

Final Project Assignment Prompt
Final draft due Mon. April 28 by 10:10am

Your final project is worth 25% of your final grade, and it is your opportunity to showcase the skills you have learned thus far in this class by creating a more thorough and substantial scholarly project in which you interrogate pieces of horror fiction and their potential intellectual and/or aesthetic value. In general, you will be analyzing a primary text (one or two short stories, novellas, or novels) while incorporating 2-3 outside sources into your argument that provide historical or critical context to your argument.

For this project you have a variety of options:

- **Option 1:** An original close-reading of any **literary** text from the semester (excluding texts you discussed in your First or Second Essay). (This is an expanded version of the kind of work you did in your First and Second Essay.)
 - Your essay should carefully interrogate a recurring motif or motifs from the text and how they relate to larger themes throughout the text, crafting an original interpretation about the text as a whole. This is not a research paper, nor is it a summary. Although you might have to contextualize the period in which this story was composed and/or published as well as particular moments, scenes, characters, or themes, the emphasis of this paper is on creating a unique interpretation of the text as a whole, the message or theme the text communicates.
 - I am interested in your own interpretation, not what other critics or scholars have said. In addition to your primary source (the text you are analyzing), you should have at least two other outside sources. These can be historical/biographical/etymological sources that contextualize/illuminate/inform your own interpretation and/or critical sources to which you are responding. For instance, you might argue against another critic who has made a particular argument for interpreting a text in a particular manner.
- **Option 2:** An analytical comparison between multiple (probably no more than two) texts. You can choose any two **literary** texts from the semester (excluding texts you discussed in your First or Second Essay).
 - You will need to focus on the texts at hand and explain the predominance of the theme on which you are focusing. You will then need to either draw connections or contrasts between how that theme is treated, always maintaining an emphasis on the specifics of the primary texts.
 - In this paper, be sure to focus on ways in which two seemingly dissimilar texts treat the same theme(s) or the ways in which two seemingly similar texts treat materials in a productively distinct way. Seek out the obvious similarities and then problematize them, or seek out seeming dissimilarities and find surprising ways in which the two texts connect. The bottom line here is to go beyond the obvious. Find productive ways to draw distinctions between or similarities among texts that aren't already self-evident.
 - What you argue should not be self-evident but should further illuminate both of these texts through your interrogation of a particular theme(s) when putting these two texts into conversation with each other.

- This is not a research paper, nor is it a summary. Although you might have to contextualize the period in which these texts were composed and/or published as well as particular moments, scenes, characters, or themes, the emphasis of this paper is on creating a unique interpretation of these texts when compared/contrasted against each other. We need to gain some larger insight than we would if we looked at one of these texts in isolation.
- I am interested in your own interpretation, not what other critics or scholars have said. In addition to your primary sources (the texts you are analyzing), you should have at least two other outside sources. These can be historical/biographical/etymological sources that contextualize/illuminate/inform your own interpretation and/or critical sources to which you are responding. For instance, you might argue against another critic who has made a particular argument for interpreting a text in a particular manner.
- **Option 3:** An argumentative essay that explores the role or function of horror in literature, other media, and society in general.
 - While this can include scientific or pedagogical evidence, it should also incorporate (with equal or greater weight) evidence from a more humanities-based perspective, and your outside sources should be scholarly articles. You will still be expected to bring in a few references to our course texts as examples of how horror functions, although this paper is ultimately not a literary analysis but an argument more grounded in the field of Cultural Studies (a pedagogical/philosophical/theoretical argument), exploring role of horror in today's literature, media, society, and culture (and perhaps arguing the merits of the ways in which it functions).
 - You will be expected to integrate at least 3-5 outside sources total to support the claims you make. This should include at least 1-2 **literary** texts from the course but should also incorporate outside readings regarding the pedagogical/scientific/philosophical role of (and perhaps merits of) studying/reading/consuming horror content. Remember that this is, ultimately, not a scientific paper, so the weight of the evidence should not rest on scientific analysis or evidence but should be more philosophically based or focused on the humanities, Cultural Studies, etc.
- **Option 4:** Some other comparable project that has received my prior approval.
 - This might include a digital or video essay or other multimedia project, a conference-style presentation, or a written academic paper with a focus not listed above. I welcome and encourage such ideas, but you must provide me a written proposal of at least one page and must meet with me in-person to discuss such proposals before receiving approval. I strongly recommend that you receive this approval before the due date for our first in-class workshop for this project, which is Fri. April 11.

