

Gothic Literature – High School

COURSE DESCRIPTION: From vampires to ghosts, these frightening stories have influenced fiction writers since the 18th century. This course will focus on the major themes found in Gothic literature and demonstrate how the core writing drivers produce, for the reader, a thrilling psychological environment. Terror versus horror, the influence of the supernatural, and descriptions of the difference between good and evil are just a few of the themes presented. By the time students have completed this course, they will have gained an understanding of and an appreciation for the complex nature of dark fiction.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Discuss the definition and specific traits of Gothic literature.
- Discuss the social and historical factors that influenced the birth of this genre.
- Examine specific themes typically found in Gothic works.
- Identify key vocabulary terms related to Gothic literature.
- Discuss important works from this genre, which exemplify its themes and other traits.
- Discuss Mary Shelley and the society in which she lived.
- Identify key vocabulary terms and characters from Frankenstein.
- Read and understand the Preface, letters, and chapters 1-12 of Frankenstein.
- Connect the novel with your own personal experiences and/or reactions to its themes.
- Determine which features of this novel make it fit the Gothic genre.
- Discuss scientific and medical issues related to the theme of “playing god.”
- Compare the poem “Prometheus” by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe to Frankenstein.
- Identify key vocabulary terms from Frankenstein and the related readings.
- Read and understand chapters 13-25 of Frankenstein.
- Connect the novel with our own personal experiences and/or reactions to its themes.
- Discuss Robert Louis Stevenson and his career as an author.
- Identify key vocabulary terms and characters from The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.
- Read and understand the ten chapters of the novel.
- List and describe the Gothic traits learned in Unit 1 that are found in this novel.
- Apply themes from Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde to modern society or current events.
- Identify key poetry vocabulary terms and locate examples of them in these poems.
- Read and analyze the 1773 ballad “Lenore” by German poet Gottfried August Bürger.
- Read and analyze the 1836 poem “Porphyria’s Lover” by Robert Browning.

- Read and analyze the 1906 poem “The Highwayman” by Alfred Noyes.
- Look for modern examples of other literary works such as songs, poems, stories, or films that are related to the poems in this unit.
- Discuss Bram Stoker.
- Identify key vocabulary terms and characters from Dracula.
- Discuss scientific and social issues of Victorian times that are present in this novel.
- Discover the geographical differences between nineteenth century Europe and modern Europe.
- Read and understand chapters 1-13 of Dracula.
- Identify key vocabulary terms from Dracula and the related readings.
- Discuss physiognomy and phrenology and their influence in Bram Stoker’s writing.
- Read the poem “Totentanz” by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and consider its use of vampiric themes.
- Read and understand chapters 14-27 of Dracula.
- Connect knowledge of Victorian sciences with knowledge of Dracula in a modern day practical situation.
- Discuss the life of Edgar Allan Poe.
- Identify key vocabulary terms from the stories studied in this unit.
- Read and understand the short story “The Black Cat.”
- Read and understand the short story “Berenice.”
- Connect your knowledge of unit vocabulary creatively with Poe’s life and works.

PREREQUISITES: None

COURSE LENGTH: One Semester

REQUIRED TEXT: No required textbook for this course.

MATERIALS LIST: No required materials for this course.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Unit 1: GOTHICA: When Gruesome is Delicious

Unit 2: FRANKENSTEIN: A Monster is Born

Unit 3: FRANKENSTEIN: With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility

Unit 4: JEKYLL & HYDE: To Thine Ownself Be True

Gothic Literature Midterm Exam

Unit 5: GOTHIC POETRY: Love From Beyond the Grave

Unit 6: DRACULA: The Blood is the Life

Unit 7: DRACULA: The Hunter Becomes the Hunted

Unit 8: EDGAR ALLAN POE: The Monsters In Us

Gothic Literature Final Exam