

# English 6393

## Topics in American Literature: American Gothic

**Instructor:** Dr. Gabriela Serrano

**Office:** Academic Building 0019 A

**Office Phone:** 325-486-6155

**Office Hours:** M-W 9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.

**E-mail:** gserrano@angelo.edu

### Course Description

Throughout the semester, we will study American Gothic from its origins up until the early twentieth century. We will focus on the historical context and major trends in Gothic fiction. Though we focus on major authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, Stephen King. Some of the texts we are analyzing by these authors are not often anthologized because Gothic literature is a reaction to mainstream American culture. By understanding this reactionary literature, we will gain a better understanding of problematic issues in American history and culture.

**Text** All readings will be online.

### Your Semester Grade

Blackboard Reflection Assignments/ Participation	20%
Blackboard Research	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Seminar Paper	30%
Final Exam	20%

### Blackboard Reflection

**Assignments** Most Sundays, students will write a 250 word reflection on the week's topic. These short responses will help students reflect on what has been discussed over the week. Students will also need to respond to at least one of their colleagues to earn full credit.

### Research for Seminar Paper

A seminar paper takes an entire semester to work on, so students need to begin work on the paper as soon as the class begins. Every-other week, students will complete work that will aid them in the research and writing of the paper.

- Tentative Thesis – a clear, concise argument is necessary for the tentative thesis. The tentative thesis statement will be one sentence in length, and it will convey the overall argument for the seminar paper.
- Annotated Bibliography – A list of ten sources with a complete bibliographical citation for a critical work followed by at least two sentences explaining the overall argument of the critical work.
- Abstract – a 250 word paragraph explaining the overall argument of the seminar paper. The abstract must have a clear thesis statement.
- Outline – a single-spaced, two page outline that clearly describes the major topics and subtopics that will be discussed in the paper. The outline must be organized and well-developed.

### **Exams**

There are two exams over the course of the semester:

- The Midterm Exam will cover material we cover in class until the middle of the semester
- The Final Exam will cover material we cover after the midterm

### **Seminar Paper**

- This paper is a longer, individual paper (5-7 pages) over one or more major texts we will be evaluating over the semester. Students will use the Blackboard Research Assignments they work on over the course of the summer session and apply their research to this paper. Students are expected to read, evaluate, and respond to the text(s) critically and deepen their understanding of the text(s). Students must include at least five citations in their paper. (see MLA Handbook for guidelines or the OWL at Purdue: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>)

### **Open Door Policy**

Students are welcomed and encouraged to visit me whenever you wish to discuss an exam, paper, or any other problem as it relates to this class. If students cannot come during my office hours, they may schedule an appointment with me. The easiest and best way to contact me outside of my office hours is to e-mail me ([gserrano@angelo.edu](mailto:gserrano@angelo.edu)).

### **Departmental Policy on Academic Honesty**

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the Student Handbook ([http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/Student\\_handbook\\_2005-2006.pdf](http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/Student_handbook_2005-2006.pdf)). Failure to comply with the honor code will result in disciplinary action and a failing grade in this course.

**I will assign a grade of “F” for the following violations:**

I. Plagiarism “the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another’s work or idea into one’s own work offered for credit” (Regents’ *Rules and Regulations*, Chapter VI, Section 5.32)

II. Cheating - this includes copying material from another member of the class, having someone in or outside of class complete an assignment or exam for you.

**Students  
with Special  
Needs**

Persons with disabilities which may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any accommodations being implemented.

**Student Handbook Statement of Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one’s own class and/or course work, being individually accountable, and demonstrating intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is a personal choice to abide by the standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility. Because education is a shared effort to achieve learning through the exchange of ideas, students, faculty, and staff have the collective responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. Ethical behavior and independent thought are essential for the highest level of academic achievement, which then must be measured. Academic achievement includes scholarship, teaching, and learning, all of which are shared endeavors. Grades are a device used to quantify the successful accumulation of knowledge through learning. Adhering to the standards of academic integrity ensures grades are earned honestly. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students, faculty, and staff build their educational and professional careers. Students must understand the principles of academic integrity and abide by them in all classes and/or course work at the University. Academic Misconduct violations are outlined in Part I, section B.1 of the Code of Student Conduct. If there are questions of interpretation of academic integrity policies or about what might constitute an academic integrity violation, students are responsible for seeking guidance from the faculty member teaching the course in question.

