Course Description. Sigmund Freud’s 1919 essay describes the uncanny as “that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar.” In fact, he traces the English word to its German cognate, *unheimlich*, which means “unhomely.” In this course, we will read fiction and view films that depict uncanny American homes. Some have ghosts, some hide monsters, and some, perhaps, reflect the monstrous or eerie within narrators, characters, and readers. By turns welcoming, terrifying, familiar, and utterly unknowable, the American homes we visit in imagination will help us to explore histories of gender, race, class, and literary production from the antebellum to the contemporary period. As part of our exploration of the familiar/unfamiliar, we will read contemporary texts set in or responsive to the antebellum US. Authors include Harriet Jacobs, Hannah Crafts, Frank J. Webb, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Toni Morrison, and Colson Whitehead.

Course Objectives. This course will support the following learning goals:

- Introduce students to literary and cultural histories in the United States.
- Introduce students to theories of genre, perception, and aesthetics in literary study.
- Support the development of student libraries and vocabularies for the further study of literature and American culture.
- Encourage students to make connections between imaginative texts and theoretical frameworks, and to articulate those connections with textual analysis and argumentation.

Required Texts
**Assignments & Point Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close Reading Entry (4@5% each)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyword Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Literature Review</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Interpretive Essay</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Close Reading Journal**

Across the semester, you will write four (4) short “close reading entries” that grapple directly and carefully with textual excerpts and their implications. One or several of these will form the springboard for your final interpretive essay.

**Keyword Presentation**

Each student will prepare an 8-10 minute presentation offering an overview/introduction to one of the course’s major keywords (the conceptual and theoretical phrases we work with during the semester). This presentation will include original research & synthesis, and possible application of keyword to a selected course text.

**Critical Literature Review Essay**

This project will take the place of a more traditional Annotated Bibliography. As a part of your conceptualizing and drafting process for the final assignment, you will survey at least three scholarly texts (secondary sources) and compare them, using an organizing idea, principle, or text to guide your review essay.

**Final Essay**

This Final Interpretive Essay in this course will be an original work of literary scholarship produced across the semester. It will include a fresh and focused argumentative thesis, close readings/interpretations of primary works, and engagement with secondary sources.

**Specific Course Policies.**

**Class Participation.** Success in literary and cultural criticism requires good communication and productive interaction, so attending class and contributing usefully to discussion are important parts of the final grade in this class. As graduate students in English, you are expected to have hard copies of texts with you to read with, mark on, and focus your intellectual labor in the course. If you cannot afford the texts in this course, please see me and we can address difficulties about textbook access together.
Every student should arrive to class prepared by having done the reading and considered a question or two about the text. Asking informed and productive question is as important as answering them! In a graduate-level seminar, you should be prepared to contribute your voice and perspective to our learning community each time we meet. The humanities graduate seminar is a specific learning content with explicit expectations about how we build knowledge and share it together during seminar. If you anticipate participation being for you a major source of anxiety—either in terms of grade or in terms of practice—please speak with me about some strategies we can employ together.

Studying American literature in a serious way means getting to enjoy the pleasures of beautiful writing and the insights of sophisticated minds. It also means confronting violent histories, especially histories of race, sex, and labor. Our readings include accounts of physical abuses, rapes, and other harms, as well as instances of racist epithets. Indeed, one of the more difficult elements of working with literatures of race and ethnicity in the US is how often they confront us with the prejudices and oppressions that permeate our national culture. We will talk openly about how hard it can be to read this work, but all assigned readings are required. Also important is your willingness to engage thoughtfully, generously, and sympathetically with your peers in this learning community. Please see Professor Salter to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your own participation in this course.

Your participation grade will be determined by attendance (we meet only once per week!), preparation (you have the required text; you demonstrate engagement with it through contributions in class), and completion of required class activities and contributions.

**Class Attendance.** Students are allowed a maximum of two (2) absences. All absences count equally, irrespective of the cause, and students who exceed 2 absences will be penalized .05 points on their final grade for every absence over the limit.

Additionally:

- Students who participate in university-sanctioned activities should meet with me during the first week of classes.
- If you are unable to attend class, you do not need to email me to explain the circumstances. You should contact another student in class and copy his/her notes.

For more detail, consult TAMU-CC’s “General Academic Policies and Regulations.”

http://catalog.tamucc.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=177

**Communication.** As members of a learning community, everyone is expected to be up-to-date and responsible for any changes or additions to the course schedule. I will be using your TAMU-CC email, through Blackboard, to send messages about readings, assignments, and assorted matters to the class throughout the semester. It is imperative to check email regularly and stay aware of what is happening in and outside of the classroom. I will also take my communication responsibility to you seriously: if I have not responded to an email within 24 hours, do not hesitate to follow up. Be advised that emails sent after 10pm will not be read until the following day.

**Work Policies.** All late work will lose 1/3 of a letter grade each day for as long as the assignment continues to be overdue. Students must complete all major assignments (as listed in the syllabus) in order to pass the course.
**General Educational Policies.**

**Classroom / Professional Behavior.** Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Disabilities Accommodations.** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Basic Needs Statement.** Insufficient basic needs—food, a safe living space—can affect your performance in classes and make your university experience more challenging. If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food, or you lack a safe and stable place to live, you might consider several resources on campus.