Be sure to read the handouts on Canvas under Files>How to Close Read a Text. Be sure to also read the handouts "Instructions for Formatting Papers – ENGL 148" and "MLA 9 Works Cited Sample," both of which are on Canvas under Files>Helpful Handouts and Resources. Refer also to the various resources on Canvas for assistance in the mechanics of writing, integrating quotations, paraphrasing, using citations, etc. (Canvas>Files>Helpful Handouts and Resources). **You should also revisit the feedback I have provided you regarding your earlier essays in this class.**

I highly encourage you to get outside feedback from classmates, roommates, friends, and family members and to visit the [UNC Writing Center](#) as well. Any and all forms of collaboration are welcome as long as the written work on the page is ultimately yours and yours alone.

Your paper should be clearly written, logically organized, and should include a brief introduction, a clearly stated thesis, an organized body that supports your thesis, a conclusion, and a Works Cited page. Take time to carefully construct and adjust your thesis. All of you will be making some kind of argument (even if that argument is for a particular interpretation).

Because we are working in the humanities, we will be using MLA citation style (9th edition) to cite any of your sources. Be sure to see the [UNC Library's citation guides](#). Be warned: If you use a citation builder, be sure that you enter the information correctly and are requesting MLA 9th edition citation format. Many citation builders are unreliable, out of date, and prone to user error. Always double-check what the citation builder gives you. You will be expected to include appropriate in-text/parenthetical citations as well as a complete and accurate Works Cited page for your sources.

Using AI: The use of artificial intelligence (AI), such as ChatGPT, for work in this course is not acceptable. All work completed in this course must be your own. (See the course syllabus>“Course Policies”>“Using AI for Coursework” at Canvas>Files.)

The essay should be **6-10 pages (plus your Works Cited page)**, double-spaced (approximately 2,400 to 4,000 words), submitted as a Word document. **Rough drafts will be submitted via the appropriate Canvas discussion board for in-class workshops, but the final draft will be submitted for a grade via Canvas>Assignments.** Each draft must be posted before class begins on the given due date or else it will be considered late. Late submissions will, at best, negatively impact the grade in a significant manner and, at worst, will not be accepted.

As always, if you have concerns or questions about this assignment, please email me or visit my office hours.

Fri. April 11: Workshop #1 (post your draft before class: Canvas>Discussions)

Draft 1 is not even necessarily a draft. You should have selected the option on which you will be writing. You should have a rough outline that incorporates your texts of choice, your tentative thesis, some major claims to make in your body paragraphs, and the larger implications of the argument/interpretation you will be forming. This should also include most of your outside research, even if only in the manner of a list of quotations or other points you might use in your paper.

Wed. April 23: Workshop #2 (post your draft before class: Canvas>Discussions)

This should be a rough draft or at least most of it. It doesn't need to be perfectly polished, but you should have started putting together different pieces from Draft 1. You should have polished your thesis, and you should have begun at least composing the body paragraphs as you begin analyzing the various elements you're discussing. Ideally, you'll have a complete rough draft, including your full introduction and conclusion (or plans for these). The more complete this draft is, the more you'll benefit from our in-class workshop.

Mon. April 28: Final draft due (submit your final draft before class: Canvas>Assignments)

- This is your polished, final draft you'll be submitting for a grade.
- **Note:** At the very beginning of your final draft, please indicate whether or not you consent for this final draft to be published to our [course website](#). Please indicate if you want it not to be published, if you want it to be published anonymously, or if you want it to be published with your name (first name and last initial). See "Student Work Release Form – Course Website" on Canvas at Files>Assignments for more details.

Key Features of close reading:

- a. Your analysis of the text—what you noticed—is the evidence.
- b. You want the argument (or interpretation) to grow out of this evidence.
- c. Don't try to twist the evidence to support your own favorite *a priori* argument or beliefs. Your opinion or own experience doesn't matter in this kind of argument.
- d. Use the evidence to support or explain your interpretation of the text.
- e. E.g., in a scientific experiment—you might believe that drug X will cure lymphoma, but if none of the patients in the trial respond well to that drug, then you have to report the conclusions based on that evidence. Your own hunch or beliefs don't factor into the argument.
- f. Rely on the evidence to rewrite the argument as needed!

