

## Weekend Courses 2023-24

### The Literary Gothic

**Start date:** 27 October 2023

**End date:** 29 October 2023

**Venue:** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge  
CB23 8AQ

**Tutor:** Dr Jenny Bavidge and Dr Lottie Reinbold **Course Code:** 2324NRX001

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#### Tutor biography

**Jenny Bavidge** is Associate Professor in English Literature and Academic Director for English Literature at ICE. She is Part II Director of Studies and Fellow of Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge and is a Fellow of the English Academy. She has taught at Cambridge since 2011 and before that was Senior Lecturer at the University of Greenwich. Jenny has written on an eclectic range of topics including ecogothic, E. Nesbit, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and literary rats.

**Lotte Reinbold** is a Fellow, Director of Studies, and College Teaching Officer at Selwyn College, teaching literature from 1300-1770, with a particular focus upon Chaucer, and his literary afterlives. She did her BA in English at Robinson College, Cambridge, her MA in Medieval and Renaissance Studies at UCL, and then her PhD in Medieval Literature at Robinson College. Her current research looks at the reception and afterlife of dream poetry, stretching from the French allegorical dream poem, *Le Roman de la Rose*, which was written around 1230, right up until Douglas Oliver's *The Infant and the Pearl*, published in 1985. She also works on medievalism, particularly the influences of medieval literature upon the writing of Diana Wynne Jones.

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## Course programme

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### Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00

Dinner

**20:30 – 22:00**

#### **Session One**

##### **'We've been expecting you...': An Introduction to the Gothic**

Since its inception as a distinct genre of writing, Gothic has reappeared in different literary periods. In this first session, we'll attempt some definitions and think about the way Gothic appears in literary form.

22:00

Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday

07:30

Breakfast (for residents only)

**09:00 – 10:30**

#### **Session Two**

##### **Gothic Origins 1: The Gothic Novel**

In this session we'll trace the rise of the Gothic Novel in the late 18th and early 19th century. We'll work with extracts from Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* to explore the geography and politics of the Gothic.

10:30

Coffee

**11:00 – 12:30**

#### **Session Three**

##### **Gothic Origins 2: Mary Shelley's Creature**

We'll look closely at Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, exploring its innovative form and style and how Shelley uses the Gothic to explore both personal trauma and ethical theme

13:00

Lunch

14:00 – 16:00

Free time

16:00

Tea

**16:30 – 18:00**

#### **Session Four:**

##### **The Gothic Revival: *The Castle of Otranto* (with Lotte Reinbold)**

This session focuses on the wild ride of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), with reference to the architectural Gothic Revival and Walpole's extraordinary home at Strawberry Hill.

18:00 – 18:30

Free time

18:30

Dinner

- 20:00 – 21:30**      **Session Five**  
***Fin de siècle Gothic: The Picture of Dorian Gray***  
We jump forward in time to consider the reappearance of Gothic in the late 19th century. Gothic of the *fin de siècle* (end of the century) explored the newly unknowable urban mass and created modern monsters in order to express contemporary anxieties and fears.
- 21:30                      Terrace Bar open for informal discussion
- Sunday**
- 07:30                      Breakfast (for residents only)
- 09:00 – 10:30**      **Session Six**  
**Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca***  
Daphne Du Maurier's 1938 novel is charged with Gothic influences. We'll examine how it reinvents the Gothic novel for a 20th century audience and explore its use of setting and Gothic themes.
- 10:30                      Coffee
- 11:00 – 12:30**      **Session Seven**  
**21st Century Gothic**  
Where do we find the Gothic in 21st century writing? We'll look at a contemporary short stories by George Saunders and Margaret Atwood (supplied) and think about the way the literary gothic has found new life in telling us stories about modern life.
- 12:45                      Lunch

**The course will disperse after lunch**

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## Course syllabus

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### Aims:

The course will allow you to:

