

Veranstalter	Janina Wierzoch
Thema	Gothic Fiction: Past and Present
Art der Veranstaltung	Seminar Ib
Veranstaltungsnummer	53-541
Zeit	2SWS, Di 10-12 c.t.
Raum	Phil 1269
Beginn	1. April 2013

The Gothic pervades popular culture: literature, film, television and other media abound in the dark, fantastic and uncanny and routinely recycle the supernatural. Thus they are part of a tradition that can be traced back to 18th century Gothicism. This course will explore these origins and the pervasive presence of the Gothic up to the present day.

Our focus will be on the Gothic romance, a genre highly popular in the 1790s. Its prototype is Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* published in 1764. The novel blends ideas about the medieval age, its presumed "imagination" and "fancy", with more recent ideals of probability to create a new kind of fiction (preface to the second edition). To further examine Gothic conventions we will turn to Ann Radcliffe's widely read and influential writings. Reading *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) we will tour obscure landscapes and follow beauty-in-distress Adeline to ruined abbeys. Heroines like her haunt the vivid imagination of devoted novel reader Catherine Morland, protagonist of Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817). The novel represents a third stage in generic development: it fictionalises (and parodies) Gothic fandom. We will also address other seminal texts in part, like Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796), and critical commentary on the Gothic.

Alternating with the discussion of the novels the students will give oral presentations on related and ensuing phenomena like crime fiction or the Gothic in architecture, film and television (see pictures below). Thus we will trace the continued fascination with and the notable cultural impact of the Gothic from the 18th to the 21st century.



Gothic Revival villa Strawberry Hill (painting ca. 1755-59); Scene from *Northanger Abbey* (ITV 2007); *Misfits* (Channel4 2009)

Texts: Horace Walpole. *The Castle of Otranto*. Oxford World's Classics, 2008.
Ann Radcliffe. *The Romance of the Forest*. Oxford World's Classics, 2009.
Jane Austen. *Northanger Abbey*. Oxford World's Classics, 2008.

Conditions of participation: *The Castle of Otranto* has to be read by April 8 (all other dates to be announced). Knowledge of all texts will be ensured by short written tests. Students might have to attend additional screening sessions.

Credit requirements: Regular and active participation, an oral presentation (also to be handed in in written form), and a term paper (8-10 pages).