SUBMISSION AND CONSULTATION FORM**

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*Principal Faculty Member(s) Proposing Course*

Name	User ID	College	Department
EVELYN RAMSEY	emr10	Berks College (BK)	Not Available
CHERYL NICHOLAS	CLN12	Berks College (BK)	Not Available

Academic Home: Berks College (BK)

Type of Proposal:  Add  Change  Drop

Message for Reviewers:

**Course Designation**

(CAS 232N) Identity, Citizenship, and the Rhetoric of American Horror Film

**Course Information**

**Cross-Listed Courses:**

None.

**Prerequisites:**

None.

**Corequisites:**

None.

**Concurrents:**

None.

**Recommended Preparations:**

None.

Abbreviated Title: Horror Film and Identity

Discipline: General Education

Course Listing: Inter-Domain

**Special categories for Undergraduate (001-499) courses**

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**Foundations**

Writing/Speaking (GWS)

Quantification (GQ)

**Knowledge Domains**

Health & Wellness (GHW)

Natural Sciences (GN)

Arts (GA)

Humanities (GH)

Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS)

**Additional Designations**

Bachelor of Arts

International Cultures (IL)

United States Cultures (US)

Honors Course

Common course number - x94, x95, x96, x97, x99

Writing Across the Curriculum

#### First-Year Engagement Program

First-Year Seminar

#### Miscellaneous

Common Course

#### GE Learning Objectives

GenEd Learning Objective: Effective Communication

GenEd Learning Objective: Creative Thinking

GenEd Learning Objective: Crit & Analytical Think

GenEd Learning Objective: Global Learning

GenEd Learning Objective: Integrative Thinking

GenEd Learning Objective: Key Literacies

GenEd Learning Objective: Soc Resp & Ethic Reason

#### Bulletin Listing

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**Minimum Credits:** 3

**Maximum Credits:** 3

**Repeatable:** NO

**Department with Curricular Responsibility:** Berks College Liberal Arts (BKBK\_BKLA)

**Effective Semester:** FA 2019

**Travel Component:** NO

#### Course Outline

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##### **A brief outline or overview of the course content:**

Concentrated on American horror film from the 1930s to the present, the course addresses the role of horror in the creation of stories told about the United States, its history, and its people. The course examines horror films rhetorically and social scientifically (as media effects). Both perspectives (rhetoric and media effects) are used to consider the roles of U.S. social, political, and economic contexts in the production/construction of horror films for the stories they tell and the characters they construct.

##### **A listing of the major topics to be covered with an approximate length of time allotted for their discussion:**

Week 1: Introduction/Background

Course syllabus, icebreakers

Watch documentary: Nightmares in Red, White, and Blue: History of American Horror Films

Week 2: GH/GS/GA theories and methods

Film as rhetoric: (genre, characters, story, mise en scène, editing, cinematography, and sound)

Week 3: GH theories and methods

Film, Hegemony, Culture, and Identity (Burke's Identification and Consubstantiality, Charland's Constitutive rhetoric, and film's relation to cultural context (Brummett and Cherry).

Week 4: GH theories and methods

Film, Archetypes, and Resonant Violation (Kendall Phillips)

Week 5: GS theories and methods

Early Media Models (DeFleur's Magic Bullet and Katz's Uses and Gratifications)

Week 6: GS theories and methods

Cultivation and Agenda Setting/Audience Studies Gerbner's Mean World Syndrome; the psychology of horror, horror's audiences, social sciences study on adolescent motivations for viewing graphic horror.

Week 7: Writing workshop—Writing in the humanities and social sciences; Exam 1

Week 8: Horror, religion, changes in the psychology of advertising, and different bodies/eugenics in "The New World" of the early 1900s: Watch "Freaks"

Week 9: Horror, the Red Scare, and the Atomic Age of the 1950s: Watch "Invasion of the Body Snatchers"

Week 10: Horror, families, and positivism vs. transcendentalism in the 1970s

Watch "The Exorcist"

Week 11: Horror, hillbillies, and economic class: Watch "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre"

Week 12: Horrific white suburbs and the "Final Girl" in the 1980s: Watch "Halloween"

Week 13: Horror and neo-conservatism in the 1980s and 90s.: Watch "Hellraiser" (supplemented by a out-of-class lecture and class visit by Paul T. Taylor, the new "Pinhead" of the "Hellraiser" franchise)

Week 14: Horror and the post-9/11 United States: Watch "SAW"

Week 15: Horror and the "Post-Racial" United States: Watch "Get Out"

Week 16: Exam 2

#### **Course Description:**

Concentrated on American horror film from the 1930s to the present, the course will address the role of horror in the creation of stories told about the United States, its history, and its people. The course examines horror films rhetorically and social scientifically. Specifically, the course incorporates a rhetorical lens by exploring horror films as acts of constitutive rhetoric, that dramatize and interrogate the ways people use language and images to tell stories and foster identification within and between citizens and to constitute an "American identity." The course also incorporates a social scientific lens by examining horror films' association with identity/US identities using media effects theories, which include perspectives associated with audience use and reception. Both perspectives (rhetoric and media effects) are used to consider the roles of U.S. social, political, and economic contexts in the production/construction of horror films for the stories they tell and the characters they construct. For example, the course will examine the ways that American horror films respond to fear and anxiety in response to specific cultural contexts such as the emergence of science, xenophobia/marginalized populations, various social movements, economics, and war.

#### **The name(s) of the faculty member(s) responsible for the development of the course:**

1 Name: CHERYL NICHOLAS (CLN12)

Title:

Phone:

Address:

Campus: BK

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1 Name: EVELYN RAMSEY (emr10)

Title:

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## **Course Justification**

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#### **Instructional, Educational, and Course Objectives:**

**This section should define what the student is expected to learn and what skills the student will develop.**

1. Understand various perspectives of rhetorical and film theory as they relate to horror films from the United States;
2. Understand various social science theories regarding media effects, including audience reception and use of media;
3. Understand the relationship of horror films to social, political, and economic policies, decisions, assumptions and stories in the United States;
4. Understand the role that media plays in the construction of personal, group, and national identities in the United States;
5. Develop stronger oral and written discussion/debate/presentation skills; and
6. Develop stronger research and writing skills.

#### **Evaluation Methods:**

**Include a statement that explains how the achievement of the educational objective identified above will be assessed.**

**The procedures for determining students' grades should be specifically identified.**

How these assignments effectively evaluate the course objectives:

Students will be evaluated via weekly reading quizzes, weekly written assignments (critical questions), three exams, and a final project. First, we explain the assignments and then we discuss how the assignments effectively evaluate the course objectives.

1. Weekly reading quizzes: Quizzes based on the course readings will be created on Canvas and students will take the quizzes before class to help ensure students are keeping up with the reading. Because of the theoretical nature of the course, the quizzes will be written to reward students for reading rather than testing for complete content comprehension. Content comprehension will

be evaluated with the critical questions.

The quizzes are tied to course objectives 1 and 2.

2. Weekly writing assignments/Critical Questions: Most weeks we will assign a set of questions based on the course readings and/or film screenings. These questions will address issues in readings and film screenings and ask students to make connections, recognize contrasts, "connect the dots," and apply the readings to current politics and contexts. These questions will, in part, be the jumping off point for our class discussions of the readings and film screenings. It should be clear from student responses that they not only understood the readings, but that they were also creative and insightful in their responses. In order to receive full credit each week, responses will need to show genuine thought and integrity in the attempt to answer the questions. There will never be any specific "right answers," but rather answers that range from clearly communicating that students read the material to answers that communicate the opposite. Student responses are expected to meet the basic requirements of: evidence that they have read the material, evidence that they have answered the questions with integrity, and evidence of proper/effective writing. Average responses are 2-3 pages (double-spaced).

Weekly writing assignments will also include two outlines for proposed research papers, one in the humanities tradition and one in the social sciences tradition.

