

British Horror Film, 1945-1972 (LTEL 140I)

Instructors:

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Office Hours:
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Lectures:

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-3:45PM, Kresge 321

Sections:

A. Wednesdays, 3:30-4:40PM, College Eight 250
B. Thursdays, 6:00-7:10PM, Cowell 134
C. Thursdays, 7:30-8:40PM, Cowell 134

Film Viewings:

Tuesdays, 6:00-9:00PM, Kresge 321

Required Texts:

David Pirie, *A New Heritage of Horror: The New English Gothic Cinema*, revised and updated edition (2008)
The Course Reader

These texts are *only* available at the Literary Guillotine (204 Locust Street, Santa Cruz, CA).

Requirements:

1. Regular attendance at lectures, film showings, and sections; students are also expected to keep up with the readings assigned. Roll will be taken regularly at lectures, sections, and film showings. Since McHenry Library does not have the facilities to serve large numbers of individual film viewers, and repeated handling of the DVDs eventually wears them out, **attendance at film screenings on Tuesdays is required.** There are other, more substantive reasons for this requirement: all of the films we will study in this course were made before the digital era and thus were meant to be seen under theatrical

conditions. A certain size of the image is essential for a proper appreciation of the address these movies make to the body. We could go on. **More than three absences during the quarter (this includes lectures, film screenings, and sections) will adversely affect your grade.**

2. Four 2-to-3-page papers (due every other week) on the most recently screened films, to be turned in at the Thursday lecture. The paper due dates are as follows: October 7th and 21st, November 4th and 18th. Papers should avoid recapitulating plot/incident and concentrate instead on some cinematic aspect of the film, e.g., the use of the camera (movement, angle shots, editing) and/or elements of *mise-en-scène*, such as recurrent images (“rhymes”), lighting, use of the sound track or special effects, etc. In the case of British films, the use of allusion and citation—references to specific other films, or to typical images and situations from various film genres—is often of particular interest. In general, you should consider how characteristic effects or especially dramatic moments are constructed by the film—that is, how they are made or made effective. **UCSC’s guidelines for Academic Integrity are quite specific with regard to cheating and plagiarism, and those guidelines will be taken very seriously in this course. For Academic Integrity policy, please see http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity/undergraduate_students/.**

3. A final paper, 10-15 pages, on some aspect of the course, due at the end of exam week. We are interested in how the development of the course has affected your own thinking. Therefore, though we will be happy to suggest topics for those who want them, we want to leave the topic of this final paper as open as possible, subject to the requirements of your section instructors. You may write on any aspect of British horror films in the period covered by this course, including films not treated in class, and you may focus at any level of generalization, from close readings of images and sequences to synthetic work on several films or all of them, et bloody cetera. Please refer more specific queries to your section instructor. Repeat chorus: **plagiarism will adversely affect your academic career at this university.**

Supplemental Film Series:

There will be an *optional* series in which we will screen movies that are relevant to the course. The films in this series are listed below in the syllabus, and there will be weekly in-class announcements with details concerning their particular significance with respect to that week’s required film(s). The Supplemental Film Series will be take place at **9PM every Thursday in Stevenson 150**. Invite your friends, tell your family.

Film, Reading, and Assignment Schedule
(texts marked with * can be found in the Reader)

9/23 Introductions, Admin Rigmarole (Enrollment Issues, Section Assignments/Swaps, etc.), and Opening Statements on British (Horror) Cinema

Week 1. The Birth of British (Portmanteau) Horror

9/28 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:

*Marshal Leicester, "What's a Horror Movie?"

*Selections from James C. Robertson, *The British Board of Film Censors: Film Censorship in Britain, 1895-1950*

*Mark Kermode, "The British Censors and Horror Cinema"

In-Class Screening: *The Ghoul* (1933; dir. T. Hayes Hunter)

Movie Night: *Dead of Night* (1945; dir. Alberto Cavalcanti, et al.)

