


Course Overview

This course explores the history and development of the Gothic genre, with a focus on how writers captivate readers by balancing *terror* with *horror*. Across eight units, students will investigate central psychological conflicts—such as the duality of human nature and the debate over nature versus nurture—through key works, including excerpts from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Along the way, students will analyze literary devices (such as personification and foreshadowing) and trace recurring themes of power, oppression, and social anxiety as they evolve from Victorian classics to modern Gothic subgenres like Southern Gothic and apocalyptic zombie fiction.

Unit Title

Unit 1: Gothica: When Gruesome is Delicious

Time Frame

4 Weeks



Focus of the Unit

This unit establishes the historical and literary roots of the Gothic genre, defining its origins in the Middle Ages as dark and macabre. We analyze terror (fear) versus horror (shock) while examining devices such as foreshadowing, personification, and archetypes. Students trace the evolution of Gothic literature and study how writers like Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson create a pervasive mood suggesting readers cannot control their fate.

Unit Title

Unit 2: With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility

Time Frame

4 Weeks



Focus of the Unit

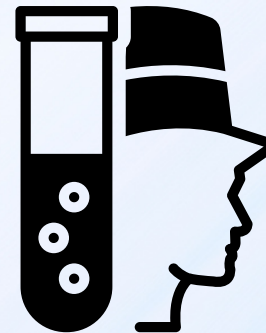
We analyze the enduring "nature versus nurture" debate and how it shapes complex characters torn between good and evil in Gothic fiction. By studying ancient narratives, like the Prometheus myth, alongside Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, students explore creation stories that challenge faith-based beliefs about human origins and examine the ethical questions of rejection and abandonment by a creator.

Unit Title

Unit 3: To Thine Own Self Be True

Time Frame

4 Weeks



Focus of the Unit

Centered on Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, this unit dissects the "duality of man." We study how the novel exposes moral contradictions in Victorian society and how Stevenson manipulates setting (safety vs. darkness) to heighten psychological terror and unleash evil acts. The unit concludes by linking Stevenson's work to Freud's theories of the Id, Ego, and Superego, key concepts for modern horror.

Unit Title

Unit 4: Gothic Themes and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

Time Frame

4 Weeks



Focus of the Unit

Using Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (Ch. 1–4), we analyze how Gothic writers challenge Victorian social norms and gender inequality. We explore the narrative's use of religious symbols versus scientific reasoning about disease and trace how modern vampire archetypes emphasize stronger female characters and taboo subjects while exploring the conflict between religion and science.

Board Approved 8/2026

Course Title

Gothic Literature 12



INNOVATIVE
ARTS ACADEMY

Course Overview

This course explores the history and development of the Gothic genre, with a focus on how writers captivate readers by balancing *terror* with *horror*. Across eight units, students will investigate central psychological conflicts—such as the duality of human nature and the debate over nature versus nurture—through key works, including excerpts from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Along the way, students will analyze literary devices (such as personification and foreshadowing) and trace recurring themes of power, oppression, and social anxiety as they evolve from Victorian classics to modern Gothic subgenres like Southern Gothic and apocalyptic zombie fiction.

Unit Title

Unit 5: Gothic Short Stories

Time Frame

4 Weeks

Unit Title

Unit 6: Gothic Poetry: Love from Beyond the Grave

Time Frame

4 Weeks

Unit Title

Unit 7: A New Identity for the Gothic Genre

Time Frame

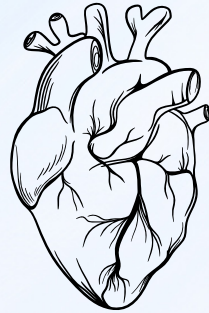
4 Weeks

Unit Title

Unit 8: A New Era of Gothic Fiction

Time Frame

4 Weeks



Focus of the Unit

This unit contrasts Gothic novels with short fiction, analyzing how texts like *The Tell-Tale Heart* follow Poe's rules for short stories (singular mood, brief reading time). We examine Poe's themes of insanity, murder, and guilt, then distinguish traditional Victorian Gothic from Southern Gothic, which addresses regional anxieties like racism, wealth disparity, and moral depravity in works by writers such as Shirley Jackson.