The weekly writing/critical question assignments are tied to objectives 1,2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

3. Exams: Each exam may include several forms of assessment, including True-False, Multiple-Choice, Short-Answer, and both long and shorter essay questions.

The exams are tied to objectives 1-6.

4. Final Project: Students will work on final projects linked specifically to their interests in terms of dissemination. Students may choose to write a traditional research paper in either the social sciences or humanities tradition. The research paper can be an extension of the research outline (see #2, weekly writing assignments). Other students who already possess digital or technological skills may choose to create a digital humanities project. For example, a student may opt to craft a website showcasing their research, engage in the creation of a Wikipedia entry on agreed upon topics, or create a database for future scholars and students to use in their own research. Students interested in film production may choose to create their own horror film. Digital humanities and film production projects will include written explanations of how the students engaged/used coursework in their final projects. Regardless of the type of final project, students will present their final projects to the class during finals week.

The final project is tied to objectives 1-6.

How these assignments effectively evaluate the course objectives:

1. Understand various perspectives of rhetorical and film theory as they relate to American horror films:

Quizzes on reading material will provide formative evaluation's of student understanding of basic course concepts and vocabulary. The quizzes will help students understand the extent to which they are reading effectively and comprehending basic concepts of rhetorical and film theory via their reading. They will also encourage students to complete readings before class time. The weekly critical questions will encourage students to think more deeply about core concepts in rhetorical and film theory and allow them to link those course concepts to class discussions and film screenings. These assignments will evaluate a student's understanding of the concepts by assessing the extent to which students are able to effectively apply rhetorical and film theory concepts to film screenings and outside viewings of films. The exams will again assess those core concepts of rhetorical and film theory, as well as assess the ability to more deeply integrate those concepts into examples and to link concepts learned over the semester together. The research-paper outline and final project will allow faculty to assess the ability of students to apply and demonstrate what they have learned about rhetorical and film theory, and associated methods, over the entire semester to historical and current horror media and political, social, and economic contexts in the United States.

2. Understand various social science theories regarding media effects, including audience reception and use of media:

Quizzes on reading material will provide formative evaluation's of student understanding of basic course concepts and vocabulary of social science audience reception studies. The quizzes will help students understand the extent to which they are reading effectively and comprehending basic concepts of social science theories of audience reception via their reading. They will also encourage students to complete readings before class time. The weekly critical questions will encourage students to think more deeply about core concepts of social science theories of media effects and allow them to link those course concepts to class discussions and film screenings. These assignments will evaluate a student's understanding of the concepts of social science audience studies by assessing the extent to which students are able to effectively apply social science theories of media effects to film screenings and outside viewings of films. The exams will again assess those audience reception theories in social science, as well as assess the ability to more deeply integrate those concepts into examples and to link concepts learned over the semester together. The research paper-outline and final project will allow faculty to assess the ability of students to apply and demonstrate what they have learned about social science media effects theories and associated methods over the entire semester to historical and current horror media and political, social, and economic contexts in the United States.

3. Understand the relationship of horror films to social, political, and economic policies, decisions, assumptions and stories:

The weekly critical questions will encourage students to think more deeply about the interplay of influence between specific horror films, different horror genres, and cultural context. These assignments will regularly ask students to apply their readings about an historical cultural context to the present, so that they can make links between the role of horror film in the construction of identity in the past and present. Like the critical questions, the exams will assess the ability of students to more deeply integrate those concepts into current examples and to link concepts learned over the semester together. The research-paper outline and final project will requires that students address cultural context and identity and allow faculty to assess the ability of students to apply and demonstrate what they have learned about the role of cultural context in the production and reception of horror films over the entire semester to historical and current horror media and political, social, and economic contexts in the United States.

4. Understand the role that media plays in the construction of personal, group, and national identities:

Weekly writing/critical questions will address issues of identity in readings and film screenings and ask students to make

connections, recognize contrasts, “connect the dots,” and apply the readings to current politics and contexts and the relationship they have to the construction of personal, group, and national identities. Like the critical questions, the exams will assess the ability of students to more deeply integrate what they've learned about identity and its relationship to media products (specifically horror, but these lessons can be applied to other genres of film and television) over the semester. The research paper-outline and final project will require that students analyze the interplay of influence between horror films and individual, group, and national identity.

**5. Development of oral and written discussion/debate/presentation skills:**

Student responses to weekly critical questions will guide, to a good extent, our discussions of course material. We understand that because of cultural norms, introverted tendencies, or other reasons, some students do not learn best via forced discussion, thus we will not link credit in the course to specific discussion requirements. Team-teaching the course, we will model and steer students towards effective discussion techniques. All students will, however, be required to craft a well-organized oral presentation of their final project.

**6. Development of research and writing skills:**

Students will practice constructing arguments and crafting well-written persuasive appeals in their weekly critical questions and exams. The final project, whether a formal paper or a digital/technological project will require a demonstration of more formal research and writing skills in either the social-science or humanities tradition. Weekly critical questions will require a minimum of 3 double-spaced pages, giving us the chance to assess student practice at clear, succinct, persuasive writing. Whether writing a research paper or creating a digital humanities or film production project, we will assess written discussion and debate skills in the writing that accompanies each project.

Weekly Reading Quizzes: 15%

Weekly Critical Questions (8): 25%

Exams (2 at 15%): 30%

Final Project: 30%

**Relationship/Linkage of Course to Other Courses:**

**This statement should relate the course to existing or proposed new courses. It should provide a rationale for the level of instruction, for any prerequisites that may be specified, or for the course's role as a prerequisite for other courses.**

This course provides General Education credit in Humanities and Social Science, but it is not otherwise required for any major or minor.

**Relationship of Course to Major, Option, Minor, or General Education:**

**This statement should explain how the course will contribute to the major, option, or minor and indicate how it may function as a service course for other departments.**

Students who are CAS majors cannot take this course for credit in the CAS major since it counts for General Education, unless they choose to take another Integrative Studies course in place of CAS 232. CAS and COMM majors who choose to take the course will have a firm foundation on which to continue their studies on popular culture/film/documentary (CAS) and the study and production of media (COMM). Students in areas such as sociology, psychology, political science, and even business and marketing will have a fundamental understanding of the role of media in the construction of individual and group identity as it relates to cultural contexts, as well as an understanding of how fear functions as a primary motivator for humans. All students will be exposed to different theoretical trajectories (and associated ways of thinking about theories) that underscore the humanities and social sciences. Students will also learn about basic philosophical differences in how domains such as the humanities and social sciences attempt to understand the social world.

**A description of any special facilities:**

Students interested in the creation of media products for their final projects will need access to computers, cameras, and software needed to create such projects. The course setting needs to be one comfortable for, and capable of, extended film screenings.

**Frequency of Offering and Enrollment:**

This course will be offered every odd fall semester. We choose fall because an upper-level course in the Rhetoric of Film is taught in spring. Thus, students can take CAS 232 in the fall and CAS 415 in the spring in the years it is offered if they are interested in doing so and have the appropriate semester standing.

## Alignment with General Education Objectives

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**✘ EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION** – the ability to exchange information and ideas in oral, written, and visual form in ways that allow for informed and persuasive discourse that builds trust and respect among those engaged in that exchange, and helps create environments where creative ideas and problem-solving flourish.

**✘ KEY LITERACIES** – the ability to identify, interpret, create, communicate and compute using materials in a variety of media and contexts. Literacy acquired in multiple areas, such as textual, quantitative, information/technology, health, intercultural, historical, aesthetic, linguistic (world languages), and scientific, enables individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, to lead healthy and productive lives, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.

**✘ CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL THINKING** – the habit of mind characterized by comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating a conclusion. It is the intellectually disciplined process of conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.

