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| Veranstalter | Prof. Dr. Stephan Karschay |
| Thema | Hauntings: British and American Ghost Fiction [AA-A2, AA-A3, ENG-6/a, ENG-7/a, AA10, AA11, LAA9, LAA10, LAA12, LAA13, AA-W, AA-WB] |
| Art der Veranstaltung | Seminar II – Seminar Ib |
| Veranstaltungsnummer | 53-541 |
| Zeit | Di 10-12 |
| Raum | Phil 1219 |
| Beginn | 5. April 2016 |

Course Description:

The ghost [...] reminds us that death is the one thing certain and the thing most uncertain; the bourn from which no traveller returns, except this one. (Robert Aickman)

Ghosts have a long history. With origins in folklore and legend, they appeared on the forefront of literary production with the emergence of the Gothic novel in the late eighteenth century. In the Victorian period, they became the spectral protagonists of a distinct subgenre – the ghost story. According to a traditional critical consensus, ghosts are inimical to larger literary forms like the novel, as they require economy of style and a highly concentrated plot to be most effective. However, one of the most enduring ghost stories of the last twenty years – Susan Hill’s *The Woman in Black* (1983) – is a full-length novel, and the twenty-first century has already seen a striking number of longer novels, which have breathed new life into the formulaic and slightly time-worn genre of the shorter ghost story. Gothic scholar Andrew Smith notes how literary ghosts should always be regarded as historically specific entities: “Ghosts are never just ghosts; they provide us with an insight into what haunts our culture. Ghosts, of course, cannot die and as such are a persistent reminder of what a culture can only express in oblique terms.” (153) In other words, when the dead return, they always do so with a purpose. In this seminar, we will investigate the reasons behind these ghostly appearances in fiction and their wider cultural significations. We will also enquire into the ontological status of our fictional ghosts: Are they ‘real’ supernatural phantoms, returned from the dead to torment the living? Or are they the delusions of a novel’s narrator, a circumstance which would throw doubt on the narrative’s reliability.

In this seminar, we will read and discuss four examples of extended ghost fiction from Britain and America (in this order): Susan Hill’s *The Woman in Black* (1983), Henry James’s *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), Shirley Jackson’s *The Haunting of Hill House* (1956) and Sarah Waters’s *The Little Stranger* (2009). Furthermore, students will be asked to engage in group presentations to introduce the seminar to other selected samples of ghost fiction from Britain, Ireland and the US by classic and contemporary writers as diverse as John Banville, A. S. Byatt, Helen Dunmore, Louise Doughty, Toby Litt, Hilary Mantel, Toni Morrison, Joyce Carol Oates, Helen Oyeyemi, Edgar Allan Poe, Michèle Roberts, Will Self, Ali Smith and Edith Wharton. In order to strengthen their ability to critically appreciate ghost fiction, students will be made familiar with important theoretical concepts such as the Freudian notion of the ‘uncanny’, the textual process of ‘abjection’ and the aesthetic category of the ‘grotesque’.

Set Texts:

Hill, Susan. *The Woman in Black*. 1983. London: Vintage, 1998. Print. [ISBN: 978-0099288473]
Jackson, Shirley. *The Haunting of Hill House*. 1959. London: Penguin, 2009. [ISBN: 978-0141191447]
James, Henry. *The Turn of the Screw and Other Stories*. 1898. Ed. T. J. Lustig. Oxford: Oxford U P, 1992. Print. [ISBN: 978-0199536177]
Waters, Sarah. *The Little Stranger*. London: Virago, 2009. Print. [ISBN: 978-1844086061]

Workload:

Regular contributions to seminar discussions, lively participation in teamwork, an oral group presentation, a reading journal, and written course work. You must have read Susan Hill's *The Woman in Black* by our second session on 12 April 2016.

Introductory Reading:

Briggs, Julia. "The Ghost Story." 2000. *A Companion to the Gothic*. Ed. David Punter. Malden: Blackwell, 2001. 122-31. Print.
Cox, Michael, and R. A. Gilbert. Introduction. 1986. *The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989. ix-xvii. Print.
Smith, Andrew. "Hauntings." *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*. Ed. Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy. London: Routledge, 2007. 147-54. Print.

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| Sprechstunde während der Vorlesungszeit: | Donnerstag, 12-13 |
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| Sprechstunden während der Semesterferien: | Siehe Homepage. |
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