

Slavic 130: Introduction to Slavic Culture

The Vampire in East European and American Culture

Lectures: TTh 1:30–3:18, Hitchcock 035

Instructor: Dr. Daniel Collins

Office Hours: T 9–12 and by appointment

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Discussion Sections: W 11:30–12:18, 12:30–1:18, 1:30–2:18

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Course Description

Slavic 130 is a course that discusses different approaches to the problem of Evil. We will focus on the myth of the vampire, an embodiment of Evil that has had enduring power both in East European folk belief and in American popular culture right up to the present day. It has been observed that "every age creates the vampire that it needs" (Nina Auerbach). In other words, different cultures and time periods have different views on the definition and causes of Evil (or even whether Evil exists at all). Therefore, we have to examine the images of the vampire and Evil (or its absence) in the cultural contexts that gave them rise:

- Traditional East and East Central European peasant culture
- Modern East and East Central European urban culture
- Western Europe in the Ages of Reason, Romanticism, and Progressivism
- American popular culture in the 20th and 21st centuries

In our study of vampire beliefs and evil, we will cover a wide variety of topics:

- The geography, religions, and history of Eastern Europe

- Folk beliefs about time, death, the soul, the family, fertility, and diseases
- The function of monsters in coping with fears, identity issues, & repressed desires
- Rites of passage and their function in society
- Boundary-crossers and their demonization in East European folklore
- Folk monsters related to the vampire (Evil Eye, *rusalka*, *nav*, *mora*, etc.)
- Views on Evil in different religions—polytheism, dualism, Christianity, and Islam
- Views on Evil from major philosophers and theologians—Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Leibniz, Voltaire, Rousseau, Sade, the Romantics, Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche, and Freud
- The vampire's changing image over the ages and how it relates to different ideas of Evil
- Dracula; his image in Romania; how he came to be a symbol of evil in the West
- Why the vampire has had such enduring power and adaptability as a cultural symbol

Main learning objectives

- Slavic 130 is a GEC International Issues (non-U.S., Western) Culture course.
- The general *goal* of the category is to help students become educated, productive, and principled citizens of their nation and the world.
- The general *learning objective* of the category is for students to exhibit an understanding of political, economic, cultural, physical, and social differences among the nations of the world.
- In accordance with this objective, in Slavic 130 you will learn about the cultures, geography, religions, languages, and history of the East and East Central European peoples. You will be able to discuss them and compare them with those of other regions of the world. You will be able to apply your knowledge to the analysis of authentic folklore material. You will have a good foundation for further study and for understanding the background of current events in the region.
- You will be able to define and discuss *folklore*—what it is, how it is studied, how it functions in societies (including our own)—as well as major concepts in folklore in general and East European folklore in particular. You will be able to apply these concepts to the analysis of folklore material.
- You will learn about how different religions, cultures, historical epochs, and important thinkers have envisioned Evil over the ages. You will be able to discuss, compare, and contrast these visions of Evil. This will give you the ability to think about the problem of Evil on your own.
- You will develop critical thinking and writing skills through analysis of folklore texts, historical documents, literary works, and films.

Disability Accommodations

If you need accommodation because of a disability, please contact me confidentially before the end of the second week to discuss your specific needs. In accordance with university policy, accommodation can be given only in the case of disabilities documented by the Office of Disability Services (150 Pomerene Hall, 292-3307).

Grading Scale

93–100 A

90–92 A-

88–89 B+

83–87 B

80–82 B-

78–79 C+

73–77 C

70–72 C-

68–69 D+

66–67 D

65 and below E

Graded Work (Subject to Change with Due Notice)

Study questions accompany the readings in the course packet; additional study questions and reading guides will be given out in class to help you prepare for quizzes and exams and will be posted on the Web site.