**✘ INTEGRATIVE THINKING** – the ability to synthesize knowledge across multiple domains, modes of inquiry, historical periods, and perspectives, as well as the ability to identify linkages between existing knowledge and new information. Individuals who engage in integrative thinking are able to transfer knowledge within and beyond their current contexts.

**CREATIVE THINKING** – the capacity to synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of performing, making, thinking, or acting in an imaginative way that may be characterized by innovation, divergent thinking, and intellectual risk taking.

**GLOBAL LEARNING** – the intellectually disciplined abilities to analyze similarities and differences among cultures; evaluate natural, physical, social, cultural, historical, and economic legacies and hierarchies; and engage as community members and leaders who will continue to deal with the intricacies of an ever-changing world. Individuals should acquire the ability to analyze power; identify and critique interdependent global, regional, and local cultures and systems; and evaluate the implications for people's lives.

**SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICAL REASONING** – the ability to assess one's own values within the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, describe how different perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Individuals should acquire the self-knowledge and leadership skills needed to play a role in creating and maintaining healthy, civil, safe, and thriving communities.

**What component(s) of the course will help students achieve the General Education Learning Objectives covered in the course? Provide evidence that students in the course have adequate opportunities to achieve the identified learning objectives.**

#### 1. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Students will gain effective written communication skills via the weekly critical questions, exams, outline, and the final project.

- o The critical questions in particular, are designed to help students develop strong and insightful arguments about course topics. In addition, some of the responses may be shared in class such that students get the opportunity to learn from each other.
- o The outlines will be used to develop the final paper. The instructors will work closely with students to help them develop a strong research paper (in either the GS or GH tradition) that "builds" on a previous assignment (the outline). This will help students learn about organizing and building frameworks for arguments.
- o Both the exams and final project will require that students demonstrate their knowledge via their written communication skills. Sample "A" papers/projects will be provided to students as guides/models for their work.
- o A writing workshop will be conducted as part of the class to help better students understand stylistic differences between humanities and social science writing.
- o Extensive feedback will be provided for all written class projects.

Students will gain effective oral communication skills via classroom discussions and the final project presentation.

- o Classroom discussions are an excellent place for learning communication skills. Students will get to observe and learn from how the instructors and other students discuss their perspectives on the course/course topics. In addition, students will be asked to elaborate or clarify their statements, where needed.
- o Since this is a communication (CAS) course, attention will be given how well students do oral presentation, from clear argumentation to strong visual presentations (e.g. PPT).

#### 2. KEY LITERACIES

Key literacies are focused on a) how research inquiry on horror film is accomplished differently and similarly in the humanities and social sciences, and b) on different contexts that influence how horror film constitutes and is constituted by social/national identity.

- o Students will gain textual, information/technology, historical, and aesthetic literacies through the study of humanities/social science theories, film techniques, strategies, and rhetorics as they are impacted by and impact social, political, and economic contexts.
- o Recognizing that there are different learner-types in the classroom, these key literacies will be taught to the class using a variety of methods, from traditional journal articles, to pop-culture readings, workshops, as well as video-based instruction (short instructional videos and documentaries). Students will also get the opportunity to watch (horror) films together as an academic-community; as such, they will learn about various ways to watch/experience films not only using the "lenses" of an academic, but also recognizing that they are part of a community that explores film in this way.
- o In addition, students will gain intercultural literacy through the focus on the role of film in the creation of individual, group, and national identity.

A large part of the course interrogates how various cultural "identities" (such as race, class, gender, ability, age) are represented and implicated in horror film. Students will explore how such representations shape cultural ideologies.

- o Students will be tested on their knowledge of key literacies through exams and reading quizzes, critical questions, and the term project. The instructors may also glean students' understanding/experience of key literacies through informal conversations (e.g. when discussing a film currently showing at the cinema/not on the course film list).

#### 3. CRITICAL & ANALYTICAL THINKING

Students will gain practice in critical and analytical thinking via the analysis of horror films as they relate to social, political, and economic contexts and the interplay of influence between these film and cultural context.

- o Students will learn conceptual and methodological paradigms that influence how humanities and social science scholars research film. Students will be introduced to collaborative and multi-methodological perspectives and asked to explore film analytically, critically and creatively.
- o Critical and analytical skills will be developed and tested through exams and reading quizzes, critical questions, and the term project. The instructors may also glean students' critical/analytical thinking through informal conversations (e.g. when discussing a film currently showing at the cinema/not on the course film list).
- o Classroom discussions are an excellent place for learning critical/analytical skills. Students will get to observe and learn from how the instructors and other students critically discuss their perspectives on the course/course topics. In addition, in these discussions, students will be asked to be more critical, make better arguments, show evidence and be self-reflexive, where needed.

- o Extensive feedback will be provided for projects involving critique/analysis.

#### 4. INTEGRATIVE THINKING

As earlier noted, key literacies in the course are focused on a how research inquiry on horror film is accomplished differently and similarly in the humanities and social sciences.

- o Students will practice integrative thinking via learning the rhetorical (humanities) and media effects/audience studies (social science) foci of horror film studies.
- o Students will learn different theoretical/meta-theoretical philosophies and methodologies that drive humanities and social scientific inquiry.
- o Students will learn key theories in each domain.

o Students will be asked to develop two outlines for inquiries to be accomplished in each area respectively (one of these outlines will be developed into the final paper/project).  
In addition, the course will analyze the first attempts to craft an American “national identity” before the horror genre was solidified and then continue by analyzing films from the 1930s to the present day, allowing for cultural and historical integrative thinking.  
o Students will learn about intersectional identities as a potential context for how to understand national identity.  
o Students will learn about the “fluidity” of history and memory, and critically explore questions that look at how history can be used to understand contemporary issues/problems.  
Critical and analytical skills will be developed and tested through exams and reading quizzes, critical questions, and the term project. The instructors may also glean students’ critical/analytical thinking through informal conversations (e.g. when discussing a film currently showing at the cinema/not on the course film list).

#### 5. CREATIVE THINKING

As part of their analysis of film, students will explore the formal elements of film, which includes “creative” components such as color, sound, and mise-en-scene.  
o These components can also be seen as key parts of analyses using a social sciences or humanities lens.  
Final projects will allow students to create written, technological, or filmic projects that encourage creativity in the creation of arguments, information, and/or entertainment linked to course content.  
o The instructors will help students think about ways to make their various assignments more creative, such that these projects could appeal to wider audiences.  
o These skills/and projects will be showcased at the end of the semester, when students present their final projects to the class. Creative approaches are also intrinsic to social sciences/humanities theory and research.  
o Both the humanities and social sciences support “innovative” approaches to inquiry and, research that encourages us to “think outside of the box.”  
Creative thinking skills will be developed and tested through class discussions, critical questions, and the term project. The instructors may also glean students’ creative thinking through informal conversations (e.g. when discussing a film currently showing at the cinema/not on the course film list).

#### 6. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICAL REASONING

The course considers ethical perspectives/imperatives that underscores the role of film in the creation of individual, group, and national identity. Students will engage in written and oral discussions of ethics as they relate to film production and the rhetoric of films as they relate to cultural context.  
o Students will be introduced to these discussions about ethics as part of the course key literacies.  
o For example, students will engage in discussions about the ethics of Cold War films, gender roles in horror films, representations of race in horror films, and representations of social class.  
o Students may choose to write about films and ethics in their responses to critical questions or in their term projects.  
o Students will also ethically and critically evaluate the interaction between film as practice and film as research, such that they better understand the role of film in society.  
o Classroom discussions are an excellent place for exploring ethical reasoning. Students will get a forum to test out ideas, practice ethical listening, and working through ethical dilemmas in support of ethical reasoning. This will be done under the guidance of the course instructors.  
o A key component of this course is self-reflexivity. Students will be asked to be self-reflexive (that is to interrogate their experiences, ideologies, and other factors that impact their interpretive lenses). Being self-reflexive is an important component in developing ethical reasoning.  
o In these discussions, students will also get to observe and learn from how the instructors and other students discuss their perspectives on the course/course topics.  
Social responsibility and ethical reasoning skills will be developed and tested through class discussions, exams, critical questions, and the term project. The instructors may also glean students’ understanding of these perspectives through informal conversations (e.g. when discussing a film currently showing at the cinema/not on the course film list).