9/30 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:

*Selections from Andrew Higson, *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain*

Supplemental Film Series: *Asylum* (1972; dir. Roy Ward Baker)

Week 2. "Nobody wins a Cold War": Fifties Hammer Science Horror

10/5 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:

David Pirie, *A New Heritage of Horror*, pp. 1-65

Movie night: *The Quatermass Xperiment* (1955; dir. Val Guest) **AND**
Quatermass II: Enemy from Space (1957; dir. Val Guest)

10/7 **First Response Papers Due in Class**

Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:

David Pirie, *A New Heritage of Horror*, pp. 150-61

*Denis Meikle, *A History of Horrors*, rev. ed., 1-24

Supplemental Film Series: *Four Sided Triangle* (1953; dir. Terence Fisher)

Week 3. Universal Attractions or Heritage Reclamation? (Pt. 1)

10/12 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:

*Selections from Peter Hutchings, *Hammer and Beyond*

Movie night: *The Curse of Frankenstein* (1957; dir. Terence Fisher) **AND**
The Revenge of Frankenstein (1958; dir. Terence Fisher)

10/14 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:

David Pirie, *A New Heritage of Horror*, pp. 79-94

*Denis Meikle, *A History of Horrors*, rev. ed., 25-47

10/14 **Supplemental Film Series:** *The Flesh and the Fiends* (1960; dir. John Gilling)

Week 4. Universal Attractions or Heritage Reclamation? (Pt. 2)

10/19 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:

- *Derek Hill, "The Face of Horror"
- *Terence Fisher, "Horror Is My Business"
- *Sven Lütticken, "Planet of the Remakes"

Movie Night: *Dracula* (1958; dir. Terence Fisher)

10/21 **Second Response Papers Due in Class**

Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:

David Pirie, *A New Heritage of Horror*, pp. 95-112

Supplemental Film Series: *The Fearless Vampire Killers or: Pardon Me, but Your Teeth Are in My Neck* (1967; dir. Roman Polanski)

Week 5. "Whatever I photograph I always lose"

10/26 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:

- *Denis Meikle, *A History of Horrors*, rev. ed., 49-116

Movie night: *Peeping Tom* (1960; dir. Michael Powell)

10/28 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:

- David Pirie, *A New Heritage of Horror*, pp. 113-36
- *Kim Newman, "Psycho-thriller, qu'est-ce que c'est"

Supplemental Film Series: *Circus of Horrors* (1960; dir. Sidney Hayers)

Week 6. Some Versions of Exploitation in Swinging London

11/2 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:

- *Raymond Lefevre, "From Voyeurism to Infinity"
- *Laura Mulvey, "The Light That Fails: A Commentary on *Peeping Tom*"

Movie night: *Repulsion* (1965; dir. Roman Polanski)

11/4 **Third Response Papers Due in Class**

Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:

David Pirie, *A New Heritage of Horror*, pp. 161-66

Supplemental Film Series: *The Sorcerers* (1967; dir. Michael Reeves)

Week 7. Britain's Glorious Past Refigured: Hammer and Empire

11/9 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:

- *Ivan Butler, "The Horror Film: Polanski and *Repulsion*"
- *Steven Jay Schneider, "Barbara, Julia, Carol, Myra, and Nell: Diagnosing Female Madness in British Horror Cinema"

Movie night: *The Plague of the Zombies* (1966; dir. John Gilling)

11/11 **Veterans Day—No Class**

Week 8. “He could be a witch”

11/16 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:
David Pirie, *A New Heritage of Horror*, pp. 137-49
*Evan Calder Williams, “Plague in the Gears”

Movie night: *Witchfinder General* (1968; dir. Michael Reeves)

11/18 **Fourth Response Papers Due in Class**

Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:
*Leon Hunt, “Necromancy in the UK: Witchcraft and the Occult in British Horror”

Supplemental Film Series: *The City of the Dead* (1960; dir. John Llewellyn Moxey)

Week 9. Nobody Wins a Cold War (Except for Dr. Mabuse’s Living Dead Army)