**Operating Policy 10.5 (student accommodation)**

Angelo State University is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation. All students at Angelo State University must have the capacity and ambition to undertake, with reasonable accommodation from the faculty and administration, the academic challenges necessary to fulfill the academic requirements for the degree or certification programs which they are pursuing. Operating Policy 10.19 (Holy Day): “Religious holy day” means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code §11.20. A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the

observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

### **Title IX at Angelo State University**

The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. Students are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU's Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at: Michelle Boone, J.D. Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator Mayer Administration Building, Room 210 325-942-2022 michelle.boone@angelo.edu You may also file a report online 24/7 at [www.angelo.edu/incident-form](http://www.angelo.edu/incident-form). If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the University Health Clinic and Counseling Center at 325-942-2173 or the ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345. For more information about Title IX in general you may visit [www.angelo.edu/title-ix](http://www.angelo.edu/title-ix).

### **Inclusion Statement**

We will be addressing controversial topics related to underprivileged groups throughout the semester. I support a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honor all identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). Please let me know if there is a particular name or pronouns by which you identify. Also, please let me know if anything I or your peers may say in class makes you feel excluded or marginalized. You may come see me in my office, leave me a note, and your concerns will remain anonymous if you choose so.

### **Confidential Resources Available to Students:**

Office of Title IX Compliance: 325-486-6357  
University Health Clinic: 325-942-2171  
University Counseling Center: 325-942-2173  
ASU Crisis Helpline: 325-486-6345

## Schedule of Readings, Assignments, and Exams (Tentative and Subject to Change)

### Week 1

#### **Lectures**

*Reflection Topic: Beginnings*

Course Introduction and Syllabus

Cotton Mather: Introduction to *Wonders of the Invisible World*  
“The Trial of Martha Carrier”

Charles Brockden Brown: Excerpt from *Wieland* (Blackboard)

Herman Melville: “The Whiteness of the Whale” from *Moby Dick*

Nathaniel Hawthorne: “Rappaccini’s Daughter”

#### **Assignment due 7/18 by Midnight**

Blackboard Reflection Assignment

### Week 2

#### **Lectures**

*Reflection Topic: Women Behaving Badly*

Phillis Wheatley: “On Being Brought from Africa to America”  
“To the University of Cambridge, in New England”

Emily Dickinson: Selections

Charlotte Perkins Gilman: “The Giant Wisteria”

Edith Wharton: “The Eyes”

Joyce Carol Oates: “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?”

#### **Assignments due by Midnight 7/25**

Annotated Bibliography (10 sources)

Tentative Thesis Statement

Blackboard Reflection Assignment

### Week 3

#### **Lectures**

*Reflection Topic: Southern Gothic*

Daniel Decatur Emmett: “Dixie’s Land”

Edgar Allan Poe: “Hop-Frog”

Kate Chopin: “Desiree’s Baby”

Flannery O’Connor: “Good Country People”

Eudora Welty: “Petified Man”

*Review for Midterm Exam*

#### **Assignment due by Midnight 8/1**

**Midterm Exam**

Outline

Week 4

*Reflection Topic: Contemporary Gothic*

Shirley Jackson: "The Lottery"

Sandra Cisneros: "Woman Hollering Creek"

Stephen King: Selections

Students' Choice

**Assignment due by Midnight 8/8**

**Seminar Paper**

*Blackboard Reflection Assignment*

Week 5

*Reflection Topic: Students' Choice*

Stephen Crane: *The Monster*

*Review for Final Exam*

**Assignment due 8/13 by Midnight**

**Final Exam**