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### How will students be assessed to determine their attainment of the Learning Objective(s) of General Education covered in this course? This assessment must be included as a portion of the student’s overall performance in this course.

Weekly Reading Quizzes: 15%  
Weekly Critical Questions (11): 25%  
Exams (2 at 15%): 30%  
Final Project: 30%

Effective communication skills: Weekly Critical Questions, including research-paper outline (25%); Exams (25%); and Final Project (30%).

Textual, information/technology, historical, intercultural, and aesthetic literacies: Weekly Reading Quizzes (15%); Weekly Critical Questions, including research-paper outline (25%); Exams (30%); and Final Project (30%)

Critical and analytical thinking: Weekly Critical Questions, including research-paper outline (25%); Exams (30%); and Final Project (30%)

Integrative thinking: Weekly Critical Questions, including research-paper outline (25%); Exams (30%); and Final Project (30%)

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## General Education Domain Criteria

General Education Designation: Inter-Domain

### GH Criteria

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Explain the methods of inquiry in humanities fields and describe how the contributions of these fields complement inquiry in other areas

- Demonstrate competence in critical thinking about topics and texts in the humanities through clear and well-reasoned responses**
- Critically evaluate texts in the humanities— whether verbal, visual, or digital— and identify and explain moral or ethical dimensions within the disciplines of the humanities**
- Demonstrate knowledge of major cultural currents, issues, and developments through time, including evidence of exposure to unfamiliar material that challenges their curiosity and stretches their intellectual range**
- Become familiar with groups, individuals, ideas, or events that have influenced the experiences and values of different communities**

**What components of the course will help students achieve the domain criteria selected above?**

CAS 232N students will become familiar with the work of a number of important scholars of the humanities/issues important to the humanities. Examples include:

Kenneth Burke: Identification and Consubstantiality  
 James White/Maurice Charland: Constitutive rhetoric  
 Antonio Gamsco: Hegemony and hegemonic sites of struggle  
 Various scholars: Ideology  
 Numerous scholars: Rhetorical criticism/writing about film  
 Kendall Phillips: Rhetoric of horror, film and national identity, film and cultural resonance

Students will be introduced to philosophical leanings and methods of inquiry used by humanities/rhetorical scholars. These methods will be compared to methods used in the social sciences as a way to differentiate between both domains. They will also learn about the metatheoretical perspectives that underscore the humanities, in order to understand/appreciate humanities-based method of inquiry.

Students use the work of humanities scholars to study/explore relevant culture contexts. As such, using a humanities lens, students will learn about history and how it's related to the present and future contexts; They will learn about a variety of cultural factors (e.g. economic, political, religious) that influenced the films of the past, while reflecting on how similar factors impact films today.

These rhetorical positions/humanities theories will require that students grapple with moral/ethical dimensions regarding horror film, including issues of representation, political ideology and social values. These issues are intrinsic to the cultural contexts that will be discussed in class.

Course assignments (e.g. weekly reading quizzes and critical questions) will require that students critically respond to selected topics (based on incorporating humanities perspectives).

Examples of cultural contexts that will be studied include:

- The clash of science, religion, and eugenics in the 1930s.
- The Red Scare, the Cold War, and debates over military vs. scientific means of dealing with issues/controversies that arose in the Atomic Age.
- Shifts in gender roles, economics, and the burgeoning suburbs
- Civil rights movements focused on Black Americans and women
- 70s environmental movement
- Divorce, changing gender roles
- Pandemics
- The post 9/11 world
- Great Recession of 2008/Occupy Wall Street
- President Obama and Black Lives Matter

(It is important to note here that similar cultural contexts will be used to fulfill GS criteria, except that perspectives incorporating a GS lens will be used instead).

**GS Criteria**

- Explain the various methods of inquiry used in the social and behavioral sciences and describe how the contributions of these fields complement inquiry in other areas**
- Identify and explain major foundational theories and bodies of work in a particular area of social and behavioral sciences**
- Describe the ways in which many different factors may interact to influence behaviors and/or institutions in historical or contemporary settings**
- Explain how social and behavioral science researchers use concepts, theoretical models and data to better understand and address world problems**
- Recognize social, cultural, political and/or ethical implications of work in the social and behavioral sciences**

**What components of the course will help students achieve the domain criteria selected above?**

CAS 232 students will become familiar with the work of a number of important scholars of the social sciences/issues important to the social sciences. Examples include:

Various Scholars: Early media models, such as Schramm, Lasswell  
 McCombs and Shaw: Agenda Setting  
 Gerbner: Media Cultivation  
 Noelle-Neumann: Spiral of Silence  
 Blumler and Katz: Uses and Gratification



CAS 232 students will become familiar major foundational theories/bodies of work that study the media using a social science lens; specifically, the class will focus on scholars who study media effects, including how audiences use and respond to media/film, based on specific cultural contexts.

While learning theories/perspectives related to media effects/social sciences perspectives in studying film, students will be introduced to intrinsic philosophical leanings and methods of inquiry used by social sciences scholars. Students will learn about following the “scientific path” while considering issues of objectivity, practicability/utility, and clear explanation of the data. These methods will be compared to methods used in the humanities to differentiate between both domains. They will also learn about the metatheoretical perspectives that underscore the social sciences, in order to understand/appreciate social-scientific-based methods of inquiry.

Students will read social scientific studies that relate to horror film to understand how scholars ask questions and do research in the social sciences, to respond to social/global issues. In these and other readings, students will be introduced to the application of concepts, models, and data, as practiced in the social sciences.

Students will use a social scientific lens to study/explore relevant socio-cultural contexts (see below). As such, students will explore how different factors influence or are influenced by the viewing of horror films; for instance, students may use theory to understand how a specific variable (e.g. age, religion, race, political affiliation) interacts with perceptions of “political appeals” in a horror film. (Note: These contexts will be used to explore how scholars ask questions and do research using both a social sciences and humanities perspective).

Course assignments (e.g. weekly reading quizzes and critical questions) will require that students critically respond to selected topics (based on incorporating social-scientific perspectives).

Examples of cultural contexts that will be studied include:

- The clash of science, religion, and eugenics in the 1930s.
- The Red Scare, the Cold War, and debates over military vs. scientific means of dealing with issues/controversies that arose in the Atomic Age.
- Shifts in gender roles, economics, and the burgeoning suburbs
- Civil rights movements focused on Black Americans and women
- 70s environmental movement
- Divorce, changing gender roles
- Pandemics
- The post 9/11 world
- Great Recession of 2008/Occupy Wall Street
- President Obama and Black Lives Matter

(It is important to note here that similar cultural contexts will be used to fulfill GH criteria, except that perspectives incorporating a GH lens will be used instead).

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## **Integrative Studies**

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**Explain how the intellectual frameworks And methodologies of the two Knowledge Domains will be explicitly addressed in the course and practiced by the students.**

SSStudents will engage in both theories and methodologies of GH and GS in their written work, discussions, and final project. They will use theoretical and critical lenses from both domains as they engage in the course’s films in multiple ways. We have designed the course so that it will have a good balance of both GH and GS perspectives, as follows:

Week 1: Introduction/Background

Course syllabus, icebreakers (75 mins)

Watch documentary: Nightmares in Red, White, and Blue: History of American Horror Films

(Introduce students to the study of horror film, explain the interdomain perspective of the course)

Week 2: Overview of GH/GS perspectives (KEY LITERACIES /INTEGRATIVE THINKING)

Students will be introduced to the basic assumptions/values of GH and GS traditions, and this will be the framework that will be used to build on the interdomain feature of the course.