- Contact the Division of Student Engagement and Success for support. Specifically, the office of Student Assistance provides consultations, resource management, and institutional support for “extenuating circumstances.” Their website is here: [http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/StudentAssistance.html](http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/StudentAssistance.html). The Student Assistance Coordinator is Kristeen Gonzalez. UC318, M-F 8AM-5PM. 361-825-2612
- If you do not have access to or cannot afford sufficient food, be aware that “Izzy’s Food Pantry” provides on-campus access to food. Find more information here: [http://seas.tamucc.edu/FoodPantry/](http://seas.tamucc.edu/FoodPantry/)
- If you feel comfortable doing so, please talk with me and / or your other professors. We may be able to assist.

**Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct.** English graduate students are expected to "conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty" (Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Graduate Catalog). TAMU-CC identifies “Academic Misconduct” as
“engaging in an act that violates the standards of the academic integrity policy as described in the Student Code of Conduct and Procedure for Academic Misconduct Cases.” These include cheating, plagiarism, multiple submissions, complicity, fabrication, falsification, and misrepresentation (Student Code of Conduct, Article III, 1. Academic Misconduct). In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment will result in failure of the course and possible recommendation for dismissal from the academic program (TAMUCC Graduate Catalog, Academic Honesty).

For each Academic Misconduct case, the faculty member must file a record, including a description of the disciplinary action taken, along with any materials involved, with his or her college dean, who will forward a copy to the Office of Student Affairs. Further information regarding the judicial process is available on the website of the Office for Student Affairs. Specifically, academic misconduct includes plagiarism, the act of using someone else’s words and ideas without attribution. The TAMU-CC Student Code of Conduct defines Plagiarism as “Intentionally, knowingly, or carelessly presenting the work of another as one’s own without proper acknowledgement of the source, with the exception of information that is generally accepted as common knowledge.”

Examples:

- Using another’s work from print, web or other sources without acknowledging the source.
- Quoting from a source without citation.
- Using facts, figures, graphs, charts or information without acknowledgement of the source.
- Using a past assignment the student has completed as a portion of a new assignment, without providing citation. Please note that without instructor permission, this is also considered a multiple submission violation.

We will discuss MLA citation style and the appropriate use of academic sources and conventions throughout the semester. Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions about academic misconduct and academic integrity at any time.

If you are confused about citation of quotes or ideas, please visit the Writing Center or see me to get help. Information on MLA documentation rules is available at Purdue University’s OWL: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/, and from our local Writing Center at CASA. See the TAMU-CC Graduate Catalogue for more detail.

http://catalog.tamucc.edu/content.php?catoid=18&navoid=730#Academic_Integrity

学术咨询。重要的是所有学生都应定期与学术顾问会面。每位大学都有一个学术咨询中心，由全职专业顾问协助学生进行课程选择、学位计划和其它学术事务。要了解如何联系合适的顾问，请访问：http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php

For more information, go to: http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac

Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.
Dropping a Class. Although I hope we will learn together for the course of this semester, sometimes a student must drop a course. Please see me if you are considering doing so. You must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 10 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Grade Appeals. Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

Statement of Academic Continuity. In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

Campus Carry. Beginning August 1, 2016, it is legal in the State of Texas for “a handgun license holder to carry a concealed handgun on the campus of an institution of higher education.” As a state institution of higher learning, Texas A&M–Corpus Christi must recognize and abide by the Campus Carry law, which limits concealed carry to those over the age of 21 who hold the appropriate permit. By law, employees of TAMUCC cannot restrict permit holders, under the appropriate circumstances, from carrying a firearm on campus (with the exception of university restricted zones, which are clearly marked). I hope that you will consider participating in our learning community’s safe-space mentality in the classroom and my office. If you have concerns about this law and its effect on your learning experience, you can speak to your professor, a representative of the office of Student Engagement and Success, an employee of Campus Security, or a member of the ICARE community. For more information about this policy, please consult the TAMUCC website at http://campuscarry.tamucc.edu/ and http://www.tamus.edu/campus-carry-rules/

Reading Schedule
NB: Professor reserves the right to make changes as needed to the syllabus.

Week 2. Jan. 27
Introductory.

Hannah Crafts, Bondswoman’s Narrative

Week 4. Feb. 10

Hannah Crafts, Bondswoman’s Narrative
Week 5. Feb. 17
*Close Reading Entry #1*

Week 6. Feb. 24

Week 7. March 2
Theory Week: Hortense Spillers; Toni Morrison
~SPRING BREAK. March 9-13~

Week 8. March 16
Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad*

Week 9. March 23
Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*
*CRE#3*

Week 10. March 30

Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*

Week 11. April 6
Theory Week TBD
*Lit Review Essay*

Week 12. April 13
James, *The Turn of the Screw*
*CRE#4*

Week 13. April 20
Feldman, “Turning the Screw of Interpretation”

Week 14. April 27
Morrison, *A Mercy*

Week 15. May 4
Conclusion

**Final Interpretative Essay** due during Finals Week