Focus of the Unit

Students develop critical reading skills for poetry, analyzing how devices like allegory, alliteration, metaphor, and apostrophe create a macabre mood and convey complex themes. We examine early poems (like Bürger's *Lenore*) and trace themes of unrequited love, despair, and death in the works of Victorian poets (Browning, Rossetti) and American Gothic writers (Poe, Dickinson).

Focus of the Unit

We analyze how modern Gothic writers address social justice issues by using "othering" to highlight class conflict and oppression. Students study Black American female writers exploring racial injustice and investigate subgenres like the Gothic Detective Novel (Doyle, Christie, Zafón) and the Psychological Thriller, noting how they adapt Gothic mood, suspense, and inner conflict to terrify modern audiences.

Focus of the Unit

This unit synthesizes persistent Gothic themes (power vs. oppression, good vs. evil) across two centuries. We explore how modern anxieties appear in subgenres like EcoGothic, Urban Gothic, and Sapphic Gothic. Finally, we analyze how zombies and apocalyptic settings act as modern symbols of societal distress, reflecting the tension between the "haves" and "have-nots" in the fight for scarce resources.

Unit Title	Unit 1: Gothica: When Gruesome is Delicious
Time Frame	6 Weeks



INNOVATIVE
ARTS ACADEMY

	Essential Question(s)
	Terror or horror: What is scarier? How do literary devices create fate/mood? Where does Gothic literature come from? How do Gothic themes connect to psychological trauma?

	Focus of the Unit
	The focus of this unit is understanding where the "Gothic" style comes from, exploring dark settings, distinguishing between fear (terror) and disgust (horror), and identifying key literary devices used by early masters

Standards	CC.1.3.11-12.A Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more themes or central ideas of a text, including the development and interaction of the themes; provide an objective summary of the text	CC.1.3.11-12.F: Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts	CC.1.4.11-12.M: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events	CC.1.5.11-12.A: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions
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Learning Targets
I can outline the origins and evolution of Gothic literature.
Learning Targets
I can examine which literary devices Gothic writers employ to create mood.

Learning Targets
I can differentiate between horror and terror as used in Gothic literature.
Learning Targets
I can analyze elements of Gothic literature using sample poems and short stories.



Resources	Google and related programs, eDynamics, Schoology, <u>Pacing Guide</u> .
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Unit Title**Unit 2: With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility**

Time Frame

6 Weeks

**INNOVATIVE**
ARTS ACADEMY**Essential Question(s)**

Does nature or nurture create evil?
Myths reflect power and responsibility values?
Does rejection create evil or humanity?
How do *Frankenstein* adaptations change meaning?

Focus of the Unit

The focus of this unit is monsters and morality: Investigating whether people are born good or evil (nature vs. nurture), exploring how creation myths (like Prometheus) influence monster stories, and analyzing Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as a story of rejection and humanity.

Standards

CC.1.3.11–12.A: Determine and analyze the relationship between two or more themes or central ideas of a text.

CC.1.3.9–10.B: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly.

CC.1.4.11–12.V: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question.

CC.1.4.11–12.A: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas.

Learning Targets

I can differentiate between how genetic and environmental factors impact human character development

Learning Targets

I can explore how Mary Shelley examines our attraction to superficial beauty in others.

Learning Targets

I can describe how the Prometheus myth challenges faith-based beliefs about the creation of humans.

Learning Targets

I can recognize current and competing interpretations of the story of *Frankenstein's* monster.

**Resources**

Google and related programs, eDynamics, Schoology, Pacing Guide.