Week 3: GH theories and methods (KEY LITERACIES in GH perspectives)

Film, Hegemony, Culture, and Identity (Burke’s Identification and Consubstantiality, Charland’s Constitutive rhetoric, and film’s relation to cultural context (Brummett and Cherry).

Week 4: GH theories and methods (KEY LITERACIES in GH perspectives)

Film, Archetypes, and Resonant Violation (Kendall Phillips)

Week 5: GS theories and methods (KEY LITERACIES in GS perspectives)

Early Media Models (DeFleur’s Magic Bullet and Katz’s Uses and Gratifications)

Week 6: GS theories and methods (KEY LITERACIES in GS perspectives)

Cultivation and Agenda Setting/Audience Studies Gerbner’s Mean World Syndrome; the psychology of horror, horror’s audiences, social sciences study on adolescent motivations for viewing graphic horror.

Week 7: Writing workshop—Writing in the humanities and social sciences;

Exam 1 (EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION/ CREATIVE, CRITICAL/ANALYTICAL THINKING)

Week 8: Horror, religion, changes in the psychology of advertising, and different bodies/eugenics in “The New World” of the early 1900s: Watch “Freaks”

(KEY LITERACIES /INTEGRATIVE THINKING)

Week 9: Horror, the Red Scare, and the Atomic Age of the 1950s: Watch "Invasion of the Body Snatchers"  
(KEY LITERACIES /INTEGRATIVE THINKING)

Week 10: Horror, families, and positivism vs. transcendentalism in the 1970s  
Watch "The Exorcist"  
(KEY LITERACIES /INTEGRATIVE THINKING)

Week 11: Horror, hillbillies, and economic class: Watch "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre"  
(KEY LITERACIES /INTEGRATIVE THINKING)

Week 12: Horrifying white suburbs and the "Final Girl" in the 1980s: Watch "Halloween"  
(KEY LITERACIES /INTEGRATIVE THINKING)

Week 13: Horror and neo-conservatism in the 1980s and 90s.: Watch "Hellraiser" (supplemented by a out-of-class lecture and class visit by Paul T. Taylor, the new "Pinhead" of the "Hellraiser" franchise) (KEY LITERACIES /INTEGRATIVE THINKING)

Week 14: Horror and the post-9/11 United States: Watch "SAW" (KEY LITERACIES /INTEGRATIVE THINKING)

Week 15: Horror and the "Post-Racial" United States: Watch "Get Out" (KEY LITERACIES /INTEGRATIVE THINKING)

Week 16: Exam 2

Connection to General Education Objectives:

- Students will gain textual, information/technology, historical, and aesthetic literacies through the study of humanities/social science theories, film techniques, strategies, and rhetorics as they are impacted by and impact social, political, and economic contexts. In addition, students will gain intercultural literacy through the focus on the role of film in the creation of individual, group, and national identity.
- Students will gain practice in critical and analytical thinking via the analysis of horror films as they relate to social, political, and economic contexts and the interplay of influence between these film and cultural context. Students will learn conceptual and methodological paradigms that influence how humanities and social science scholars research film. Students will be introduced to collaborative and multi-methodological perspectives and asked to explore film analytically, critically and creatively.
- Students will practice integrative thinking via the rhetorical (humanities) and social science foci of the course. In addition, the course will analyze the first attempts to craft an American "national identity" before the horror genre was solidified and then continue by analyzing films from the 1930s to the present day, allowing for historical integrative thinking.
- Students will gain effective written communication skills via the weekly critical questions, exams, outline, and the final project. They will gain effective oral communication skills via classroom discussions and the final project presentation.

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**Demonstrate that each Of the two domains will receive approximately equal attention, providing evidence from course topics, assignments, or other course components, and that students will integrate material from both domains.**

The first six week of class will be dedicated to learning about theories/perspectives in GH and GS, with approximately 3 weeks dedicated to each area respectively. The rest of the course will involve studying specific cultural factors that influence horror films in the past (e.g. Cold War, Red Scare, 70s environmental movement), while reflecting on how similar types of influences might impact audiences today. Students will explore how theories in GS and GH can be used to study/examine these influences in both past/present contexts.

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**Briefly explain the staffing plan. Given that each Inter-Domain course is approved for two Knowledge Domains, it will be taught by an instructor (or instructional team) with appropriate expertise in both domains.**

Both Dr. Ramsey and Dr. Nicholas are part of the Communication Arts and Sciences (CAS) program at Penn State Berks. CAS is an interdisciplinary program that is rooted in both the humanities and social sciences, therefore the interdomain characteristic already exists generally within this area of study. Dr. Ramsey is a rhetorician whose work is ingrained in the humanities (GH) while Dr. Nicholas is a social scientist (GS). Both Dr. Ramsey and Dr. Nicholas have significant research and teaching experience in film and identity studies.

The first year the course is taught, Drs. Ramsey (GH) and Nicholas (GS) will team teach the course so that each can learn from the expertise of the other. Both Drs. Ramsey and Nicholas have some expertise in the other domain. For example, while Dr. Ramsey primarily does her teaching and research work in the humanities, she has also taught courses with the GS designation. And while Dr. Nicholas is grounded in social sciences, she also teaches and has written about storytelling. Once we each feel comfortable with course content from both domains we will alternate teaching the course.

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**Describe the assessments that will be used to determine students' ability to apply integrative thinking.**

At multiple points in the semester, students will be expected to critically assess and communicate their findings about films screens in class using theories and methodologies from both GH and GS scholars. This work will happen in weekly critical questions including research-paper outline, on exams, and via the final project.

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## **General Education Designation Requirements**

### **Intercultural Requirements:**

By virtue of its focus on the construction of national and individual identities in the United States, this course will cultivate student knowledge surrounding ethnicity, race, class, religion, gender, physical/mental disability, age, sexual orientation, and other primary categories of identification. Because the course will be an historical survey of American horror film, students will engage topics and debates regarding how U.S. values, traditions, beliefs, and customs emerged, were defined, and were represented in and by American horror films. The historical survey structure will also ensure that students learn about U.S. cultural achievements and

human conditions from the early 1900s to the present day. A rhetorical focus on the construction of social identity will always focus on how one category of social identity is defined, in part, by what it is not. A social scientific focus starts by asking that students operationalize/define how we understand identity-categories such that they can be examined. The social scientific approach is also interested in how concepts (identities) interact with each other, and over time. Thus, students will regularly engage questions about how groups and individuals were and are encouraged to relate to one another in the United States from the early 1900s to present day.

## 2. Course Objectives and course content:

- a. Understand various perspectives of rhetorical and film theory as they relate to horror films from the United States;
- b. Understand various social science theories regarding media effects, including audience reception and use of media;
- c. Understand the relationship of horror films to social, political, and economic policies, decisions, assumptions and stories in the United States;
- d. Understand the role that media plays in the construction of personal, group, and national identities in the United States;
- e. Development of oral and written discussion/debate/presentation skills; and
- f. Development of research and writing skills.

### Week 1: Introduction/Background

Course syllabus, icebreakers (75 mins)

Watch documentary: Nightmares in Red, White, and Blue: History of American Horror Films

### Week 2: GH/GS and some GA theories

Film as rhetoric: (genre, characters, story, mise en scène, editing, cinematography, and sound)

### Week 3: GH theories and methods

Film, Hegemony, Culture, and Identity (Burke's Identification and Consubstantiality, Charland's Constitutive rhetoric, and film's relation to cultural context (Brummett and Cherry).

### Week 4: GH theories and methods

Film, Archetypes, and Resonant Violation (Kendall Phillips)

### Week 5: GS theories and methods

Early Media Models (DeFleur's Magic Bullet and Katz's Uses and Gratifications)

Week 6: Cultivation and Agenda Setting/Audience Studies Gerbner's Mean World Syndrome; the psychology of horror, horror's audiences, social sciences study on adolescent motivations for viewing graphic horror.