The vital elements:

1. Analysis: breaking down scenes into words, metaphors, meanings, etc.
2. Evidence: selecting bits from the analysis that help support an interpretation
3. Synthesis: combining the evidence in ways to persuade the reader; citing evidence
4. Interpretation: making sense of what is happening in the text. How is the text meaningful? What theme(s) has the author realized in writing this text?
5. Writing: clearly communicating your ideas with well-written and logically organized prose that is free of errors and formatted correctly, including appropriate citations for outside sources

Final Project Grading Rubric, Spring 2025:

	10	7	4	1
Introduction	Introduction clearly identifies the central question or issue under study, offers helpful background or contextual information, and contains a logical progression of ideas, ending with the thesis statement.	Some information about the essay's central ideas is offered, but it is confusingly organized or summarized strangely.	Introduction is cursory at best and does not provide enough information for reader to understand the significance of the thesis statement.	Essay lacks introduction.
Thesis Statement	Thesis statement makes a strong and interesting claim regarding the central object of analysis; statement is well-worded, clear, and intriguing.	Thesis statement forwards an arguable claim but does so in confusing or unclear language.	Thesis statement makes more of an observation rather than a debatable claim.	Essay lacks thesis statement, or statement is totally unintelligible.
Body	Body includes well synthesized information drawn from sources. It is well organized and offers multiple sub-claims that support the overall argument.	Body is lacking some detail or specificity. In a few instances, more evidence is necessary to support its claims.	Body is significantly lacking in some way. Minimal or no evidence is provided to support claims.	Body contains almost no credible information drawn from scholarly sources; body is disorganized and confusing.
Paragraph Structure	Paragraphs contain an analytical topic sentence that makes one central claim and then provides evidence and analysis to support this claim. Paragraph flows well.	Paragraphs are mostly well structured with a few slip-ups; some paragraphs either do not contain adequate flow, are missing a topic or ending sentence, or do not analyze their evidence.	A few paragraphs attempt to do too much or do not advance one specific claim. Paragraphs do not contain logical flow of information.	Paragraphs are highly unorganized and very difficult to follow; paragraphs do not advance any claim at all.

Integration of Sources	Sources are excellently paraphrased and summarized and are incorporated into the writing using signals or attributions. Quotations of specific phrases, word choice, etc. are used when appropriate. Author analyzes this material and offers their own perspective.	Sources are mostly paraphrased and summarized well, as is the inclusion of quotations. Author makes some attempt to analyze this research.	Summaries and paraphrases are confusing, awkward, and do not flow well with the rest of the paragraph. Quotations are poorly integrated into the text and tend to be unnecessarily long with little comment/analysis.	Sources are pulled in as lengthy direct quotes, and almost no effort is made to paraphrase or summarize them. Author does not provide enough information to understand the importance of this material and offers no analysis of their own.
Organization	Essay is organized with a logical and explicit pattern.	Essay is mostly well-organized, but some paragraphs seem out of order or repetitive.	Essay is very confusingly organized and does not reflect an overall organizational pattern.	Essay is organized so confusingly that it impedes the author's purpose.
Style	Essay features varied and sophisticated sentence structure and diction.	Essay uses some repetitive diction, simplistic language or sentence structures but mostly maintains a professional and objective tone.	Essay occasionally lapses into casual, colloquial discourse or subjective claims. Writing appears erratic, and some sentences are hard to follow.	Major lapses into casual discourse or little attempt to maintain objectivity. Diction is highly repetitive, and syntax is confusing.
Conclusion	Conclusion clearly & definitively answers the "so what"/ "who cares" questions, indicating the significance or larger implications of the essay's argument.	Conclusion makes some effort to point to broader implications of topic.	Conclusion mostly just repeats information already stated.	Conclusion is indistinguishable from introduction.
Citations	A coherent citation system (MLA 9 th edition) is used	A citation system is systematically	It is very difficult to tell if a single citation style has	No effort at citing sources accurately and consistently is made.

	consistently throughout; Works Cited page is complete and formatted accurately.	used with some lapses in providing required bibliographical information; Works Cited does not include all sources cited in body of text.	been adopted throughout. Citations are erratic and/or Works Cited is incomplete.	
Grammar	Essay is free from typographical errors as well as spelling and grammar mistakes.	A few surface errors, but none so consistent that they obscure the writer's meaning.	Repeated surface errors.	No sign of editing or revision.
Total: /100				