Unit Title	Unit 3: To Thine Own Self Be True
Time Frame	6 Weeks



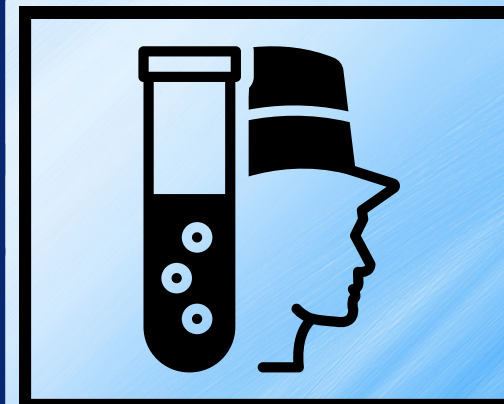
INNOVATIVE
ARTS ACADEMY

	Essential Question(s)		Focus of the Unit
	How does duality reflect Victorian hypocrisy? Does setting enable characters' evil acts? Do Freud's theories explain duality/evil? Why do Jekyll/Hyde themes endure?		The focus of this unit is The Double Life: Exploring the internal conflict (good vs. evil) and the hypocrisies of the Victorian Age through Robert Louis Stevenson's <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>, and connecting this duality to theories of human personality (Freud's id, ego, and superego).

Standards	CC.1.3.11–12.C: Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.	CC.1.4.11–12.M: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.	CC.1.4.11–12.U: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update writing.	CC.1.3.11–12.G: Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem.
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Learning Targets
I can determine how Victorian-Age Christian teachings created unattainable standards for society.
Learning Targets
I can assess how writers expanded on traditional Gothic settings to increase the sense of terror.

Learning Targets
I can analyze human beings' internal conflict between good and evil, or man's dual nature.
Learning Targets
I can discuss how Sigmund Freud's theories (Id, Ego, and Superego) provide a foundation for modern storytellers of terror.



Resources	Google and related programs, eDynamics, Schoology, <u>Pacing Guide</u> .
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Unit Title	Unit 4: Gothic Themes and Bram Stoker's Dracula
Time Frame	4 Weeks



INNOVATIVE
ARTS ACADEMY

	Essential Question(s)		Focus of the Unit
	Vampires challenge gender roles/Victorian values? How have vampire characteristics changed? Does Stoker use religion over science? Does art imitate life, or vice versa?		This unit focuses on the relationship between nature, emotion, and the self, analyzing poetry and engaging with the science fiction genre through <i>Frankenstein</i>

Standards	CC.1.3.11–12.H: Demonstrate knowledge of foundational works of literature... including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.	CC.1.2.11–12.F: Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.	CC.1.4.11–12.V: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question.	CC.1.5.11–12.C: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media.
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Learning Targets	Learning Targets
I can discuss how Gothic writers influenced attitudes about gender roles and gender stereotypes.	I can examine the clash between traditional and modern values found in Dracula.
Learning Targets	Learning Targets
I can identify examples in modern vampiric literature of the conflict between religion and science.	I can explore the popularity and evolution of the vampire genre in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.



Resources	Google and related programs, eDynamics, Schoology, <u>Pacing Guide</u> .
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Unit Title	Unit 5: Gothic Short Stories
Time Frame	4 Weeks



INNOVATIVE
ARTS ACADEMY

	Essential Question(s)
	How do short stories enhance fear? Southern Gothic: uniquely American fears? How did Poe's life influence gothic themes? Does guilt create internal terror?

	Focus of the Unit
	The focus of this unit is Focused Fear: Analyzing how short stories differ from novels, exploring classic American Gothic themes in Edgar Allen Poe's tales, and distinguishing the unique American anxieties found in Southern Gothic literature.

Standards	CC.1.3.11–12.C: Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama. CC.1.3.11–12.B: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis. CC.1.4.11–12.W: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources. CC.1.5.11–12.A: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.
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Learning Targets
I can explain how Gothic short stories differ from Gothic novels and novellas.
Learning Targets
I can analyze "The Tell-Tale Heart" and Poe's exploration of personal guilt.

Learning Targets
I can differentiate between American Southern Gothic literature and traditional Victorian-era Gothic literature.
Learning Targets
I can develop an original Gothic ghost story (Victorian or Southern style).



Resources	Google and related programs, eDynamics, Schoology, <u>Pacing Guide</u>.
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Unit Title	Unit 6: Gothic Poetry: Love from Beyond the Grave
Time Frame	4 Weeks



INNOVATIVE
ARTS ACADEMY



Essential Question(s)
How do poetic devices examine destiny, despair, and death? How did old poems set dark stage? Does mood change when read aloud? How do poets explore sacrifice, temptation, and lost love?

