

Vampire: Blood and Empire Slavic 0880

Dr. Lisa Di Bartolomeo

Office: 1420A CL

Phone: 624-5711

Office hours: Tuesdays 11-11:50AM, Thursdays 12-12:50PM, and by
appointment

T/H 2:30-3:45 PM

Langley A221

Email: ldibart+@pitt.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the phenomenon of vampirism in verbal and visual culture from different periods in various cultures (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Russia, Serbia, France, England, America, Africa and the Caribbean). Why do vampires capture the imagination especially of Anglophone readers and viewers? What qualities does the vampire incarnate? Which historical events or customs have triggered particular enthusiasm for depicting the undead? How has the depiction of the vampire evolved over centuries? Our discussions will address these and related issues as we analyze stories, novels, films, legends, fairy tales, television shows, and historical studies, focusing on vampires from a variety of critical perspectives and contextualizing the works in the cultures that produced them.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The number of students enrolled in this class is, you will notice, very large. The requirements have been modified to suit that fact. Students are required (1) to complete the assignments scheduled for each class meeting (read a specified text or view a specified film) and be prepared to discuss them on the pertinent day; (2) to participate actively and intelligently, on a REGULAR basis, in class discussions; (3) to take the three scheduled exams, as well as the regular, unannounced quizzes administered throughout the semester; (4) on 18 November, to submit a two- to three-page paper, written from the viewpoint of a vampire, on the psychological conflicts encountered by a vampire who is also a politician OR an actor. This typed, double-spaced paper may be an essay, a story, a diary entry, a letter, or a confession. Although the paper taps into your creativity, it must observe

the rules of correct English and standard paper format (consult the MLA Handbook if you are unfamiliar with those conventions).

CREDITS AND ATTENDANCE

This course carries three credits and satisfies the CAS requirement in a foreign culture. It meets twice a week throughout the semester and combines lecture and discussion format. Since attendance is critical to course performance, eight absences automatically translate into an F for the course. If serious illness prevents class attendance, documentation of that fact must be presented in the form of a doctor's letter, stating that **ON THE DAY AT THE TIME THE CLASS MEETS** the student was too ill to attend. **These letters must be submitted to the instructor on the day the student returns to class;** otherwise they will not be accepted.

Students are responsible for finding out **FROM THEIR CLASSMATES** whether important information or materials circulated during a session that they missed. Therefore students should exchange phone numbers and email addresses with someone in class.

**Classmate's phone number: _____, email:
_____**

I strongly encourage anyone experiencing problems in the course to make an appointment with me during my office hours (see above).

Website:

This course has a website, which also contains my daily PowerPoint slides, the current syllabus, as well as sundry visuals and links to other vampire-relevant sites. Each day before class, I suggest you print out the slides for that day and bring them with you to class; this will facilitate your note-taking. I shall appreciate information from students regarding additional sites and visuals. Moreover, I encourage students to bring into class and share with the group any materials (music, visuals, etc.) connected with vampirism that may be of interest to the group.

Grading:

Grades will be based on the QUALITY of student performance in the following: (1) class discussions—20%; (2) five best scores on unannounced quizzes—25%; (3) three exams—39%; (4) brief vampire paper—16%.

NOTE: ***ANYONE INCAPABLE OF REGULAR, ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS SHOULD NOT STAY ENROLLED IN THIS COURSE. SERIOUSLY. I'M NOT KIDDING.***

Make-up exams will only be administered once, during my office hours, and will consist entirely of essay answers. There is no make up make up. Quizzes may not be made up. If you miss a quiz owing to absence, you will receive a zero for that quiz. If you miss an exam and fail to make it up on the scheduled day, you will receive a zero for the exam. There are NO EXCEPTIONS.

Academic Integrity:

By remaining enrolled in this course, you agree not only to abide by the above stipulations, but also understand that the instructor will follow with the utmost rigor the rules spelled out in the Handbook on Integrity regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc. It is the students' responsibility to familiarize themselves with these regulations and to observe them. Any infraction will be penalized according to these rules. PLEASE NOTE THAT SIGNING THE ATTENDANCE SHEET FOR A CLASSMATE IS EASY TO DETECT, CONSTITUTES A VIOLATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, AND WILL BE PENALIZED ACCORDINGLY.

READINGS AND VIEWINGS

The following is a daily schedule of our class activities and assignments. The combination *HW indicates an assignment to be completed for the following day of class, as homework for the next day indicated. Some videos will be viewed in class, others outside of class by the date specified in the syllabus: rent the video or watch it in Hillman Library, where the films and videos for this course are on Reserve. As far as is possible, I have tried to arrange for a viewing time and place outside class for each film so assigned, to enable students to view the required film for free without having to wrestle with everyone else needing to watch it at Hillman. See the syllabus for a schedule of these screenings.

The designation (D) refers to the Norton Critical Edition of *Dracula*, which, apart from the text of Stoker's novel, contains critical essays (#3 below).