1. **Midterm 1** (20% of the grade): *Wednesday, 10/11* in the discussion sections. The exam will be 48 minutes long and will have fill-in-the-blank and short-answer questions about the readings from Unit 1 (pp. 1-52) and Units 2–3. A study guide will be distributed in advance, and there will be review sessions on Friday, 10/6.
2. **Midterm 2** (20% of the grade): *Wednesday, 10/25* in the discussion sections. The exam will be 48 minutes long and will have fill-in-the-blank and short-answer questions about the lectures and readings from Unit 1 (pp. 52–80) and Units 3-5, as well as a ten-point analysis of a vampire text. A study guide will be distributed in advance, and there will be review sessions on Friday, 10/20.
3. **Final Examination** (20% of the grade): *Wednesday, 12/6, 1:30–3:18* in Hitchcock 35. The examination is *cumulative*. It will be 96 minutes long and will have fill-in-the-blank and short-answer questions, a short essay, and a ten-point analysis of a vampire text. A study guide will be distributed in advance, and there will be review sessions on Monday, 12/4.
4. **Attendance, Participation, and Professionalism** (20% of the grade): You are expected to attend both the lectures and discussion sections.
 1. Attendance is vital for your success in Slavic 130, as in any college class. Each roll that you miss is 1 point off your grade for the course. If you are ill, you must provide a doctor's note on your return if you wish to be excused. Other excuses must be cleared with your TA in advance.
 2. There will be occasional in-class writing assignments to check how well you are learning the material. There may be pop quizzes to check whether you have prepared the readings.
 3. We encourage you to participate actively. Active participation will be noted and taken into consideration when we assign the final grade.
5. **Homework Assignments** (20% of the grade):
There will be 15 possible homework assignments, drawn from the study questions and worksheets in the course packet. You are only required to turn in **TEN** of these assignments;

please make sure you keep track of your assignments. If you wish to do more than ten, we will drop the lowest grades. Each assignment will be worth up to 2 points of your grade for the course; the grading scale will be 0 (no work turned in), 1 (work turned in but insufficient effort shown; poorly written), 1.5 (shows evidence that the student has completed the reading, and the questions are fully answered), 2 (well-written, well-developed, shows careful thought on the topic). Each individual assignment will have its own instructions.

The homeworks will be due at the beginning of the Wednesday recitation sections. As you can drop 5 of the 15 assignments, **no late work will be accepted; email submissions will not be accepted.** Homework assignments can be handwritten neatly unless otherwise specified.

Assignment (Do at least 10)	Unit	Due Date
Vampires in Twentieth-Century Bulgarian Folk Belief	2	Wednesday, September 27
Folktales for Analysis	2	Wednesday, September 27
Folktales for Analysis	3	Wednesday, October 4
Evil in Traditional Christian Thought	4	Wednesday, October 11
Folktales for Analysis	5	Wednesday, October 18
Leibniz and the Problem of Evil	6	Wednesday, November 1
Voltaire on Leibniz, Evil, and Superstition	6	Wednesday, November 1
Rousseau's Views on Evil and Society	7	Wednesday, November 1
The Age of Reason	6	Wednesday, November 8
Gothic(k)	7	Wednesday, November 8
de Sade, "Dialogue Between a Priest & a Dying Man"	7	Wednesday, November 8
Romanticism	7	Wednesday, November 15
Karl Marx's Redefinition of Evil	8	Wednesday, November 15
Nietzsche and the Superman	8	Wednesday, November 29
Sigmund Freud	9	Wednesday, November 29

Extra Credit: You can receive **up to 10 points** extra credit on your grade for the class. There are two forms of extra credit:

1. Attending some or all of the films in the "Nights of the Slavic Living Dead" series (October 28–31), including the prescreening talk, and answering the questions we will provide. Five films will be shown; each film is worth up to 2 points; the grading scale will be 1 (work turned in but insufficient effort shown; poorly written), 1.5 (the questions are fully answered), 2 (well-written, well-developed, shows careful thought on the topic).
2. Writing a report (5 pages, stapled, double-spaced, 1-inch margins on all sides, 12-point Times or Times New Roman font). Be sure to specify your section and TA on the top of the first page. Reports will be graded for accuracy and insight; the following scale will be used: 3 (work turned in but insufficient effort shown; poorly written), 4 (shows evidence that the student has completed the reading, and the questions are fully answered), 5 (well-written, well-developed, shows careful thought on the topic). Extra-credit reports will be due on **Thursday, 11/30**, and will be returned at the final exam. Email submissions are not allowed. You must have your topic approved by Dr. Collins. The following are some suggested topics: 1) discussion of folk beliefs (e.g., about the soul), customs, or rituals (e.g., what happens at childbirths, weddings, or funerals and why) from some culture known to you, based on interviews with elderly family members or with acquaintances from other countries; 2) review of a vampire novel, discussing in particular the novel's presentation of Evil and how it fits into the models of Evil discussed in class.

