ENG 305-01E Gothic Children's & YA Literature

Course Syllabus Spring 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Emily Littlejohn
Office Location: DTH 214
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and by appointment
University Email Address: Emily.littlejohn@etamu.edu
Communication Response Time: Within 48-hours, Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required (any edition acceptable)
1. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter* by Theodora Goss, ISBN 9781481466516
2. *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman, ISBN 9780380807345
3. *Midnight for Charlie Bone* by Jenny Nimmo, ISBN 9781405280921
4. Additional texts on D2L and/or the course schedule

Software Required
- D2L: We will use D2L for all assignment submissions and course materials.
- PDF Reader: You will need Adobe Acrobat or another PDF reader to view/download PDFs linked on D2L throughout the semester.
- YouTube/Other Websites: Occasionally, you will need to access course materials through YouTube or other websites and/or you may choose to use such materials for course projects.

Optional Texts and/or Materials
- *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (any edition; or, check Project Gutenberg)
- *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz
  - for the original illustrations, find an edition with drawings by Stephen Gammell
  - for less scary illustrations, find an edition illustrated by Brett Helquist
- Waters Library: course readings, researching primary and/or secondary sources, general academic support (workshops, technology, study rooms, etc.)
- Purdue OWL: formatting and citation guidelines as well as general writing support
- www.tinyurl.com/otmarchive: Pedagogical resources (especially helpful for the final project, Teaching Gothic Stories)

Course Description

From the course catalogue: "This course is a survey of children's and young adult literature that may include various authors and illustrators in such genres in the oral tradition, fantasy, realistic and historical fiction, the novel, poetry, and the picture book. This course applies critical theory to texts for young people in order to better understand the complexities of this seemingly simple literature and how it reflects and impacts the culture that it came from. Students will learn how to more deeply examine children's literature in their own reading but also in professional spaces such as the classroom or library."

O Most Gothic literature features a mix of the following elements: isolated, abandoned, unfamiliar, and/or haunted settings; archetypal characters such as the innocent victim or the antihero and corrupt/evil aristocrats, monks, politicians, or other authority figures/institutions; supernatural elements like ghosts, vampires, and omens; and atmospheres that create psychological tension, suspense, unease and/or uncertainty.

Each unit, students will explore how multiple mediums (picture books, novels, TV and/or films) approach (re)telling Gothic stories—including adult classics like the *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*—to children and young adults. Students will apply critical theories such as picture book theory (Moebius and Bang), adaptation theory (Hutcheon), and other cultural and literary theories relevant to Gothic literature (Bakhtin's carnival and Freud's uncanny) to primary texts. Students will complete creative, research, and pedagogical projects. By applying these theories and completing course projects, students will learn strategies to create, analyze, research, and teach children's and young adult literature.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completing the course, students will be able to:
1. Articulate key concepts related to medium and genre such as audience, "[c]odes of position, size, and diminishing returns," the uncanny, and the carnivalesque (Moebius).
2. Apply critical theory to primary texts to understand the complexities of children's and young adult literature and how it simultaneously represents and influences culture.
3. Analyze linguistic, visual, aural, and multimodal texts for young people.
4. Research and archive children's and young adult adaptations of Gothic classics to explore how "culture-text[s]" build cultural memory and meaning (Davis).
5. Develop pedagogical strategies such as creating a reading list, constructing a unit plan and individual lesson plans, and designing assignment prompts.

These course-specific learning outcomes align with the following ETAMU's undergraduate learning outcomes: critical thinking, oral/visual communication, personal responsibility, and social responsibility.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

- **Word Processor**: You will need to use a word processor, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs, for class notes, project reflections, media reviews, and the pedagogical

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project. All assignments/projects must be submitted as Word .docx or PDF files unless otherwise noted.
- **Websites**: You will need to be familiar with websites such as D2L, YouTube, and Waters Library to view, research, and/or submit texts.
- **Other Applications**: Some projects include multimodal components, so you may wish to use additional websites/applications such as Adobe Express, Canva, Wix, etc.

Instructional Methods

This is a face-to-face course. We will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. in DTH 208. For most class meetings, you can expect a lecture and some kind of class conversation or activity. I provide feedback on the assignments you submit to D2L as described in the "Grading" section below.