(AR) references the collection of stories edited by Alan Ryan (#2 below).

The notation (CP) refers to Xeroxes either distributed in class or contained in the course pack (#5 below).

Required texts:

1. Raymond T. McNally & Radu Florescu. *In Search of Dracula. The History of Dracula and Vampires*. Boston/NY: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992/1994.
2. Alan Ryan. *The Penguin Book of Vampire Stories*. NY: Penguin Books, 1988.
3. Nina Auerbach & David J. Skal, eds. *Dracula: Bram Stoker*. NY/London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997.
4. Anne Rice. *Interview with the Vampire*. NY: Ballantine Books, 1997.
5. Course pack, to be purchased at the University Bookstore.

Daily Schedule

August

T 26. Introduction: distribution of syllabi, practical matters. *SIGNS OF THE VAMPIRE*: accoutrements, setting, activities, prophylactics. *HW: (to be completed for Thursday): Read: folktales "The Vampire" and "The Soldier and the Vampire" (CP); recorded legends Jan Perkowski (CP); Felix J. Oinas, "East European Vampires" (CP); McNally and Florescu, pp. 117-32, and 193-219.

H 28. Significance and diversity of *APPROACHES*: historical, political, social, religious, psychological/sexual, medical, metaphorical, synthetic. *FOLKTALES, LEGENDS, MYTHS IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE*. *HW: Read: McNally & Florescu, pp. 15-42, and 60-103.

September.

T 2. *HISTORICAL* basis: Vlad Tepes & Erszebet (Elizabeth) Bathory. Clips of *Dark Prince* (2000). (This is available at Hillman or at most rental

stores, for those who like what they see.) *HW: Read: John Polidori, "The Vampyre" (1819) (AR=Alan Ryan collection, pp. 7-24); Thomas Ligotti, "The Lost Art of Twilight" (1987) (Xerox); Chelsea Quinn Yarbo, "Cabin 33" (1980) (AR 451-504).

H 4. Gothic and (neo-)Romantic period: spirituality, search for the ineffable, immortality through art, maximal individualism (polarization), Satanism. VAMPIRE AS ARISTOCRAT AND ARTIST/AESTHETE.

*HW: Read: Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897) (D): pp. 9-132.

T 9. MODERN VAMPIRE: *Dracula* on page and screen. Begin discussion of *Dracula*. *HW: Read: Christopher Craft, "Kiss Me with Those Ruby Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" (D): 444-59; and Stoker, *Dracula* (D): 133-240.

H 11. STOKER'S DRACULA. Empire and alterity, patriarchal male bonding; female as "weak vessel," object of rescue. If women are penetrated by an alien force to which they submit, are men next in line? Medical and legal men as authorities. Invaded borders and empire. "Possession." The New Woman (Mina's shorthand) in Stoker's misogynistic framework. Victorian science. Theories of evolution (Darwin); colonization. *HW: Read Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 241-327, and Phyllis A. Roth, "Suddenly Sexual Women in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" (D): 411-21.

T 16. STOKER'S DRACULA. Finish discussion of novel. *HW: Read: Carol A. Senf, "Dracula: The Unseen Face in the Mirror" (D): 421-31; Stephen D. Arata, "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization" (D): 462-70; Franco Moretti, "[A Capital *Dracula*]" (D): 431-44.

H 18. DRACULA critiques. Discussion of critical articles. *HW: Read: Bram Dijkstra, ["*Dracula's* Backlash"] (D): 460-62; be familiar with the handout of film terms and concepts. They will help you understand the films we watch—and, surprise, will also show up on exams.

T 23. NOSFERATU. F.W. Murnau, *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*

(1922), with Max Shreck (68 minutes, in class). Alterity of a stereotypical Jewish appearance—visual impact; forces of light versus darkness (rodents, disease, etc.) in German Expressionist mode.

- H 25. NOSFERATU. Finish discussion of Murnau's film. Watch clips of Werner Herzog, *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979), with Klaus Kinski. (This film is also on reserve if you would like to watch it in its entirety.) Polarization of aesthetics: the frisson of "beauty and the beast" contrast as part of decadence and disease, rodents and plague (evolutionary scale). The tragic vampire, parallelism of opposites. *HW: Study for Exam 1!

T 30. General Discussion. EXAM 1.

October.

- H 2. Tod Browning, *Dracula* (1931), with Bela Lugosi—video (75 minutes) in class. Signalling alterity through sound: foreign accent as non-assimilation. *HW: Read: Nina Auerbach, "Vampires in the Light" (D): 389-404.

- T 7. Hammar Studio Draculas and Christopher Lee. Stage Draculas Bela Lugosi and Frank Langella. Discussion of Lugosi's characterization, compared with Lee (shown in clips in class), in Terence Fisher's *Dracula/Horror of Dracula* (1958). (The film is on reserve.) More explicit eroticisation: Drac as mesmerizing icon. *HW: View John Badham, *Dracula* (1979), with Frank Langella—video (109 minutes). Watch at home, on reserve, or at the screening (time and place to be announced).