Makeup Policy

Makeups require **prior permission** from your teaching assistant or from Dr. Collins, if you cannot reach your TA. If you are forced to miss class on the day of a quiz or exam, you *must* contact your teaching assistant or Dr. Collins (leaving a message at 292–6733 if no one is available) **in advance**. If you are ill, you must provide a doctor's note when you return if you wish to be counted as excused for that day.

Grading Appeals

If you have questions about a grade, please first consult your TA, then Dr. Collins. If you disagree with a correction on a graded work, please be prepared to show us that your answer was drawn from the readings or lecture notes. (The procedure for appealing grades after the end of the quarter is given on the Registrar's Web site <http://www.ureg.ohio-state.edu/ourweb/scheduling/CourseBulletinInfo2005-06.pdf>: Go to p. 4 of the pdf file and refer to the section entitled "Alteration of marks.")

Incompletes

The grade of "Incomplete" may be assigned, **upon request** only, in cases of students who have been unable to complete their coursework due to extraordinary circumstances—**verified** medical problems or family emergencies. The missing work must be completed by the sixth week of the following of the following quarter; if not, the incomplete will automatically elapse, and the

alternative grade (based on the coursework that was actually completed) will be automatically assigned.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism on any assignment is **NOT allowed** and **will be treated as Academic Misconduct**; that means that, in writing your short-response and extra-credit papers, you must cite your sources appropriately *whenever* you use information prepared by other people (including written sources, Web sites, lectures, and other spoken communications).

The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so we recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct. If an instructor suspects that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, s/he is obligated by University Rules to report his/her suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that a student has violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact your teacher or consult the [Committee on Academic Misconduct Web pages](#).

Topics and Assignments

Note: The readings and assignments should be prepared in advance!

L = Lecture R = Recitation *Italics/Bold* = Graded work

Required Texts

- **Course Packet** (= CP). This is available through UniPrint. You can pick up a copy at their Tuttle Store (next to Central Classrooms), or you can go to their Web site and select a pickup location for delivery (<http://www.uniprint.osu.edu>).
- **The Penguin Book of Vampire Stories**, by Alan Ryan (= PBVS). Available at SBX.
- **Dracula**, by Bram Stoker (any *unabridged* edition will do). Available at SBX.

Class Schedule [Subject to Revision]

Week 1 Introduction

9/20: R Topics: Class policies and introductions

9/21: L Topics: Functions of monsters; monsters and Evil; typology of vampires.

Week 2 Unit 2: Eastern European Folklore about Vampires

Topics: What is folklore? The Eastern European folk vampire.

9/26: L Reading (CP): Unit 1: "Guide," pp. 1–28; Unit 2: Introduction; "The Field of Folklore"; "East European Vampire Beliefs"

9/27: R Homework (CP): Unit 2: "*Vampires in Twentieth-Century Bulgarian Folk Belief*"; *Folktales for Analysis*.

9/28: L Reading (CP): Unit 2: "Forensic Pathology and the European Vampire"

Week 3 Unit 3: The Peasant Way of Life and its Dangers (The Vampire and Other Traitors Within the Gates)

Topics: Peasant lifestyle and economy; the joint extended family (*zadruga*); the Image of Limited Good; the Evil Eye; the Problem of Evil

10/3: L Reading (CP): Unit 1, pp. 29–52; Unit 3: Introduction; "The Peasant Way of Life"; "A Zadruga in Bileca Rudine"

10/4: R Homework (CP): Unit 3: *Folktales for Analysis*

10/5: L Reading (CP): Unit 3: "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good"; "The Evil Eye in Romania and its Antidotes"

10/6: Review Sessions for Midterm 1 (HH 406, 1-4)

Week 4 Unit 4: The Problem of Evil and Evil in Peasant Culture

Topics: The Problem of Evil in Eastern European religions and folklore; modern views on the Problem of Evil (introduction)

10/10: L Readings (CP): Unit 4: Introduction; "Russian and Romanian Myths," "The Seed of Evil Within"

10/11: R *Midterm 1*

Homework (CP): Unit 4: *Worksheet on Evil in Traditional Christian Thought*

10/12 L Reading (CP): Unit 4: Folktales for Analysis; "Rebellion"; "Excerpt from 'Salem's Lot'; "The Question of Evil in Modern Society."