### Week 7: Writing workshop—Writing in the humanities and social sciences; Exam 1

Week 8: Horror, religion, changes in the psychology of advertising, and differing bodies/eugenics ("Freaks"): This section will focus on conflicts centered on the religious history of the United States and its shift toward a more science-based future, the changes in advertising that began the linking of consumption to personal identity, and the eugenics movement with its connection to religion, science, racism, and ablism.

Week 9: Horror, the Red Scare, and the Atomic Age of the 1950s ("Invasion of the Body Snatchers"): This section will focus on post world war two fears of nuclear war and communist invasion. More specifically, we will interrogate the ways that horror films represented debates between science and the military with regard to how to deal with the spread of communism and our new atomic age, as well as ways that horror films propagated and challenged McCarthyism during the Red Scare.

Week 10: Horror, families, and positivism vs. transcendentalism in the 1970s ("The Exorcist"): This section will focus on how horror films, responding to various important social movements in the 60s and 70s, engaged shifting ideas about sexuality, gender roles, and patriarchal notions of the nuclear family. It will also address these fundamental challenges to the status quo within the context of questions about positivism vs. transcendentalism as a means of dealing with the cultural changes of the 1960s and 70s.

Week 11: Horror, hillbillies, and economic class ("Texas Chainsaw Massacre"): This section will address the interplay of influence between the 70s environmental movement, economic shifts toward agribusiness that changed the nature of work for more agrarian communities, and the health problems associated with poor environmental quality and things like nuclear testing.

Week 12: Horrific white suburbs and the "Final Girl" in the 1980s ("Halloween"): This section will focus on "the final girl" and her relationship to the second wave of feminism and backlash against it. It will also address significant challenges to masculinity invited by feminism, the impact of divorce on families, the move to suburban life for many U.S. citizens, and whiteness as it relates to these topics, as well as horror film overall.

Week 13: Horror and neo-conservatism in the 1980s and 90s. ("Hellraiser" supplemented by a out-of-class lecture and class visit by Paul T. Taylor, the new "Pinhead" of the "Hellraiser" franchise). This section will focus on neo-conservatism and the "Religious Right" as it emerged in response to the tumultuous 1960s and 70s and its impact on films and notions of youth culture in the 1980s and 90s.

Week 14: Horror and the post-9/11 United States ("Saw"): This section will address important challenges to the U.S. national identity in response to the 9/11 terror attacks and a national military and intelligence response marked by claims of torture and other war crimes/human rights abuses.

Week 15: Horror and the "Post-Racial" United States ("Get Out"): This section will focus on claims of a post-racial United States after the election of Barack Obama and counter arguments against those claims.

## 3. Long course description:

Concentrated on American horror film from the 1930s to the present, the course will address the role of horror in the creation of stories told about the United States, its history, and its people. The course examines horror films rhetorically, as acts of constitutive rhetoric, that dramatize and interrogate the ways people use language and images to tell stories and foster identification within and between citizens and to constitute an "American identity." Connected to the study of the rhetorical functions of film, the course will also incorporate theories of media effects, including audience reception and use of media. These perspectives similarly explain how horror film influences and is influenced by cultural contexts. These theories also explore how audiences interpret and use horror film. Using both, a rhetorical and media effects lens, the roles of U.S. social, political, and economic contexts in the production/construction of horror films for the stories they tell and the characters they construct will also be considered. For example, the course will examine the ways that American horror films respond to fear and anxiety in response to specific cultural contexts such as the emergence of science, xenophobia/marginalized populations, various social movements, economics, and war. The course is invested in a systematic approach to studying film, following traditions of the humanities and social sciences.

This description makes clear that the course focuses on cultural context and horror films from the United States.

4. Students will maintain constant engagement and issues linked to understanding historical and present cultural contexts as they relate to U.S. identity. Because much of the discussion of social identity and rhetoric discusses how social identity definitions not only communicate what someone is, but also what a particular identity isn't, students will learn about how different social identities emerge and relate historically and presently in the United States. These discussions will also point to the many ways that different groups and social identities actually share more commonalities and differences, pointing to the value of pluralism and diversity in the United States. By virtue of learning about the cultural context in which films emerged, students will get ample opportunity to examine different cultural values, traditions, beliefs, and customs throughout U.S. history, as well as an understanding of how

those things were challenged by new contexts such as science, war, and social movements. Through our discussions of the means by which social identities are constructed and represented in horror films we will also examine the different values placed on different people, groups, and social identities. Understanding how social identities are often rhetorically constructed in popular media such as horror films, students will be challenged to reexamine their beliefs about people different from them, as well as how they engage with others whose identities are different than theirs.

Part of the critical assessment of horror films will be explicit discussions of how stereotypes and biases make their way into popular culture and thereby help individuals define "the other." Ideologies, including those that are racist, sexist, homophobic, classist, ableist, etc., are most powerful when they are least visible. This course will bring visibility to the means by which ideology becomes embedded in popular culture products like horror films thus enabling students to better critically assess representations presented to them about others and themselves in the media.

5. Because the weekly critical questions, exams, and final project will require students to engage in discussions of context and social identity, specifically identity is linked to United States citizenship, each of these assignments will effectively assess the extent to which students are understanding the complex relationships between these things in U.S. history and the present day.

## Campuses That Have Offered ( ) Over The Past 4 Years

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semester	AB	AL	BK	BR	BW	CR	DS	ER	FE	GA	GV	HB	HN	HY	LV	MA	NK	PC	SH	SL	UP	WB	WC	WS	XC	XP	XS	YK
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## Potential Impact

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### Pre-Requisites

is *listed as a pre-requisite or concurrent course* for the following courses:

Note: Not all courses may be listed here, due to lionpath requirement incompleation.

No pre-requisites or concurrent courses found

# CAS252N: Identity, Citizenship, and the Rhetoric of the American Horror Film

3 credits ; FALL 2019

Prerequisites: None

General Education Attributes: Inter-Domain GH/GS, US Cultures (US)

General Education Learning Objectives: 1) Effective Communication Skills; 2) textual, information/technology, historical, intercultural, and aesthetic literacies; 3) critical and analytical thinking; and, 4) integrative thinking.

Faculty:  Dr. Cheryl Nicholas Dr. Michele Ramsey	Office Hours:	Communication/Materials: (Faculty email) (Faculty phone number)  Make sure that email is checked daily. Note that course materials are posted on CANVAS.
Hutchings, Peter. <i>The Horror Film</i> . (Available as e-book via the PSU library or at the bookstore)		
Reading and materials on CANVAS as assigned		

WARNING: Most of the media texts for this class will include content rated “R” by the MPAA. Thus, some might find some of the film content objectionable, such as violence, obscene language, adult situations, partial nudity, and other typical elements of horror films. If any student feels that they will be uncomfortable with these elements of the course, they are encouraged to withdraw from the course.

**Students are not allowed to record any portion of this course without appropriate documentation from the Disability Services Office.**

## Course Overview:

Concentrated on American horror film from the 1930s to the present, this course will address the role of horror in the creation of stories told about the United States, its history, and its people. The course examines horror films rhetorically and social scientifically. Specifically, the course incorporates a rhetorical lens by exploring horror films as acts of constitutive rhetoric, that dramatize and interrogate the ways people use language and images to tell stories and foster identification within and between citizens and to constitute an “American identity.” This course also incorporates a social scientific lens by examining horror films’ association with identity/US identities using media effects theories, which include perspectives associated with audience use and reception. Both perspectives (rhetoric and media effects) are used to consider the roles of U.S. social, political, and economic contexts in the production/construction of horror films for the stories they tell and the characters they construct. For example, the course will examine the ways that American horror films respond to fear and anxiety based on specific cultural contexts such as the emergence of science, xenophobia/marginalized populations, various social movements, economics, and war.

