

Your Professor

Dr. Emily Clark

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Humanities 335

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Office Hours: M 1:00-2:00 pm
and Tues 11:00am-2:00 pm;
and by appointment

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How This Course Helps You Graduate

This course is a first-year seminar and fulfills one of your [core curriculum requirements](#).

Course Texts



Mira Ptacin, *The In-Betweens: The Spiritualists, Mediums, and Legends of Camp Etna* (Liveright, 2019).

The book is required, though we won't start it until October (so save some money and purchase a used copy!).

Many additional readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Always bring your readings to class!!

PARANORMAL

| Let's Get Spooky! |



Course Description

"We have noticed an interesting trend in how Americans relate to the paranormal: they are simultaneously fascinated and repulsed, intrigued and dismissive." – Christopher D.

Bader, F. Carson Mencken, and Joseph O. Baker, *Paranormal America*

As a First-Year Seminar, this course investigates how we pursue knowledge and cultivate understanding. To achieve this, Paranormal investigates how people see and experience the world, the ways in which humans make meaning of those experiences, and whether or not the supernatural still has a place in today's modern world. What do witch scares say about American fears, social expectations, gender norms, and more? What do Bigfoot hunts reveal about the limits of human knowledge and our discomfort with the unknown? What does belief in and communication with spirits and ghosts say about American ideas about life and death? Rather than a how-to class or a tour of debunking the paranormal, we attempt cultural analysis of the paranormal. Our big question is: What does the paranormal say about us?

First Year Seminar Course Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to differentiate the ways in which knowledge is constructed across multiple disciplines.

In Paranormal, students will investigate the line between normal and paranormal, religion and magic, and how these boundaries move and work in culture and society. As such, conversations will pull ideas and methodologies from religious studies, history, anthropology, and media studies.

2. Students will be able to articulate how their own personal and cultural perspectives affect their discovery and generation of knowledge and understanding.

In Paranormal, students will analyze how Americans conceive of the paranormal and consider the limits of belief.

3. Students will be able to integrate the principles of Gonzaga's mission with their academic, personal, and spiritual aspirations.

In Paranormal, students will discuss issues surrounding fear of the unknown in contemporary America. Students will evaluate the tensions between fear of the unknown and recognizing the dignity of human persons.

How to Succeed in this Course



- 1) Come to class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire meeting.
- 2) Regularly check your email. I frequently email about grades, housekeeping issues, and more.
- 3) Complete assigned readings, in their entirety, on schedule. Engage with your reading. **Bring** the readings to class.
- 4) Contribute to class discussions. You should come to class with questions and comments, prepared to participate in a lively discussion.

5) Complete all assignments, in a timely manner. Due dates are firm but I allow requested extensions if requested 12 hours before due date. Otherwise late papers will be deducted a full letter grade for every day it is late.

6) Ask for help when you need it. I am happy to assist you in your attempts to master course materials and successfully complete course assignments (Really, I am). Come to my office hours and I am always available via email.

Course Policies

RESPECT FOR MATERIAL, OUR SUBJECTS, AND YOUR PEERS

Students will be expected to communicate in a civil manner at all times, both in and out of the

classroom. This means that interactions are to be carried out in a polite, courteous, and dignified way. Treat your peers and the subject material with respect.

COURSE POLICY ON RACE AND ETHNICITY

This class and classroom is one that respects and welcomes each other. Many of my classes cover topics related to race, colonialism, religion, and racism. These conversations and readings are difficult for some students, and I encourage you to live in that space of productive discomfort and allow yourself to be challenged. Gonzaga's [Mission Statement](#) emphasizes a commitment to intercultural competence, diversity, and social justice. Let's live that mission in the classroom. Through these sometimes-uncomfortable conversations, we will learn and grow together.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

I do not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. We are an intellectual and academic community, and all of us are responsible to act with integrity. All violations of the Gonzaga Academic Honesty Policy will result in a zero on the assignment. Plagiarism is the act of passing another's work off as your own. Whether intentional or not, all plagiarized assignments will receive a zero. If you have questions or concerns about plagiarism, consult the guide on blackboard. [Click here for more on Academic Citizenship at Gonzaga.](#)

SCREEN POLICY

You are welcome to use your computer or tablet in class to take notes and refer to pdf readings you did not print out. Screens are **not** to be allowed for other purposes during class. If you have a screen open, you have agreed that I can cold-call on you at any time. The only exceptions to this rule are those with relevant disability accommodations.