- understand the history of the literary Gothic
- develop skills in close-reading and understanding of literary style and form
- trace the development of style and form across different literary epochs

### Summary of content:

Despite its frequent silliness, its excess and its sometimes unsavoury subject matter, Gothic is a powerfully persistent and protean form of writing. Stories about ghosts, monsters and the shadowy side of life had long existed in oral and popular culture but it was with the rise of the novel in the 18th century that the Gothic became a distinct form. Surprisingly it was during the Age of Reason, when rationality and science were challenging superstition and religion, that Gothic became a dominant and widely read mode of story-telling, with recognisable tropes and characters. Indeed, the craze for Gothic spread so fast that it was very soon the target of satire in works such as *Northanger Abbey* by Jane Austen. The first part of our weekend will focus on key Gothic texts from the 18th and early 19th centuries, including Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*: we'll think about the historical context of the Gothic and how the Gothic Revival in architecture and art is entwined with the literature of the period. One of the defining features of the Gothic is the way its stock characters such as the evil aristocrat, the vampire, the living dead, the virtuous heroine and so on, are reborn in different periods to suit the tenor and terrors of the time. In the late 19th and 20th centuries Gothic motifs have returned in various forms and we'll look at two classic modern Gothic stories, Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Du Maurier's *Rebecca* to examine ideas around doubleness, possession and Freudian concepts including uncanniness and repression. We'll ask ourselves about the politics whether Gothic is a conservative and confining genre, warning against bad behaviour, or, alternatively, if it offers a liberating and unruly space which allows writers and readers to explore ideas touching personal and political freedom and rebellion. We'll finish with a session looking at 21st century Gothic and its incursions into contemporary culture and literature, including unsettling short stories, Zombie films and Halloween.

### Presentation of the course:

The course will be taught through a series of informal talks and presentations by the tutors, followed by seminar discussion. We hope that students will read as many of the novels as possible and will come ready to talk about them. All classes will be taught by Dr Bavidge, with the exception of Session Four which will be taken by Dr Reinbold.

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

- describe some key features of the literary Gothic
- feel confident in their abilities to read and analyse literary texts from different periods
- extend their knowledge of literature and literary criticism more broadly

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## Reading and resources list

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**Required reading:** these are books / articles / sources that you must read prior to the course and are marked with an asterisk (\*).

Please bring a copy of the text with you to class. E-readers are fine.

\*Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) (recommended edition Oxford University Press, ed. Nick Groom). You can read the novel online for free at Project Gutenberg <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/696/696-h/696-h.htm>

\*Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) (recommended edition Oxford University Press, ed. Joseph Bristow). You can read the novel online for free at Project Gutenberg <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/174>

\*Daphne Du Maurier, *Rebecca* (1938) any edition.

You might also wish to watch the classic film adaptation directed by Alfred Hitchcock in 1940.

We will also work with extracts from **Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*** which will be supplied but please feel free to read it in full if you have time. There are two versions of *Frankenstein*; it was originally published in 1818 and then appeared in a revised edition in 1831 (it doesn't matter enormously which version you read and we will compare some of the sections to look at Shelley's revisions.) We recommend the 2018 Oxford University Press edition (ed. Nick Groom) of the 1818 text. You can read *Frankenstein* online at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/84/84-h/84-h.htm>.

We'll also look at two short stories which we'll supply at the beginning of the course.

### Online resources:

Gothic Collections at the British Library (<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/themes/the-gothic>)

Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill (<https://www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk>)

An Anthology of Gothic-related texts compiled by Rictor Norton (<http://rictornorton.co.uk/gothic/index.htm#toc>)

A satirical letter mocking the conventions of the Gothic '[The Terrorist System of Novel-Writing](http://rictornorton.co.uk/gothic/jacobin.htm)' (1797) <http://rictornorton.co.uk/gothic/jacobin.htm>

**Note:** Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) students are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current ICE course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

(Information correct as of 15 May 2023)