**Course Objectives:** At the end of the course, the student should:

- Understand various perspectives of rhetorical and film theory as they relate to horror films from the United States;
- Understand various social science theories regarding media effects, including audience reception and use of media;
- Understand the relationship of horror films to social, political, and economic policies, decisions, assumptions and stories in the United States;
- Understand the role that media plays in the construction of personal, group, and national identities in the United States;
- Develop stronger oral and written discussion/debate/presentation skills; and
- Develop stronger research and writing skills.

## **Attendance Policy:**

The College expects you to attend class regularly and so do we. You are adults, however, and so we leave decisions about class attendance to your discretion. Because there is no attendance policy in this class, we will give students who miss class any information regarding what was covered during a missed session unless provided with documentation proving an unavoidable absence. You are encouraged to find someone in class who can give you information if you should you have to miss a **day**—switch phone numbers and keep each other informed. You are also encouraged to look over CANVAS site for any announcements or emails you might miss. The flip side of enjoying the freedom to make your own attendance decisions is the responsibility of finding out what you missed when you are **absent**—**when you miss class keeping up is solely your responsibility.**

## **Academic Integrity:**

This course follows the College's academic integrity policies. There is a zero-tolerance policy against all forms of academic dishonesty. Please see the College website regarding academic integrity: (<https://berks.psu.edu/academic-integrity-policy>), for important information regarding students' rights and responsibilities.

## **Note to students with disabilities :**

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Please contact Michelle Peasely, Student Disability Resources Coordinator, at [mns136@psu.edu](mailto:mns136@psu.edu) or 610-396-6410. Her office is located in 169 Franco. Please visit the website for further details related to the Student Disability Resource office (<http://berks.psu.edu/student-disability-resources>) and documentation guidelines (<http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/guidelines> ) In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the Student Disability Resources Coordinator, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation.

**Assignments:** Students will receive more information on each assignment in class.

**Weekly Reading Quizzes:** There will be weekly quizzes on the reading material. They will cover the basic concepts in each chapter and are intended as a means to reward those who have read the assigned material. **The quizzes are on CANVAS and must be taken prior to the date and time that they are due. You have 20**

minutes to take your quiz. The latest a student can begin a quiz is at 5:30pm on the day that it is due. We will drop 3 quizzes to account for illness, technology problems, or other issues.

**Critical Questions** : Students will be asked to respond to 11 sets of questions based on the course readings and/or film screenings. These questions will address issues in readings and film screenings and ask students to make connections, recognize contrasts, and apply the readings to current politics and contexts. These questions will, in part, be the jumping off point for class discussions of the readings and film screenings. It should be clear from your responses that you not only understood the readings, but that you were also creative and insightful in your response. In order to receive full credit each week, responses will need to show genuine thought and integrity in the attempt to answer the questions. Student responses are expected to meet the basic requirements of: evidence that you have read the material, evidence that you have answered the questions with integrity, and evidence of proper/effective writing. Average responses are 2-3 pages (double-spaced). *Critical questions are due at the beginning of class and cannot be turned in via email.* To account for illness, technology, or other problems, we will drop 1 critical question. ***Please bring two copies of your CQ to class with you.***

**Exams** : The exams in this course will contain a mixture of multiple choice, matching, true/false, short answer, and essay questions. The exams will not be cumulative. Students will receive a review sheet for each exam one week prior to the exam date. There are no make-up exams in the course.

**Final Project** : Students will work on final projects linked specifically to their interests. Students may choose to write a traditional research paper in either the social sciences or humanities tradition. The research paper can be an extension of the research outline. Other students who already possess digital or technological skills may choose to create a digital humanities project. For example, a student may opt to craft a website showcasing their research, engage in the creation of a Wikipedia entry on agreed upon topics, or create a database for future scholars and students to use in their own research. Students interested in film production may choose to create their own horror film. Digital humanities and film production projects will include written explanations of how the students engaged/used coursework in their final projects.

## **Grade Distribution :**

Weekly Reading Quizzes: 15%  
Weekly Critical Questions (11): 25%  
Exams (2 at 15%): 30%  
Final Project: 30%

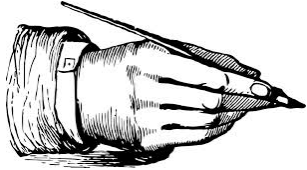

**The Writing Center:** The Writing Center (located in Franco 167) is a free resource for members of the Penn State Berks community. At the writing center, a trained writing tutor will work with you at any point in the writing process from brainstorming ideas to polishing a final draft. Appointments are strongly recommended, but walk-ins will be accepted on a limited, first-come first-serve basis. For more information or to make an appointment, call (610) 396-6333 or (610) 396-6029, email [bk-writingcenter@psu.edu](mailto:bk-writingcenter@psu.edu) or stop by Franco 167.

**Course Schedule** : The following is the tentative course schedule for the class. Because enrollment numbers change and weather issues are beyond our control, the instructor(s) reserve the right to make changes to this schedule when necessary. **You are expected to have the readings completed for the day they are assigned.**


(note: Due to the number and length of film screenings, course works best as an evening course 2.5 hours that runs once a week. While the following schedule is based on this premise, it can also be broken down for a 1 hour 15 min course to be run twice a week with some modifications .)


Date	Topic(s)	Assignment(s)
WEEK 1	Introduction to the Course	Course syllabus/Getting to know the class and each other  <u>Watch:</u> Watch: <i>Nightmares in Red, White, and Blue: History of American Horror Films</i> on Kanopy  <u>Read:</u> Littlejohn and Foss
WEEK 2  <b>GH focus</b>	Film as Rhetoric (genre, characters, story, <i>mise en scène</i> , editing, cinematography, and sound)  <i>Faculty may want to read the Altman essay on CANVAS for help in shaping the discussion on genre</i>	<u>Read:</u> CH 1 in Hutchings: Defining Horror CH 6 in Hutchings: The Sounds of Horror CH 7 in Hutchings: Performing Horror  <b>Quiz #1 due</b>  <b>CQ #1 due (documentary)</b>
WEEK 3  <b>GH focus</b>	Film, Hegemony, Culture, and Identity  <i>Faculty not familiar with Kenneth Burke's notions of identification and consubstantiality or James Boyd White/Charland's notion of constitutive rhetoric may want to look into those concepts for this section</i>	<u>Watch on YouTube via CANVAS:</u> <i>Hegemony: 10min</i>  <u>Read:</u> Brummett: What Popular Films Teach Us About Values  Cherry: Horror and the Cultural Moment  Ramsey: Protecting Patriarchy: The Myths of Capitalism and Patriotism in <i>The People vs. Larry Flynt</i>  <b>Quiz #2 due</b>
WEEK 4  <b>GH focus</b>	Rhetoric, Archetypes, and Resonant Violation  <i>Faculty not familiar with Phillips's notion may want to read the "Introduction" to his book "Projected Fears"</i>	<u>Read:</u> CH 2 in Hutchings: A World of Monsters  Phillips: <i>The Exorcist</i> and <i>The Texas Chainsaw Massacre</i>  <b>Quiz #3 due</b>  <b>CQ #2 due (Hutchings and Phillips)</b>