DISABILITY ACCESS POLICY

Students with disabilities who need academic accommodations should:

1. Register with and provide documentation to the Disability Access.
2. Bring a letter to me from the Disability Access Office indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done within the first two weeks of class. The sooner I know, the sooner we can work together.

For more information about services available to GU students with disabilities, contact:

disability@gonzaga.edu; 313-4134. Or visit their office in Foley 209 www.gonzaga.edu/Campus-Resources/Offices-and-Services-A-Z/Disability-Resources-Education-and-Access-Management/default.asp.

A NOTE ON HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Consistent with its mission, Gonzaga seeks to assure all community members learn and work in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Title VII, Title IX and Gonzaga's policy prohibit harassment,

discrimination and sexual misconduct. Gonzaga encourages anyone experiencing harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct to talk to someone from the Campus and Local Resources list found in the Student Handbook: www.gonzaga.edu/studenthandbook about what happened so they can get the support they need and Gonzaga can respond appropriately. There are both confidential and non-confidential resources and reporting options available to you. Gonzaga is legally obligated to respond to reports of sexual misconduct, and therefore we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of a report, unless made to a confidential resource. Responses may vary from support services to formal investigations. As a faculty member, I am required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. I must provide our Title IX coordinator with relevant details such as the names of those involved in the incident. For more information about policies and resources or reporting options, please visit the following website: www.gonzaga.edu/titleix. My office is a safe space, but I am legally required to report sexual misconduct.

For more on Title IX, see: Stephanie N. Thomas

Title IX Director

509-313-6910

thomassn@gonzaga.edu

Business Services Building 018

Or by filling out an online [Sexual Misconduct Report Form](#)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I enforce the [Gonzaga attendance policy](#), if you miss more than 6 class meetings, you will receive a “V,” which is the same as a “F.” For a seminar class to work, attendance is necessary. Per the University [policy on religious holidays](#), exceptions to this include religious holidays. And any COVID-related issue, like exhibiting symptoms, is fully excused.

Assignments and Grading

- 1) 3Qs Reading Journals. These show critical engagement with texts. Every class period that has an assigned reading, you'll submit a reading journal entry on blackboard that includes: a rich **quote**, a discussion **question** for the class, and a **quandary** that the reading left with you. For more on the grading, see the Reading Journals Rubric on blackboard. Your journal is due an hour before class begins. Worth 280 points (for 28 reading journals).
- 2) Information Literacy assignment: A completion grade on information literacy prepared by librarian Anthony Tardiff. The link for the assignment is in the course schedule and will be emailed out too. Worth 50 points
- 3) Paranormal Analysis. Pick a pop culture example (film, novel, comic book, television show, or smartphone app) of the paranormal and provide an analysis of that example with attention to religion, culture, gender, sexuality, politics, and/or fear. Worth 135 points.
- 4) Podcast Analysis. You will individually analyze an episode of the podcast *Haunted Road*. This will be preparation for paranormal stories in small groups at the end of the semester. Worth 150 points.

5) Paranormal Stories. You will create or tell a paranormal story set at Gonzaga University. Your story will include both the paranormal story itself as well as reflection on why it is paranormal. We will dedicate the last week to working on this assignment, using class time for you to build your story and medium of delivery. Worth 185 points.

6) Preparation and Participation: The least boring and most effective way to learn is to participate fully in the process. You are expected to contribute to the success of this course by: reading the assigned materials, attending every class, taking notes, listening respectfully, and contributing to class discussions. See the In-Class Participation Rubric for more. Worth 200 points.

3Qs Reading Journals: 280 points	1000-895 points: A range
Information Literacy: 50 points	A/A- cutoff at 925
Paranormal Analysis: 135 points	894-795 points: B range
Podcast Analysis: 150 points	B+/B cutoff at 855
Paranormal Stories: 185 points	B/B- cutoff at 825
Preparation and Participation: 200 points	794-695 points: C range
Total: 1000 points	C+/C cutoff at 755
	C/C- cutoff at 725
	694-595 points: D range
	D+/D cutoff at 655
	594 points and below: F

Course Schedule

Important: You need to come to class having already read the assigned reading for that day; in other words, readings are due the date listed.



Week 1: Course Introduction

Wednesday, Aug 31: Introductions, Class Expectations

Friday, Sept 2: Success in the First Year at Gonzaga

Reading: "What the Best College Students Do" on blackboard

Week 2: How to Evaluate Information

Monday, Sept 5: No Class. Labor Day Holiday

Wednesday, Sept 7: Information Literacy

Reading: Complete all the clickthroughs and entries here: <https://researchguides.gonzaga.edu/ccow>

Friday, Sept 9: Before the Paranormal, what is normal?

