



Exeter College Oxford Summer Programme The Art of Ghosts (nineteenth century to the present)

Course description

Throughout time, ghosts have been one of the richest sources of inspiration for artists and writers. In this course, we will study ghost and the political, affective, and cultural dimensions of haunting across literary and cinematic texts and the plastic arts from the nineteenth century to the present. In exploring these varied texts from across the world, we ask what ghosts do in the narration of place and history, how they facilitate or complicate our understanding of the vital and moral limits of humanity, and how they enable reimaginings of some of the most pressing questions about race, class, and gender.

Course objectives

The aim of the course is to use the phenomenon of ghosts and haunting as a lens through which develop students' ability to think about literature, film, and art by employing diverse analytic methods. Hailing from across national, linguistic traditions, genres, and formats, the texts selected for discussion will enable students to consider this pervasive theme through several disciplinary angles, from literary studies to art historical analysis. In addition, students will also be asked to consider the ghost's political and cultural potential, as it appears in diverse texts across histories and territories.

Teaching Methodology and Assessment

12 x 1.25 hr Lectures (15hrs)
6 x 1.25hr Seminars (7.5hrs)
4 x 1.25hr Tutorials (5hrs)

The introductory lecture will suggest pathways for students to think about and develop their understanding of ghosts. Subsequent lectures will focus on a set of themes through which to read ghosts' presence in creative texts.

Some of the lectures feature lengthier texts than others. Students are encouraged to read texts in advance, even if, in the lecture, we will be focusing on selections from them.

Seminars and tutorials will allow for further discussion of the texts discussed in the lectures. Students will be asked to deliver a short oral presentation on one of the primary texts in the context of broader themes explored in the course.

Assessment: A final essay of no more than 3000 words (40%), a final three-hour written examination (40%), an oral presentation (10%), and participation in seminar discussion (10%).

Course schedule

Lecture 1 *“The time is out of joint”: ghosts, temporality, and history*

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (1603), selected sections
Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx* (2003), selection
Judith Richardson, *Possessions: The History and Uses of Haunting in the Hudson Valley* (2005), selection

Lecture 2 *Genre and haunting*

Charles Brockden Brown, *Ormond; or, the Secret Witness* (1799), selected sections
Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), selected sections

Lecture 3 *Gender and haunting*

Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), selected sections
María Luisa Bombal, *The Shrouded Woman* (1938)
Elizabeth Bowen, “The Demon Lover” (1945)

Lecture 4 *Ghosts of the City*

Edgar Allan Poe, “The Man of the Crowd” (1840)
Charles Baudelaire, *Flowers of Evil* (1857)
André Breton, *Nadja* (1928)

Lecture 5 *Frontier hauntings*

Ambrose Bierce, “The Boarded Window” (1891)
Henry Lawson, “The Bush Undertaker” (1892)
David Lowery, dir., *A Ghost Story* (2017)

Lecture 6 *Haunted perspectives: Henry James’s ghost-telling*

Henry James, “The Turn of the Screw” (1898)
Henry James, “The Jolly Corner” (1908)
Alex Nemerov, “Seeing Ghosts: *The Turn of the Screw* and Art History” (2008)

Lecture 7 *Ghosts and Racialized Lives*

W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), selected sections
Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987)

Lecture 8 *Spiritualism and the science of ghosts*

Alejandro Amenábar, dir., *The Others* (2001)
Selections from *Banner of Light* (Spiritualist newspaper), pub. 1857-1907
Pamela Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology, and Magical Thinking, 1880-1920* (2001)

John Gray, *The Immortalization Commission: Science and the Strange Quest to Cheat Death* (2011)

Lecture 9 *Ghosts of the machine: haunted technologies*

Adolfo Bioy Casares, *The Invention of Morel* (1941)

Hideo Nakata, dir., *Ringu* (1998)

Tom Gunning, "To Scan a Ghost: The Ontology of Mediated Vision" (2007)

Lecture 10 *Ghost towns*

Juan Rulfo, *Pedro Páramo* (1955)

Marcin Wrona, dir., *Demon* (2015)

Lecture 11 *Ghosts and dispossession (conclusion 1)*

Julio Cortázar, "A House Taken Over" (1946)

Jayro Bustamante, dir., *La Llorona* (2019)

Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics* (2011)

Lecture 12 *Ghosts and contemporary arts (conclusion 2)*

Selected artworks from Camille Normand to Glenn Ligon