Student Responsibilities, Academic Integrity, & AI Use

Before each class, you will need to read and/or view a variety of primary and secondary sources in order to participate in our class conversations and activities. I treat the classroom as a space for mutual collaboration, so I expect you to share your TQEs (thoughts, questions, epiphanies)* about our course materials. True learning—lasting learning—requires more than listening to a 75-minute lecture twice a week. It involves active participation and effort, both individually and as a community.

You will also need to complete three major projects and a variety of engagement assignments to meet our learning outcomes. For assignments large and small, you are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty. You can read definitions of academic integrity, academic dishonesty procedures, and citing resources here. In this course, learning requires your human thoughts, questions, revelations, and experiences; AI would hinder my ability to evaluate what you learned from your work. Thus, no generative AI use is permitted. Any AI use will be treated as academic dishonesty.
*Marissa Thompson developed the TQE method.

Attendance Policy & Make-Up Work*

Attendance is required. Learning is a social activity that is only impactful if you attend, engage, and participate. However, I know illness and other unforeseen circumstances may occasionally affect your ability to attend class, so you have 3 freebies. In other words, **you may miss 6 classes—for any reason—without penalty**. You do not have to tell me why you are absent or provide documentation (like a doctor's note). I will notify you, via email, when you have used up your freebies. **After your freebies, you will lose 2 points for every absence**. You may also lose points, or be counted absent, for regular and/or significant tardiness and early departures. For instance, if you attend only the first (or last) 15-20 minutes of a class, you won't be counted as present because you did not experience/participate in most of our 75-minute meeting.

If you are absent, you can complete a **make-up activity** by emailing me to receive the specific activity for that day. Completing make-up work will count as your attendance (rather than losing 2 points!) and will keep you up to date with our course's concepts, goals, and objectives. Because I provide make-up work, **your 6 absence freebies include any and all of ETAMU's excused absences** like university competitions. Even if you miss class for an excused reason, you will need to stay up to date with the course content by completing make-up work when possible.

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This policy is adapted from Dr. Rebecca Rowe's.

Interaction with Instructor Statement

My goal is to be as flexible and compassionate as possible. I am here to help you meet your learning goals. If you have questions or need support, please email me or come to my office hours. Don't know how to start an email? Get started with Portwood-Stacer's humorous explanation/template combo titled "How to Email Your Professor (without being annoying AF)" [here](#).

Grading*

My approach to classroom assessment (i.e. grading) is labor-based—based on the labor/work you do instead of the quality of your work. I use a form of [Gameful Learning](#) which promotes self-motivated learning, risk-taking, and engagement with the course materials rather than numerical grades. **This should make the course less stressful because _you_ are in control of your learning path and grade**.

There are many assignments in this course, and each one is worth a certain number of points. While some assignments are required (the major projects), many are not. Like many games, you'll earn experience points (XP) by completing assignments. You choose *which* and *how many* (non-required) assignments to complete to earn the grade you want. While I assign points to each assignment, your grade rests mostly on completion. If you do all that is asked of you in the manner and spirit it is asked, you will earn all the points that assignment is worth. This is why I emphasize *experience* in the XP system: **your grade in this course is about how much you experienced (or engaged with) the course content**.

This is a points-based class. **Your grade is determined by total XP—*not* a percentage**. While your *grade* is determined by completion, my *feedback* is based on the quality of your work. My feedback will propose ideas and recommend strategies to help you improve your analysis and writing skills.

Here's what you can expect from my rubric or global feedback throughout the semester:

Assignment Criteria	XP (Experience Points)	Instructor Feedback
Ideas	How you think and write will not affect your XP. I may disagree or misunderstand your ideas, but if you put in the labor, you are guaranteed full points.	My feedback will help you refine your ideas, deepen your analysis, etc.
Timeliness	Most work for this class is due Sunday night by 11:59 p.m., but this is a soft deadline. As long as it's in before I start working the next day, it's fine. After that, late projects will lose 1 XP each calendar day they are late. If you need an extension, fill out the **Extension Request Form** *before* the due date. Extensions are *not*	You're expected to know this policy, so I may or may not comment explaining why you lost XP.