Reading: "The Body Ritual of the Nacirema" on blackboard

Week 3: How to Study Paranormal Culture

Monday, Sept 12: Paranormal and the Uncanny

Reading: "The Uncanny" on blackboard

Wednesday, Sept 14: What is Religious Studies?

Reading: "Religion: The Basics" on blackboard

Friday, Sept 16: The Paranormal!!

Reading: "Paranormal America" on blackboard

Week 4: Is the Paranormal Evil?

Monday, Sept 19: Salem and Witches

Reading: "The Devil, the Body, and the Puritan Soul" on blackboard

Wednesday, Sept 21: Salem, Satan, and

Olympia, WA

Reading: "Satanic Panic" on blackboard

Friday, Sept 23: Back to the 19th Century

Reading: "Poe Stories" on blackboard

Week 5: Is the Paranormal Exciting?

Monday, Sept 26: Mythical Monsters

Reading: "The Unidentified" on blackboard

(book pgs 59-90 within the pdf)

Wednesday, Sept 28: Mythical Monsters

Reading: "The Unidentified" on blackboard (book pgs 91-122 within the pdf)

Friday, Sept 30: UFOs and Aliens

Reading: "Roswell" on blackboard



Week 6: Seeking out the Paranormal

Monday, Oct 3: Paranormal Investigators

Reading: "Life with the Afterlife" on blackboard

Wednesday, Oct 5: Paranormal Investigations

Reading: "Spook_EVP" on blackboard

Friday, Oct 7: Psychics and Law Enforcement

Reading: "Psychics and Law Enforcement" on blackboard

Week 7: *The Conjuring*

Monday, Oct 10: *The Conjuring*

Reading: "The New England Society for Psychic Research" on blackboard

Wednesday, Oct 12: *The Conjuring*

Friday, Oct 14: *The Conjuring*

Paranormal Analysis Due by class time



Week 8: Ghosts and Spirits

Monday, Oct 17: Catching Spirits in their Tracks

Reading: "San Antonio Ghost Tracks" on blackboard

Wednesday, Oct 19: Spiritualism

Reading: Introduction in *The In-Betweens*

Friday, Oct 21: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 1 in *The In-Betweens*

**Week 9: Spiritualism at Camp Etna**

Monday, Oct 24: No Class. Founder's Day Holiday

Wednesday, Oct 26: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 2 in *The In-Betweens*

Friday, Oct 28: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 3 in *The In-Betweens*

Week 10: Spiritualism at Camp Etna

Monday, Oct 31: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 4 in *The In-Betweens*

Wednesday, Nov 2: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 5 in *The In-Betweens*

Friday, Nov 4: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 6 in *The In-Betweens*

Week 11: Spiritualism at Camp Etna

Monday, Nov 7: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 7 in *The In-Betweens*

Wednesday, Nov 9: No Class. Dr. Clark will be in Richmond for a conference presenting research on a 19th-century religious visionary. Just don't forget everything you've learned about Spiritualism. :)

Friday, Nov 11: No Class. Dr. Clark will still be at the conference.

Week 12: Spiritualism at Camp Etna

Monday, Nov 14: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 8 in *The In-Betweens*

Wednesday, Nov 16: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 9 in *The In-Betweens*

Friday, Nov 18: No Class, COVID pending. Dr. Clark will be away at another conference.

**Week 13: Haunted Road**

Monday, Nov 21: No Class, COVID pending. Dr. Clark will still be away at a conference. **Podcast Analysis Due** by 5 pm.

Wednesday, Nov 23: No Class. Thanksgiving Holiday

Friday, Nov 25: No Class. Thanksgiving Holiday



Week 14: College Haunts

Monday, Nov 28: Are Colleges haunted?

Reading: “Haunted Halls” on blackboard

Wednesday, Nov 30: Is Gonzaga haunted?

Reading: “Music Mansion” on blackboard

Friday, Dec 2: Paranormal Storytelling

Week 15: Paranormal Stories Workshop

Monday, Dec 5: Paranormal Workshop

Wednesday, Dec 7: Paranormal Workshop

Friday, Dec 9: Paranormal Workshop

Final Exam Week

2:10 pm MWF Class: Tuesday, Dec 13th, 6:00-8:00 pm.

3:10 pm MWF Class: Tuesday, Dec 13th, 10:30 am-12:30 pm.

Your Paranormal Stories are due then!