11/23 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:
David Pirie, *A New Heritage of Horror*, pp.167-91
*Selections from Benjamin Halligan, *Michael Reeves*

Movie night: *Scream and Scream Again* (1970; dir. Gordon Hessler)

11/25 **Thanksgiving—No Class**

Week 10. Britain’s Glorious Past Refigured: Class, Atavism, and the Underground

11/30 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:
*Kim Newman, “The Indian Summer of the British Horror Film”
*Robin Wood, “An Introduction to the American Horror Film”

Movie night: *Death Line* (1972; dir. Gary Sherman)

12/02 Reading You Will Have Done before Lecture:
David Pirie, *A New Heritage of Horror*, pp. 192-224

Supplemental Film Series: *Quatermass and the Pit* (1967; dir. Roy Ward Baker)

Final Papers will be due in Kresge 321 during the exam period, at which time we will also be holding a group discussion of the final film (*Death Line*).

Basic Film Vocabulary

Angle: The relationship of the camera to what is being filmed. **High angle** refers to the camera looking down on the filmed subject. **Low angle** means the camera is looking up at the subject. A **straight-on angle** places the camera and the subject on the same level.

Apparatus: The material means by which films are made (cameras, sound recording devices, lights, etc.).

Close-up: A framing in which the scale of the object shown is relatively large.

Cut : 1. Joining two strips of film together with a splice. 2. In the finished film, the instantaneous change from one shot to another. Cf. **Crosscutting**, which is editing that alternates shots of two or more lines of action going on in different places, usually simultaneously (**parallel crosscutting**).

Diegesis: In a narrative film, the fictional world created by the film's story. That world need not behave in the same way as our non-diegetic world.

Dissolve: A transition between two shots, less abrupt than a cut, where one image gradually disappears while another image gradually appears. Sometimes called a **lap-dissolve** because of this overlapping effect.

Establishing shot: A shot with a distinct framing that shows the spatial relations among the figures, objects and setting in a scene. Also called a **master shot**. Editing and camera movement within the space set up by the establishing shot (close-ups, cuts, etc.) are called the **analysis**.

Fade: 1. (**Fade-in**) A dark screen that gradually brightens as a shot appears. 2. (**Fade-out**) A shot that gradually darkens as the screen goes black.

Following Shot: A shot with framing that shifts to keep a moving figure onscreen.

Frame: A single image on a strip of film.

Framing: The use of the edges of the film frame to select and compose what will be visible on-screen.

Mise-en-scène: All of the elements placed in front of the camera: settings, props, lighting, costumes, makeup, actors and their behavior, etc. Generally, everything that is *in* the frame.

Montage: Editing. The way in which shots are spliced together to create a continuous film. Generally, everything that happens *between* frames.

Montage sequence (or just **sequence**): A segment of film that summarizes a topic or compresses a passage of time into brief symbolic or typical images; the segment is often set off by the use of filmic techniques that contrast with the treatment in other segments.

Motif: A significant repeated image, idea etc. The image version is also called a **rhyme**.

180-degree rule: A classical film approach that dictates that the camera should stay on one side of the action to ensure consistent spatial relations between objects on the right and left sides of the frame.

Pan (or panoramic shot): A camera movement in which the camera turns on its axis from a stationary fixed point (e.g., on a tripod). The classic pan stays true to the line of the horizon.

Profilmic event: The pre-diegetic action, or what is really in front of the camera—e.g., actors on a sound stage or on location—as opposed to the fiction of the diegesis.

Scene: A segment in a narrative film that takes place in one time and space.

Shot: The basic unit of film construction, designating camera on → camera off. In the finished film, “shot” refers to one uninterrupted image (no cuts).

Tracking Shot: A camera movement in which the camera body is moving through space horizontal to the ground on a moving support, often literally on a track. Some versions and variations are the **dolly shot** (camera on a cart that is pushed along freely) and the **crane shot** (camera mounted on a crane, allowing for movement up and down as well as laterally).