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	available for end-of-semester work or short assignments (like discussion boards).	
Length	Any project that does not meet the minimum length requirements will lose points according to how much of the project is missing. For example, if the assignment requires 1,000 words and you submit 500, you can only earn half credit because you only completed half of the experience.	You're expected to know this policy, so I may or may not comment explaining why you lost XP.
Requirements	Even though I'm flexible with how students interpret prompts, if you do not complete the project asked of you, you cannot receive full points. For example, if you submit a project that requires research but include no research, the assignment would be incomplete and will receive no more than half of the possible points. Likewise, if you write an essay when a podcase is required, you cannot receive full points because you have not engaged with the public aspect of the project.	I will explain what you're missing, how the submission doesn't meet the assignment requirements, and why this is a problem for the project as a whole. My requirements are important because they help you engage with the course to your fullest and achieve the expected learning outcomes.
Grammar	Grammar will not affect your XP.	Generally, I do not give feedback on grammar unless it impedes readability. Then, I will offer suggestions to help you communicate more effectively.
Formatting	How you format your project will not affect your XP unless the formatting you choose goes directly against the assignment prompt. For example, if I assign a flyer and you submit a PowerPoint instead, you've not used the required formatting.	Generally, I will not give feedback on formatting unless it impedes readability or goes against the assignment prompt.
Citations	Your citation style will not affect your XP unless you have (1) plagiarized by not citing the sources you used; (2) not used any sources when they have been required; (3) forgotten a Works Cited completely; (4) submitted a list of links instead of a Works Cited.	I may occasionally offer suggestions to help you cite more effectively, but you won't lose XP or receive significant commenting regarding citations unless you do any of the 4 things listed to the left.

Your final grade for the semester will be determined by how many XP you have at the end:

A = 90+ XP

B = 80 – 89 XP

C = 70 – 79 XP

D = 60 – 69 XP

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F = less than 60 XP

These grading and feedback policies were developed by Dr. Rebecca Rowe. While I changed some of the language, most of the language is borrowed.

Assessments*

Required Assignments

Week 1 Discussion Board	5 XP
Telling Gothic Stories Project	25 XP
Archiving Gothic Stories Project	25 XP
Teaching Gothic Stories Project	25 XP
Total	**80 XP**

Additional (Community Engagement) Assignments

Class notes	3 XP each, 5 times max
Office Hours	3 XP each, 5 times max
Discussion Boards	3 XP each week, 5 times max
Project Revisions	5 XP each, 1 per project
Media Review	5 XP
Course Reflection	3 XP
Total	**22+ XP**

Assessing Progress

As you can see in the point breakdown above, if you earn full XP on all the required assignments, you will earn 80 XP / 80% / a "B" in the class. If you only complete the required assignments but do not earn full credit on them, then you will earn less than a "B."

Throughout the semester, you can estimate your final XP using this formula: **current XP + expected XP**. For example, let's say it's midterm and you have earned full credit on the Week 1 Discussion Board, Telling Gothic Stories Project, and Archiving Gothic Stories Project. This means your current XP is 55. If you expect to earn full credit on the Teaching Gothic Stories Project (25 XP) and the Course Reflection (3 XP), then your expected XP is 28. 55 current XP+ 28 expected XP = estimated 83 XP by the end of the semester.

I recommend earning at least 50 XP points by the following dates according to letter grade desired:

- A: March 19th (midterm-ish)
- B: March 26th (week 10)
- C: April 16th (week 13)

Most of these assignments, as well as their designation as required or additional, are adapted from Dr. Rebecca Rowe's.

COURSE OUTLINE/CALENDAR

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UNIVERSITY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Technology Requirements & Support

LMS (D2L Brightspace and Zoom)

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

- LMS Requirements: https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements
- LMS Browser Support: https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm
- Zoom Video Conferencing Tool: https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of D2L Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:
https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport

Access and Assignment Completion

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail online in the Student Guidebook. Your instructor reserves the right to ask any student to leave the class if they prove distracting or disruptive to their instructor and/or peers. Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette Webpage for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum.

ETAMU Attendance

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For more information about the attendance policy, please view the Attendance Webpage and the Class Attendance Policy

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

- Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty University Procedure 13.99.99.R0.03
- Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

Use of Artificial Intelligence

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. **If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed**.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

Students with Disabilities: ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
East Texas A&M University
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu
Website: Office of Student Disability Services

Nondiscrimination Notice

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East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and ETAMU Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health – Counseling Services

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit https://www.etamu.edu/counseling-center/.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

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