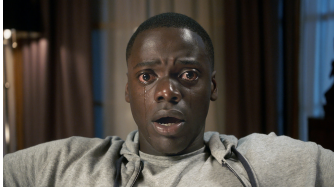
<p>WEEK 5</p> <p>GS focus</p>	<p>Early Media Models/Uses and Gratifications</p>	<p>Read:</p> <p><u>DeFleur</u>: Magic Bullet Theory of Uniform Effects</p> <p>Griffin: Katz's Uses and Gratifications,</p> <p><b>Quiz #4 due</b></p> <p><b>CQ #3 due at beginning of class (proposal for research paper in the humanities)</b></p>
<p>WEEK 6</p> <p>GS focus</p>	<p>Cultivation and Agenda Setting/Audience Studies</p>	<p><u>Watch</u>: <i>The Mean World Syndrome</i> on Kanopy</p> <p>Read:</p> <p><u>CH 3</u> in Hutchings: All the Mind? The Psychology of Horror</p> <p>Johnson: Adolescents Motivations for Viewing Graphic Horror</p> <p>CH 4 in Hutchings: Terror in the Aisles: Horror's Audiences</p> <p><b>Quiz #5 due</b></p>
<p>WEEK 7</p>	<p>Writing workshop: Writing in the humanities and social sciences</p> 	<p><u>Explore MLA writing: Penn State Libraries (online)</u></p> <p><a href="http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/mlacitation">http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/mlacitation</a>,  <a href="http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/apaquickguide">http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/apaquickguide</a></p> <p><b>CQ #4 due at beginning of class (proposal for research paper in the social sciences)</b></p> <p><b>EXAM #1</b></p>
<p>WEEK 8</p>	<p>Horror, religion, changes in the psychology of advertising, and differing bodies/eugenics</p> 	<p><u>Watch</u>: <i>Freaks</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <p><u>CH 5</u> in Hutchings: Dealing with Difference</p> <p>Larsen and Haller: The case of <i>Freaks</i>: Public reception of real disability</p> <p><b>Quiz #6 due</b></p>

<p>WEEK 9</p>	<p>Horror, the Red Scare, and the Atomic Age of the 1950s</p> 	<p><u>Watch:</u> <i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u>  <u>Worland:</u> Horror in the Age of Anxiety</p> <p>Jancovich: Alien Forms: Horror and Science Fiction in the 1950s</p> <p>Quiz #7 due</p> <p>CQ #5 due (<i>Freaks</i>)</p>
<p>WEEK 10</p>	<p>Horror, families, and positivism vs. transcendentalism in the 1970s</p> 	<p><u>Watch:</u> <i>The Exorcist</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u>  <u>CH 8</u> in Hutchings: Modern Horror and the 1970s</p> <p>Frentz and Farrall: Conversion of America's Consciousness: The Rhetoric of <i>The Exorcist</i></p> <p>Quiz #8 due</p> <p>CQ # 6 due (<i>IBS</i>)</p>
<p>WEEK 11</p>	<p>Horror, Hillbillies, and Economic Class</p> 	<p><u>Watch:</u> <i>The Texas Chainsaw Massacre</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u>  <u>Sharrett:</u> The Idea of Apocalypse in <i>The Texas Chainsaw Massacre</i></p> <p>Quiz #9 due</p> <p>CQ #7 due (<i>The Exorcist</i>)</p>

WEEK 12	<p>Horrific white suburbs and the “Final Girl” in the 1980s</p> 	<p>Watch: <i>Halloween</i></p> <p>Read:  <u>CH 9</u> in Hutchings: Slashers and Post-slashers</p> <p>Clover: Her body, Himself</p> <p>Trencansky: Final girls and Terrible Youth</p> <p>Coleman: We Always Die First: Invisibility, Racial Red-Lining, and Self-Sacrifice</p> <p>Quiz #10 due</p> <p>CQ #8 due (<i>The TCM</i>)</p>
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WEEK 13	<p>Horror and neo-conservatism in the 1980s and 90s</p> 	<p>Watch: <i>Hellraiser</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <p>Sharrett: Horror Film in Neoconservative Culture</p> <p>Cherry: Broken Homes, Tortured Flesh: Hellraiser and the Feminine Aesthetic of Horror Cinema</p> <p>Quiz # 11 due</p> <p>CQ #9 due (<i>Halloween</i>)</p>
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WEEK 14	<p>Horror and the Post-9/11 United States</p> 	<p>Watch: <i>SAW</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <p>Earle: Torture Porn: Conceptualizing a Current Trend in Graphic Imagery</p> <p>Jones: “Ladies First”? Torture, Porn, Sex, and Misogyny</p> <p>Quiz #12 due</p> <p>CQ #10 due (<i>Hellraiser</i>)</p>
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WEEK 15	<p style="text-align: center;">Horror and the “Post-Racial” United States</p> 	<p><u>Watch:</u> <i>Get Out</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u></p> <p>Lansberg: Horror vérité: politics and history in Jordan Peele’s <i>Get Out</i> (forthcoming)</p> <p>Benjamin: <i>Get Out</i> and the death of White Racial Innocence</p> <p><b>Quiz #13 due</b></p> <p><b>CQ #11 due (<i>Saw</i>)</b></p>
Week 16	Finals week	<b>EXAM #2</b>



**Readings:**

1. Littlejohn, S., & Foss, K. (2010) The Process of Inquiry in Communication. *Theories of Human Communication*, Waveland Publishing (10th ed.)
2. Brummet, B. (2013). What popular films teach us about values: Locked inside with the rage virus, *Journal of Popular Film & Television*, 41 (2), (pp. 61-67)
3. Cherry, B. (2009). Horror and the Cultural Moment. *Horror*. New York: Routledge
4. Ramsey, E. M. (2005). Protecting Patriarchy: The Myths of Capitalism & Patriotism in *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, *Feminist Media Studies*, 5(2), 197-211.
5. Phillips, K. R. (2005). *The Exorcist* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. *Projected Fears*. New York: Praeger.
6. Defleur, M. (2010). Magic Bullet Theory of Uniform Effects. *Mass Communication Theories: Explaining Origins, Processes and Effects* New York: Routledge.
7. Griffin, Ledbetter, Sparks, & Langan (2018). *Katz's Uses and Gratifications. A First Look at Communication Theory*. New York: McGraw Hill.
8. Johnson, D. (1995) Adolescents Motivations for Viewing Graphic Horror. *Human Communication Research*, 21(4), 522-552.
9. Larsen, R., & Haller, B. (2002). The case of Freaks: Public reception of real disability, *Journal of Popular Film & Television*, 29 (4), 164-172.
10. Worland, R. (2006). Horror in the Age of Anxiety. *The Horror Film: An Introduction*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
11. Jancowich, M. (1992). Alien Forms: Horror and Science Fiction in the 1950s. *Horror*. London: Batsford Publishing

12. Frenzt, T.S. and Farrell, T.B. (1975). The Rhetoric of *The Exorcist*. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* (61), 40-47
13. Sharrett, C. (2004). The idea of apocalypse in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. *Planks of Reason: Essays on the Horror Film* (B. Grant, & C. Sharrett, Eds.), Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
14. Clover, C. (1992). Her Body/Himself. *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. Boston, MA: Princeton University Press.
15. Trecansky, S. (2001) Final girls and terrible youth: Transgression in 1980 slasher horror. *Journal of Popular Film & Television*, 29(2), (pp.63-73).
16. Means Coleman, R. (2011). We Always Die First: Invisibility, racial red-lining, and self-sacrifice. *Horror noire: Blacks in American horror films from the 1890s to present*. New York: Routledge.
17. Sharrett, C. (2010). The horror film in neo-conservative culture. *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 21(3), 100-110.
18. Cherry, B. (2005). Broken homes, tortured flesh: *Hellraiser* and the feminine aesthetic of horror cinema. *Film International* 3(5), 10-16.
19. Earle, D. (2008). Torture porn: Conceptualizing a current trend in graphic imagery. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, 20 November, San Diego, CA.
20. Jones, S. (2013). "LadiesFirst"? Torture, Porn, Sex, and Misogyny. *Torture Porn: Torture Horror after SAW* UK: Palgrave
21. Lansberg, A. (2017). Horror vérité: Politics and history in Jordan Peele's *Get Out*. *Continuum*.
22. Benjamin, R. (March 27, 2017). *Get Out* and the death of white racial innocence. *The New Yorker*.