Week 5 Unit 5: Rites of Passage, Liminals, and Demonizing the Unincorporated (The

Unquiet Dead as Boundary-Crossers)

Topics: The definition and role of rites of passage; liminality and folk monsters

10/10: L Readings (CP): Unit 4: Introduction; "Russian and Romanian Myths," "The Seed of Evil

10/17: L Reading (CP): Unit 5: "Introduction"; "Introduction: Raising the Issues"; "Russian Peasant Life-Cycle Rites"

10/18: R Homework (CP): Unit 5: *Folktales for Analysis*

10/19: L Reading (CP): Unit 1, pp. 52–81

Film: *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*

10/20: Review Sessions for Midterm 2 (HH 406, 1-4)

Week 6 Unit 5 (Conclusion); the Beginning of the Film Vampire

Topics: Folk beliefs about territorial movement and women's status; summary of rites of passage; summary of the folkloric vampire; Murnau's *Nosferatu*; Expressionism

10/24 L Reading (CP): Unit 5: "Spacey Soviets and the Russian Attitude Toward Territorial Passage; "Mermaids (Rusalki) and Russian Beliefs about Women"

10/25 R **Midterm 2**

10/26 L Film: *Nosferatu*

10/27-31 Extra Credit Film Festival: Nights of the Slavic Living Dead

Week 7 Unit 6: Western Culture, I: the Sleep of Reason

Topics: The Western encounter with East European vampire beliefs; Enlightenment views on Evil (Leibniz and Voltaire); Gothic(k) and Romanticism; the Byronic Hero/Fatal Man

10/31: L Reading (CP): Unit 6: "Nice to Eat You"; "An Enlightenment View of Vampirism"

11/1: R Homework (CP): "**Leibniz and the Problem of Evil**"; "**Voltaire on Leibniz, Evil, and Superstition**"; "**Rousseau's Views on Evil and Society**"

11/2: L Reading: "The Decline of Witches and the Rise of Vampires" (CP); "The Vampyre" (PBVS, pp. 6–24)

Week 8 Unit 7: Western Culture, II: Worldly Corruption and the Divided Self

Topics: Romantic dualism; Nineteenth-century views on Evil; Marx on evil; the Fatal Woman

11/7: L Reading: "Viy" (CP); "Varney the Vampyre" (PBVS, pp. 25–35)

11/8: R Homework (CP): "**The Age of Reason**"; "**Gothic(k)**"; "**Dialogue Between a Priest and a Dying Man**"

11/9: L Reading (PBVS): *Carmilla* (pp. 71–137)

Week 9 Unit 8: Progress, the Shadow of the Past, and Degeneracy

Topics: Vlad the Impaler; sources of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*; Lombroso's Criminal Anthropology; Nietzsche and the Superman; atavism and degeneracy

11/14: L Reading: *Dracula*, Chapters 1–8

11/15: R Homework (CP): "**Romanticism**"; "**Karl Marx's Redefinition of Evil**"

11/16: L Reading: *Dracula*, Chapters 9-16

Week 10 Unit 8 (Continued)

Topics: *Dracula*, "Manly Men," and "Suddenly Sexual Women"; *Dracula* on film (part 1)

11/21: L Reading: *Dracula*, Chapters 17–27

11/22: R No discussion section (Thanksgiving holiday)

11/23: L No class (Thanksgiving holiday)

Week 11 Unit 9: Modern Culture: Repression, the Death Wish, and Technological Nightmares

Topics: Drives, repressions, and the Death Wish in Freud; evil in modern thought; *Dracula* on film (part 2); contemporary East European and American vampire beliefs

11/28: L Reading: "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" (CP); "The Girl with the Hungry Eyes" (PBVP, pp. 334–48); "The Mindworm" (PBVP, pp. 349–61); "Love-Starved" (PBVS, pp. 441–50)

11/29: R Homework (CP): "**Nietzsche and the Superman**"; "**Sigmund Freud**"

11/30: L Reading (CP): "Vampires: Fabrication or Reality?"

11/30: Extra-credit papers due

12/4: Review sessions for final exam, 1-4

12/6: **Final Exam**, 1:30–3:18 in Hitchcock 035