Ubd-Southern Gothic: Teaching Notes

* blending of horror and Romanticism
* Common themes:
  + freakishness/flaws (internal and external)
  + imprisonment
  + isolation/alienation/marginalization
  + violence/crime (physical and mental)
  + sense of place
  + poverty
  + racism
* Authors:
* Edgar Allen Poe
  + poem: "Annabel Lee"
  + poem: "The Raven"
  + poem: "Eldorado"
  + poem: "Tamerlane"
  + short story: "The Fall of the House of Usher"
    - audio: <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/147/the-works-of-edgar-allan-poe/5312/the-fall-of-the-house-of-usher/>
    - setting is key: a decaying dynasty for which the house itself is allegorical; talk about the title and the play on the word "house"
* Ambrose Bierce
  + short story: "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"
    - audio of the short story: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pw0wEMIBfos>
    - magical realism
    - the ideal story vs. the real story: sets up something that Southern Gothic continues to explore--the world is not a beautiful, positive, happy place
    - plays with the reader's emotions, the plot and it's delivery system are calibrated to get the most emotional bang for the buck
* Truman Capote
  + excerpt from *In Cold Blood*
  + the invention of the true crime novel
* Harper Lee
  + *To Kill a Mockingbird*
  + Jim is the disempowered other
  + Boo is creepy/odd/mysterious
  + Scout realizes that the world is corrupt and that the real monsters are not who/what we think
* Tennessee Williams
  + *A Streetcar Named Desire*
    - reinvents the Southern belle as a pretentious, mentally unstable woman
* Flannery O'Connor
  + Short story: " A Good Man is Hard to Find"
    - reading by O'Connor: <http://bavatuesdays.com/files/audio/a_good_man_is_hard_to_find.mp3>
    - the reader knows more then the characters in the story
    - the members of the family are repugnant: the kids are bratty, the grandmother is a shrew. Typically the reader might be expected to want the characters to survive their encounter with a murderer, but because these are terrible people what we desire shifts.
    - The title: irony
  + Short story: "The Life You Save May be Your Own"
  + Short Story: "Good Country People"
    - the title: irony
  + random body parts--what do we make of that?
* Faulkner
  + short story: "A Rose for Emily"
    - audio: <http://www.miettecast.com/2008/06/01/a-rose-for-emily/>
    - the recurrent Gothic theme of unrequited love leading to madness to a Southern town in which the disapproving residents narrate in a single voice
    - Miss Havisham-esque (we can see the direct influence of British literature)
* from Wikipedia:
  + Common themes in Southern Gothic literature include deeply flawed, disturbing or disorienting characters, decayed or derelict settings, [grotesque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grotesque) situations, and other sinister events relating to or coming from poverty, alienation, racism, crime, and violence.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Gothic#cite_note-1) It is unlike its parent genre in that it uses these tools not solely for the sake of suspense, but to explore social issues and reveal the cultural character of the American South, with the Gothic elements taking place in a [magic realist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_realism) context rather than a strictly fantastical one.
* from wisegeek:
  + This genre is unusual as a genre in that it is significantly limited to a certain geographical space.
  + builds on the traditions of the larger Gothic genre, typically including supernatural elements, mental disease, and the grotesque.  Much literature in this genre, however, eschews the supernatural and deals instead with disturbed personalities
* from Oprah's Book club:
  + The genre is riddled with many broken bodies, and even more broken souls.
  + When southern gothic authors examine the human condition, they see the potential  to do harm. Morality is in question for many characters. A major theme for  southern gothic writers hinges on innocence, and the innocent's place in the  world—where they are often asked to act as redeemer.
  + This fascination with the outsider is in many ways used to show readers not only  the individuality of the southern culture, but also to [connect  each reader to their own unique "freakish" nature.](http://www.oprah.com/oprahsbookclub/Southern-Gothic-Distinguising-Features/2)
  + By taking the uniqueness and putting it on the outside of each character,  McCullers gives her readers a good window into her truth about people: that  everyone, no matter how normal they may seem, is a freak on the inside
  + Much of the racial tension seems poised to erupt at any moment.