- H 9. John Badham, *Dracula* (1979), with Frank Langella. Romantic sexualization through body type, gesture, attire, style, baby. The melancholy, tragic vampire in an era of feminism. Discussion of all three (1931, 1958, 1979) embodiments of Stoker's count What distinguishes one Drac from the next? What links them? *HW: Watch Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, at home, on reserve, or at the special screening (TBA).

- T 14. Discuss Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 film, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*.
 *HW:
 Read in CP: Diane DeKelb-Rittenhouse, "Sex and the Single Vampire: The Evolution of the Vampire Lothario and Its Representation in *Buffy*," (CP): 143-152; Zoe-Jane Playden, "What You Are, What's to Come: Feminism, Citizenship and the Divine," (CP): 120-147. Buffy articles.
- H 16. BUFFY-LICIOUS. View in class "Buffy versus Dracula." "Buffy the Vampire Slayer": Female empowerment, female heroism, demons as psychological issues made manifest.
 *HW: If you'd like to watch *Blacula*, rent it or watch it on reserve.
- T 21. View clips of *Blacula* (1972, William Crain) and discuss. Blaxploitation meets Vampirism. *HW: Read Alan Ryan, "Following the Way" (AR 562-73).
- H 23. Vampirism as religion. Discuss "Following the Way." Watch "Buffy the Vampire Slayer": "Lie to Me." Discuss vamps as cult objects.
 *HW: Read: N.V. Gogol, "Viy" (1835) (Xerox); Bram Stoker, "Dracula's Guest" (1914) (AR 163-74, also in (D)); "C.L. Moore, "Shambleau" (1933) (AR 255-81).
- T 28. Female Vampirism. Woman as figure of sexual power, set up to be destroyed. *HW: Study for Exam 2.
- H 30. Exam 2. Turn in extra credit to date. *HW: Read: J. Sheridan Le Fanu, "Carmilla" (1871-72) (AR 71-137), Andrea Weiss, "The Vampire Lovers" (1992) (CP).

November.

- T 4. Lesbian Vampirism. Discuss "Carmilla." Watch clips of Roy Ward Baker, *The Vampire Lovers* (1970/1): an aesthetics on loan from male pornography: the male delectation of semi-dressed "femininity" versus the hero as representative of safe and "normal" status quo. *HW: View Tony Scott's, *The Hunger* (1983) at home or on reserve; or come to the screening (TBA).

- H 6. Lesbian Vampirism. View clips of Harry Kümel, *Daughters of Darkness* (1971); Use of color dissolves and combinations. Symmetrical contrasting couplings. Male sexuality versus lesbianism. Discuss *The Hunger*: recasting oppositions: hot versus cold; dark versus light; sound versus sight. Music as thematic organizer (style versus mode of life). Darwinism, power play, AIDS. *HW: Anne Rice, *Interview with the Vampire* (1976): up to p. 168.
- T 11. Vampire Revival in the Late 20th Century. Subjectivity, homoeroticism, AIDS. Vampire as existential seeker; identity crisis; family and communal imperatives; womanhood and maturity. Clips from "Angel."
*HW: Finish reading Rice, *Interview with the Vampire*.
- H 13. Finish discussion of *Interview*. *HW: Watch Neil Jordan, *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) at home, on reserve, or at the special screening (TBA); also, read Sandra Tomc, "Dieting and Damnation: Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*," (from *Blood Read*, eds. Joan Gordon & Veronica Hollinger [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997]), pp. 95-113 (CP).
- T 18. Discussion of Jordan's film version of *Interview*. Clips from "Angel."
*HW: Finish your Vampire paper; watch *Blade* at home, on reserve, or at the screening (TBA).
- H 20. Vampire papers due! Discuss *Blade* (1998, Stephen Norrington). Also, vampires in reggae music: white man as exploiter/vampire. *HW: Watch *The Lost Boys* (1987, Joel Schumacher) at home, on reserve, or at the screening (TBA); also, read in CP Nicola Nixon, "When Hollywood Sucks, or, Hungry Girls, Lost Boys, and Vampirism in the Age of Reagan" (115-128), and Rob Latham, "Consuming Youth: The Lost Boys Cruise Mallworld" (129-147).
- T 25. Discuss *The Lost Boys*. Hip bloodsuckers in Peter Pan mode—only in California! View clips from *Near Dark* (1987, Kathryn Bigelow).
*HW: Watch *Innocent Blood* (1992, John Landis) at home, on reserve, or at the screening (TBA). Also finish remaining extra credit papers and eat yourself into a food coma.

H 27. Thanksgiving Break.

December.

T 2. Discuss *Innocent Blood*. Watch clips of "Angel." Vamp as crusader/crime fighter. Course wrap-up and evaluations. *HW: Study for Exam 3!

H 4. Summary. Questions. Exam 3.

NO FINAL! HAVE A BLOODY GREAT HOLIDAY!