

Periodisk evaluering av ENG4415: Horror Writing in English

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7 out of 16 students responded to the questionnaire.

1. Gi en vurdering av:

Pensum (innhold, omfang): ENG4415 covers a wide but eclectic historical range of horror writing, from the eighteenth century to the present day, aiming to explore specific topics and tropes within horror writing, and to reflect on horror writing theoretically, rather than to give a historical overview. Based on my experience in the classroom as well as student feedback in class, in the anonymous midway evaluation, and in the questionnaire, this largely worked well – students expressed enthusiasm for the texts, and there were unusually creative and involved discussions.

There are, though, aspects of the syllabus setup that I would want to change in the future. As mentioned in one comment, the historical range and the wide variety of texts studied meant that students were occasionally unsure of what to focus on. A solution for this would be to use a more explicitly historical framework in class, and to find one or two introductory texts on the genre for students to use as a companion – this would help create a clearer ‘frame’ for their own thoughts. I didn’t do this in the 2014 class primarily because introductory texts on horror fiction are hard to find, but having seen a need for it, it should be possible to find *something* useful. If I were to teach this again, I would also shorten the syllabus a little (though not by much) to give students more time for each text.

Undervisning (undervisningsformer, timeantall, spredning over semesteret, obligatoriske aktiviteter, kvalifiseringsoppgaver): This class was taught through 10 two-hour seminars, with an obligatory qualification essay (with feedback provided on an optional first draft). This structure worked well, though as mentioned above, the time was a little short for the complexity of the syllabus.

Questionnaire feedback on seminar teaching was mostly positive, though since there were so few responses to the questionnaire, it’s difficult to draw clear conclusions here. Only one questionnaire comment is about seminar teaching, and this is positive: ‘Veldig fornøyd med hvordan seminaret er lagt opp til at alle deltar, noe som gjør at man alltid får igang gode diskusjoner blandt alle på seminaret, ikke bare læreren.’ Feedback from the midway evaluation mostly expresses excitement about and pleasure in seminar discussions, but some responses also request a more teacher-led structure to seminars. As with ENG2323/4363, if I were to teach this again I would take a somewhat more teacher-led approach, while still trying to allow for periods of wide-ranging discussion.

Qualification essays: Student feedback on ‘oppfølging, veiledning og relevante tilbakemeldinger’ was mixed to positive, with four respondees neither agreeing or disagreeing that they were happy with this, and three agreeing or strongly agreeing. No comments express dissatisfaction with any aspect of the guidance in particular, nor did anyone do so during the course itself. I think it’s possible that some of the mixed feelings expressed here come not from the qualification essay as such, but from the combination of having to come up with a research topic for both the qualification essay and the semester paper, but this is speculative.

Ressurser og infrastruktur (undervisningsrom, audiovisuelle hjelpemidler, bibliotek-ressurser m.m.): No specific problems to report. In general, I would prefer classroom seating to be set up in a circle by default – this would be more conducive to discussion than the current front-facing setup.

Eksamen (eksamensordning, vurderingsform): Students were evaluated by a semester paper. They were given the opportunity to receive feedback on their research topic choice and on a first draft of the paper. 29% of students received A, 21% B, 14% C, and 36% D. In general, while many papers were excellent and most showed original thought, independent research and understanding of the central themes of the class, I’m not sure this exam form was ideally suited to this course. If I were to teach this again, I would consider using an exam form with clearer guidance and structure, like a three-day take-home exam. I chose the semester paper format to give students the opportunity to use their research skills, but my experience with the ENG2323/ENG4363 home exam suggests that independent research is possible in the home exam format, too.

2. Gir læringsutbytteformuleringene i emnebeskrivelsen en god beskrivelse av hva studentene skal kunne etter avlagt eksamen? Yes, the learning outcomes describe the 2014 course well, though if I were to teach this again small details would have to be changed to match syllabus changes.

3. Fungerer emnebeskrivelsen tilfredsstillende?

The majority of students answering the questionnaire agree or strongly agree that the course description worked well. Again, if I were to teach this again, details of the course description would be changed to match syllabus changes.

4. Har du gjort noen endringer siden forrige periodiske evaluering? Hvilke? This is the first time I’ve taught this course.

5. Forslag til forbedringer To sum up the suggested changes mentioned above, if I were to teach this class again, I would:

- Use a more explicitly historical framework in class
- Make more use of introductory texts on horror fiction to create a clear conceptual framework for students

- Shorten the syllabus slightly to give students more time for each text
- Take a somewhat more teacher-led approach to seminars, while maintaining periods of time for wide-ranging discussion
- Consider a different exam format, like a take-home exam