* from Southern Living:
  + "In the Southern Gothic tradition, everything has meaning," says Charles Reagan Wilson, Ph.D., Cook Chair of History and Professor of Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi. "The abandoned plantation house isn't there just to be spooky. It represents our fixation with history," he says.
* Film: *Capote*
* Film/Book: *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*
* TV: True Blood
* TV: American Horror Story
* Music: Murder by Death
* "Brother"
* "Dynamite Mine"
* "King of the Gutters..."
* "Rubmbrave"
* "You Don't Miss Twice"
* "Three Men Hanging"
* preying on marginalized groups
* ehow:
  + 10 elements of gothic literature<http://www.ehow.com/info_8104633_10-elements-gothic-literature.html>
  + characteristics of a gothic literature antagonist: <http://www.ehow.com/info_8479263_characteristics-gothic-literature-antagonist.html>
* Final Project: Newspaper
* groups of 3-4
* project menu, increasing in difficulty, choose 3 items (12 total)
  + cartoon (art/visual)
  + crossword (math-ish)
  + movie/music review (music)
  + wanted ad
  + personal ad
  + poem --verbal
  + short story --fiction
  + travel endorsement (think Texas monthly) --persuasive
  + essay --expository/persuasive
  + letter to the editor (opinion)
* each student chooses is responsible for a page with 3 items
* each page focuses on a specific Southern Gothic theme
* individual and group evaluations
* project contract beforehand
* The Culture of Apathy lesson
  + start with "Little Weapon"
    - song: <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/lupefiasco/littleweapon.html>
    - lyrics: <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/lupefiasco/littleweapon.html>
  + next day read Elie Weisel's Pulitzer Prize speech and do a journal response <http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1986/wiesel-acceptance.html>
* What's up with all these vampires? Lesson
  + What books, TV shows, and movies do you know that are about vampires? (5 minutes)
    - Buffy the Vampire Slayer
    - True Blood
    - The Vampire Diaries
    - Dracula
    - Van Helsing
    - Blade
    - Interview With a Vampire
    - Queen of the Damned
    - Twilight
    - Where are these set? (cities/states)
  + True Blood intro: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wet5OM7RR8Q>
  + The purpose of opening title sequences is to get us into the feeling of a show. Much like the first chapter of a book or the intro paragraph of a paper.
    - What colors did you see?
    - What images did you see?
    - What are some lyrics you remember from the song?
      * phrase "I'm gonna do bad things to you" dangerous but enticing, tone is everything. This is a phrase that could have very different connotation depending on who says it to you. A frightening looking stranger in the street: scary. Your girlfriend after you've just caught the winning touchdown at the homecoming football game: awesome.
    - Watching this opening title sequence, what can you expect from the show that follows?
    - What overlaps might this have with the Southern Gothic movement?
  + Where in vampire story narratives do you see the major themes of Southern Gothic literature acted out? (have students separate into small groups and have each small group take a theme and come up with examples the go in it)
    - isolation and marginalization
      * can only go out at night
      * removed from humankind, though they used to be human
    - violence and crime
      * they literally kill people and suck their blood, drain the life out of them
      * people often get tasked with becoming "vampire-slayers" (Buffy, Van Helsing, Blade)
    - sense of place
      * Twilight: Forks, Washington is cloudy and gloomy
      * Anne Rice's vampires are always in New Orleans
      * True Blood set in Louisiana (complete with terrible accents)
    - freakishness and the grotesque
      * they have fangs
      * they are deathly pale
      * they have no souls
      * they turn into bats (Dracula)
      * some try to drink animal blood to be more humane and are then freaks even within their own species (The Vampire Diaries)
    - destitution and decay
      * they're dead bodies in an arrested state, not alive--they are the undead
      * they live in ancient castles and houses (Dracula)
    - oppression and discrimination
      * True Blood: "God Hates Fangs"--overlap with gay rights movement
  + Like Southern Gothic literature (which has its roots in British Romanticism), the vampire narrative has its roots in Europe too: Transylvania and Bram Stoker, a British writer