

EN2L8/EN3L5 TALES OF TERROR: GOTHIC AND THE SHORT FORM

FIRST ASSESSMENT – 1000 word CRITICAL REFLECTION

This assignment is worth 30% of the overall module mark.

It is due by **12pm on THURSDAY 15th of December 2022 (week 11)**

Whichever option you choose below, the core of the assignment is **1000 words** (with 10% leeway up or down).

I strongly advise coming and discussing your ideas with me in an office hour and do check with me regarding the presentation of any tricky technical aspects.

Your assignment should include **evidence of secondary reading and engagement**.

As far as possible your assignment should be presented in accordance with the [English Department Criteria](#) and any **references/citations** should be in either MLA or MHRA style). You should **include a bibliography**.

Extensions should be sought via self-certs or using the extension button on tabula.

You have two choices for this assignment. Either:

OPTION 1 (1000 words):

Write a Critical Review of 1 or 2 (multi-author) anthologies and / or (single-author) collections of short stories featuring all or mostly “Tales of Terror” from the long C19th.

Notes:

- ❖ You **should not use** anthologies/collections that were set reading for class.
- ❖ You are not simply *describing* the content of the works, but **critically analysing**. **Construct an argument/thesis statement around which to pin your analysis.**
- ❖ **If you choose one** anthology/collection, it **must have been published in the long C19th** and you should go into depth about the work.
- ❖ **If you choose to compare two** anthologies and/or collections, **at least one** anthology/collection **must have been published in the long C19th** (so the second may also be from this period and/or post-1920).
- ❖ For comparative reflections, your anthology/ collection choices should not be random. Think carefully about whether to group those reflections by theme, or because you find that the authors/editors/ framing have interesting connections to be explored, perhaps pirating/adapting the same stories. This may be dictated by your central argument/thesis.
- ❖ You **should engage with some critical material** that reflects the interests of your anthology and the module more widely (e.g. on anthologies in theory, or drawing on the choices and introductions in other critical anthologies, and/or if you focus on a theme or time period you might bring in secondary works about those elements). You should also consider engaging with **critical primary material** such as contemporaneous reviews, contemporaneous arguments on “Gothic”, Terror/horror etc, of your chosen anthologies. **Think about publication context and if it is relevant to your argument.**
- ❖ Remember an anthology/collection is **made up of lots of elements** – front and back cover; title-pages; contents pages; Prefaces/introductions; some give each story an introduction; illustrations; endorsements; as well as the stories themselves. Whilst you might not ultimately have room to discuss all of them, assess them in the planning stage and think critically about the inclusions (or absences) of these in your chosen work(s).
- ❖ You may add any elements for discussion (such as screenshots of illustrations, or frontispieces, contents pages) into **an appendix** that you cross-reference; these will not be included in the wordcount, but direct citation in your main review will be included.

OR

OPTION 2 (1000 words):

Construct your own multi-author short-form anthology of long-c19th “Tales of Terror” inspired by this module and write a critical reflection on/critical introduction to, your anthology.

Notes about presentation:

- ❖ You should **give your anthology a title** (this will be calculated into the word count) and **include a contents page** (not included in word count).
- ❖ Feel free to be creative and add a cover page if you wish to (text on a cover page not included in word count).
- ❖ Any actual stories and any paratextual material you include in your anthology (pictures, appendices) do not count towards the 1000 words. You do not have to reproduce the primary texts themselves in your document, but if you are using any elements you want to highlight in your introduction (such as illustrations; anecdotes; pieces of textual editing you undertake; advertisements etc), you may **add those as appendices**.
- ❖ You should, however, ensure to **fully reference each primary story for your anthology** in a bibliography/works cited (whether you reproduce the whole story or just list it in contents).
- ❖ In terms of writing style, you may be more creative than a normal academic essay allows, but remember that you are nevertheless writing a **critical** reflection, along the lines of scholarly introductions to anthologies from OUP, British Library, and the like.
- ❖ You **should engage with some critical material** that reflects the interests of your anthology and the module more widely (e.g. on anthologies in theory, or drawing on the choices and introductions in other critical anthologies, and/or if you focus on a theme or time period you might bring in secondary works about those elements).

Notes about text choices:

In terms of both your story choices and your critical reflection, you may want to think about:

- ❖ Consult anthologies that include similar themes and consider how you want to distinguish yours.
- ❖ Gauge how many stories are normally in anthologies. **No more than 1/3 of your stories should be from set module reading** and you are free to make the whole anthology independent (e.g. all from your own reading or discoveries you made in periodicals, you are more than welcome to).
- ❖ Whilst you may use some popular, well-known works, do try and also go beyond the oft-anthologised tale and show off your research skills.
Which version of a text did you use (in a particular collection, a periodical, a later edition, with illustrations etc) and why?
Who is your intended audience and why?
Will it be thematic, based on a specific time period, around a specific demographic, etc? Explain your choices.
Will it have sections or be chronological or random, etc? Explain your choices.
What interesting, tricky, obscure aspects do you want to draw your reader’s attention to?
- ❖ Do you need to contextualise? Avoid extensively summarising the plot of stories, given the word limit, but you can do so in brief to help to bring together critical points.
- ❖ Consult what you see as successful introductions/notes on the text/prefaces in other anthologies. Whilst you should not copy theirs, do use them as inspiration.