

## Your Professor

**Dr. Emily Clark**

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Humanities 335

Office Phone: 313-6781

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

## Inside this Syllabus

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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).

Richard Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt: A Brief History With Documents* (Bedford, 2017).



Both books are required. Many additional readings will be posted on Blackboard.

# PARA NORMAL



## 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. Excused absences include: documented University approved activities, contagious illness, or family emergencies. **Email me when you know you're going to be absent.**

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.

## Course Policies

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### 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](mailto:disability@gonzaga.edu); 313-4134. Or visit their office in Foley 209 [www.gonzaga.edu/](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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

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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 310 points (for 31 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) of the paranormal and provide an analysis of that example with attention to religion, culture, gender, sexuality, politics, and/or fear. Worth 100 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 and what it reveals about the normal. 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 190 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 165 points.

3Qs Reading Journals: 310 points

Information Literacy: 50 points

Paranormal Analysis: 100 points

Podcast Analysis: 150 points

Paranormal Stories: 190 points

Preparation and Participation: 165 points

Total: 1000 points

1000-895 points: A range

A/A- cutoff at 925

894-795 points: B range

B+/B cutoff at 855

B/B- cutoff at 825

794-695 points: C range

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

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## Course Schedule

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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, Jan 12: Introductions, Class Expectations

Friday, Jan 14: Success in the First Year at Gonzaga

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

### Week 2: Course Introduction

Monday, Jan 17: No Class. MLK Day Holiday



Wednesday, Jan 19: Information Literacy

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

Friday, Jan 21: Religious Studies

Reading: "Religion: Some Basics" on blackboard

### **Week 3: How to Study Paranormal Culture**

Monday, Jan 24: Paranormal and the Uncanny

Reading: "The Uncanny" on blackboard

Wednesday, Jan 26: What is normal?

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

Friday, Jan 28: What is the Paranormal?

Reading: "Paranormal America" on blackboard



### **Week 4: What was the Salem Witch Crisis?**

Monday, Jan 31: Salem Witch Crisis

Reading: Introduction (pgs 1-31) in *The Salem Witch Hunt*

Wednesday, Feb 2: Gender

Reading: "Social Construction of Gender" on blackboard

Friday, Feb 4: Salem Witch Crisis

Reading: Signs and Assaults from the Supernatural World (38-50) in *The Salem Witch Hunt*

### **Week 5: Salem "Witches" on Trial**

Monday, Feb 7: Salem Witch Crisis

Reading: Beginnings (51-66) in *The Salem Witch Hunt*

Wednesday, Feb 9: Witch Crisis

Reading: Witches on Trial: Sarah Good (67-82) in *The Salem Witch Hunt*

Friday, Feb 11: Salem Witch Crisis

Reading: Tituba (83-93) in *The Salem Witch Hunt*

### **Week 6: Salem "Witches" on Trial**

Monday, Feb 14: Salem Witch Crisis

Reading: Bridget Bishop (103-116) in *The Salem Witch Hunt*

Wednesday, Feb 16: Salem Witch Crisis

Reading: John Proctor (94-102) **OR** George Burroughs (128-140) in *The Salem Witch Hunt*

Friday, Feb 18: No Class. Dr. Clark will be at a departmental retreat.



### **Week 7: Salem Witch Crisis**

Monday, Feb 21: President's Day. No Class

Wednesday, Feb 23: Salem Witch Crisis

Reading: Witch Court Under Attack (147-168) in *The Salem Witch Hunt*



Friday, Feb 25: Salem Witch Crisis

Reading: Aftermath (169-185) in *The Salem Witch Hunt*

**Week 8: Witches and Satan, Then and Now**

Monday, Feb 28: Salem, Satan, and Olympia, WA

Reading: "Satanic Panic" on blackboard

Wednesday, March 2: *The Witch*

Friday, March 4: *The Witch*

**Paranormal Analysis Due by class time (2:10 pm)**

**March 7-March 11: SPRING BREAK! No Class**

**Week 9: Capturing Cryptids and Spirits**

Monday, March 14: Mythical Monsters

Reading: "The Unidentified" on blackboard (pgs 59-90)

Wednesday, March 16: Mythical Monsters

Reading: "The Unidentified" on blackboard (pgs 91-122)

Friday, March 18:

Reading: Catching Spirits in their Tracks

Reading: "San Antonio Ghost Tracks" on blackboard

**Week 10: Spiritualism at Camp Etna**

Monday, March 21: Spiritualism

Reading: Introduction in *The In-Betweens*

Wednesday, March 23: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 1 in *The In-Betweens*

Friday, March 25: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 2 in *The In-Betweens*

**Week 11: Spiritualism at Camp Etna**

Monday, March 28: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 3 in *The In-Betweens*

Wednesday, March 30: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 4 in *The In-Betweens*

Friday, April 1: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 5 in *The In-Betweens*

**Week 12: Spiritualism at Camp Etna**

Monday, April 4: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 6 in *The In-Betweens*

Wednesday, April 6: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 7 in *The In-Betweens*



Friday, April 8: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 8 in *The In-Betweens*

**Week 13: Spirits and Hauntings**

Monday, April 11: Spiritualism

Reading: Chapter 9 in *The In-Betweens*

Wednesday, April 13: The Haunted Road

**Podcast Analysis Due** by class time (2:10 pm)

Friday, April 15: No Class. Good Friday



**Week 14: College Haunts**

Monday, April 18: No Class. Easter Monday

Wednesday, April 20: Are Colleges haunted?

Reading: “Haunted Halls” on blackboard

Friday, April 22: Is Gonzaga haunted?

Reading: “Music Mansion” on blackboard

**Week 15: Paranormal Stories Workshop**

Monday, April 25: Paranormal Workshop

Wednesday, April 27: Paranormal Workshop

Friday, April 29: Paranormal Workshop

**Final Exam Week**

2:10 pm MFW Class: Tuesday, May 3, 6:00-8:00 pm

Your stories are due then!