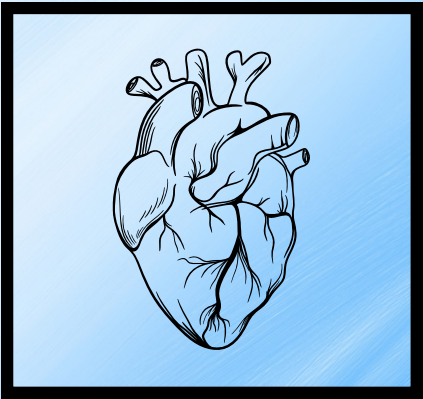


Focus of the Unit
The focus of this unit is Rhymes of Ruin: Developing critical reading skills for poetry, identifying how poetic devices create mood and convey themes, and comparing Victorian and American Gothic poets.

Standards	CC.1.3.11–12.F: Evaluate how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts. CC.1.3.9–10.D: Determine the point of view of the text and analyze the impact the point of view has on the meaning of the text. CC.1.4.11–12.Q: Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of writing, using precise language. CC.1.5.11–12.E: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks.
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Learning Targets
I can develop critical reading skills used to analyze Gothic poetry.
Learning Targets
I can recognize the roots of Gothic poetry in early works like Bürger's "Lenore".

Learning Targets
I can examine the poetry of Victorian Gothic writers (Browning, Rossetti).
Learning Targets
I can compare and contrast the works of American Gothic poets Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson.



Resources	Google and related programs, eDynamics, Schoology, <u>Pacing Guide</u> .
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Unit Title	Unit 7: A New Identity for the Gothic Genre
Time Frame	4 Weeks



INNOVATIVE
ARTS ACADEMY

	Essential Question(s)		Focus of the Unit
	How do we see "Othering" as a challenge in social injustice/class? Do modern thrillers use Gothic elements? Black writers expose racial/sexual oppression? Terror or horror in psychological thrillers?		The focus of this unit is Modern Darkness: Analyzing how contemporary Gothic literature tackles social justice issues, including "othering" and racial oppression, and exploring modern sub-genres: the Gothic Detective Novel and the Psychological Thriller.

Standards	CC.1.3.11–12.G: Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem.	CC.1.4.11–12.V: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question.	CC.1.5.11–12.A: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.	CC.1.2.11–12.C: Analyze the interaction and development of a complex set of ideas, sequence of events, or specific individuals over the course of the text.
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Learning Targets
I can explain how Gothic writers challenge social justice issues related to discrimination and class conflict.
Learning Targets
I can apply the Gothic style of writing to mystery and detective stories (e.g., Doyle, Christie, Zafón).

Learning Targets
I can connect the Gothic genre to novels and films categorized as psychological thrillers and film noir.
Learning Targets
I can analyze the works of African American women writers who use the Gothic genre to explore racial injustice.



Resources	Google and related programs, eDynamics, Schoology, <u>Pacing Guide</u>.
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Unit Title	Unit 8: A New Era of Gothic Fiction
Time Frame	4 Weeks



INNOVATIVE
ARTS ACADEMY



Essential Question(s)

Which Gothic themes have persisted today?
How can Apocalypse fiction reflect modern anxieties?
How do new sub-genres address modern social tensions?
Why are modern vampires relatable now?



Focus of the Unit

The focus of this unit is The Next Generation of Fear: Identifying long-lasting Gothic themes, comparing traditional and modern vampires, exploring new 21st-century subgenres, and examining the symbolism of Zombies and the Apocalypse as metaphors for societal distress.

Standards	CC.1.3.11–12.G: Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem.	CC.1.4.11–12.V: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question.	CC.1.5.11–12.A: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.	CC.1.2.11–12.C: Analyze the interaction and development of a complex set of ideas, sequence of events, or specific individuals over the course of the text.
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Learning Targets
I can identify elements of Gothic works that occur throughout the past two centuries.
Learning Targets
I can analyze how racism is depicted in 21st-century Gothic literature.

Learning Targets
I can compare and contrast nineteenth- and 21st-century vampires in Gothic literature.
Learning Targets
I can examine the use of zombies and apocalyptic settings as symbols of societal distress.



Resources	Google and related programs, eDynamics, Schoology, <u>Pacing Guide</u> .
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