



Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) 752

Special Topics Graduate Seminar—Bride of the Walking Undead

(Revision 14)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode:

[Grouped study](#)  . Delivered via Brightspace.

Credits:

3

Area of study:

Arts

Prerequisite:

None

Precluded:

MAIS 752 REV3 201809

Faculty:

[Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

Notes:

This course is applicable to [Cultural Studies](#)  and [Literary Studies](#)   .

Overview

As popular cultural icons, vampires, like zombies—those staples of horror movies, Halloween costumes, and nightmares—will not die. But these dead who will not die are undead in very different ways. And each culture adapts and reinvents these monsters to contain, reflect, or spark its reigning socio-political anxieties. In this course, we will read selections from major works of literature that have contributed to the mythos and popular lore of the vampire, starting with the Gothic and reading through to more recent horror writing—paying close attention both to how such writings are constructed and adapted, and critically interpreting and reflecting on the cultural work that these specific kinds of figures, scenes, and stories do. As we examine this body of work, we will be considering the role of the vampire in relation to the body natural, the body unnatural, and the body politic.

An exciting feature of this version of the course is that we will be conducting it as a team-taught and co-mingled course comprised of students enrolled from both Athabasca University and the State University of New York's Empire State College. We hope that students from nations who have dealt in dissimilar ways with their colonial histories will be able to provide a diverse and useful set of interpretations and reading experiences of these texts and secondary commentaries.

Outline

MAIS 752 comprises four units to be studied over 13 weeks:

- Unit One: Gothic Revolutions (the 18th century)
- Unit Two: Early (Re)incarnations (the 19th century)
- Unit Three: Rising From The Dead (the 20th century)
- Unit Four: World War Zee / World War Zed

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- describe the historical developments of Gothic, vampire, and zombie literature.

- articulate the cultural anxieties referenced in vampire and zombie literature.
- closely read how zombie and vampire characters, personae, and stories are composed, and interpret the textual constructions and cultural functions of these literary forms.
- analyze critical theories and their readings of the figures of the vampire and the zombie.
- define and pursue individual interests in the popular cultural and scholarly treatments of vampires and zombies.

Evaluation

To receive **credit**  for MAIS 752, students must complete and submit all of the assignments, and achieve a minimum grade of **C- (60 percent)**  for the course.

Students will be evaluated on their understanding of the concepts presented in the course and on their ability to apply those concepts. The final grade in the course will be based on the marks achieved for the following activities.

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1: Close Reading Essay	20%
Assignment 2: Critical Review	20%
Assignment 3: Research Essay or Creative Work Proposal	20%
Assignment 4: Research Essay or Creative Work	40%
Total	100%

Materials

Open-Access, authoritative digital editions will be assigned of the following works:

- John Polidori, *The Vampyre: A Tale* (1819)
- Sheridan Le Fanu, *Carmilla* (1872)
- Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897)

A dossier of secondary readings (by scholars like Fred Botting and David McNally) will be available in the course's Digital Reading Room.

NB: As a seminar for senior undergraduates and MA students, this course does presume students will have at least some familiarity with one text that is not specifically assigned for this course but that is pivotally significant to the course topic, namely, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). Shelley's novel is broadly taught in undergraduate English literature courses and widely adapted in popular culture. *Frankenstein* is also connected to vampire lore, not just conceptually (e.g. Franco Moretti's "Dialectic of Fear") but also historically: the same ghost story-writing contest that Shelley's circle held in 1816 prompted both *Frankenstein* and Polidori's *The Vampyre*. If you wish to read (or re-read) *Frankenstein* (though it's not required), the recommended open-access, digital editions of it is as follows:

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein* (1818 edition). Edited by Stuart Curran. Romantic Circles, U of Maryland.

https://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/frankenstein/1818_contents.html 

Important links

- › [Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies](#) 
- › [Focus Areas](#) 
- › [Courses](#) 
- › [Fees and Funding](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 14, June 4, 2025

Updated October 14, 2025

View **previous revision** 
