For full publishing details of critical texts, please consult the secondary reading list [Under ‘Module Information’ on StudyNet]

The leading text book for this course is Sam George and Bill Hughes, eds., Open, Graves, Open Minds: Representations of Vampires and the Undead from the Enlightenment to the Present Day (MUP, 2013)

Part One: Vampires Pre-Stoker

Week 1 Workshop: ‘Vampiric Origins: National Identity and Social Class from the Peasant to the Aristocrat’ [part one: ‘The folkloric vampire’]
Workshop texts: extracts from Dom Augustin Calmet, Treatise on the Vampires of Hungary and the Surrounding Regions (English trans. 1759); Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, ‘Voyage to Levant’ (1702), in Christopher Frayling, Vampires: Lord Byron to Count Dracula (London: Faber & Faber, 1991), pp. 87-103 [and on StudyNet]. We will discuss the representation of vampires prior to Stoker in relation to debates around ethnicity, national identity and social class using the texts above, and Marie Helene Huet’s, ‘Deadly Fears: Dom Augustin Calmet’s Vampires’, Eighteenth-Century Life, 21 (1997), 222-32 [StudyNet] and G. David Keyworth, ‘Was the Vampire of the Eighteenth Century a Unique Type of Undead-Corpse?’, Folklore, 117 (December 2006) as a starting point. We’ll also ponder over some early definitions in the OED, the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1888); and Katharina M. Wilson, ‘The History of the term “Vampire”’, in Alan Dundes, ed. The Vampire: A Casebook, pp. 3-12 [all on StudyNet].

Workshop texts: Lord Byron, Augustus Darvell (1819); John Polidori, ‘The Vampyre’ (1819), in John Polidori, The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre, ed. by Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 1-23, 246-251. We examine the arrival of the Romantic Byronic vampire in fiction and interrogate differing perspectives on the textual relationship between Byron and Polidori. Byron as a real life model for this new aristocratic vampire is also investigated alongside issues of nationality and social class. The following articles will inform our discussion: L. Skarda, ‘Vampirism and Plagiarism: Byron’s Influence and Polidori’s Practice’ [Studynet]; ‘Conrad Aquilina, ‘The Deformed Transformed; or, from Bloodsucker to Byronic Hero – Polidori and the Literary Vampire’, in Open Graves, Open Minds, pp. 24-39 [LRC]; Ken Gelder, ‘Vampires in Greece: Byron and Polidori’, in Reading the Vampire, pp. 24-41 [LRC] We conclude with a discussion around a ‘Vampire Timeline’, which identifies literary vampires post-Byron and pre-Dracula (1897).

Week 3 Workshop: ‘The Vampire Theatre: Stage Plays and Victorian Melodrama’
Workshop texts: J. R. Planché, The Vampyre, or Bride of the Isles (1820); William Thomas Moncrieff, The Spectre Bridegroom (1821); George Blink, The Vampire Bride; or, Tenant of the Tomb (1834), in Before the Count: British Vampire Tales, 1732-1897, ed. by Margo Collins (Milton Keynes: Zittaw Press, 2007), pp. 68-86, 87-110, 111-135 [Planché and Moncrieff on StudyNet]. This week we focus on the representation of the vampire in the theatre, looking at the influence of Polidori and at the vampire in Victorian melodrama prior to the Count’s appearance with all his theatrical tropes in Stoker’s Dracula. The following material will be discussed in relation to the plays: Katie Harse, “Melodrama Hath Charms”: Planché’s Theatrical Domestication of Polidori’s “The Vampyre”, Journal of Dracula Studies, 3 (2001), 3-7 [StudyNet]; Ronald Macfarlane, ‘The Vampire on Stage’, Comparative Drama, 21 (1987), 19-33 [StudyNet]; Roxana Stuart, Stage Blood: Vampires of the Nineteenth-Century Stage, pp. 41-91 [LRC].

Week 4 Workshop: ‘Victorian Bloodsuckers: Varney the Vampire and Karl Marx’
Workshop texts: James Malcolm Rymer, Varney the Vampire (1845-47), Book One (Berkeley, New Jersey: Wildside Press, 2000) [extract available in Christopher Frayling, Vampyres, pp. 145-161]; Marx’s writings, including extracts from his 1847 lectures, Capital, and The Eighteenth Brumaire [on StudyNet handout]. This week we look at the influence of the Penny Dreadful and the serialisation of Varney the Vampire in relation to vampiric metaphors
Week 7 ‘Vampire Aesthetics: Oscar Wilde and the Artist as Vampire’


Week 8 ‘Undead Authors: Decadence and Sexual Deviance from Dracula to Oscar Wilde’

Workshop text: George Sylvester Viereck’s, The House of Vampire (1907) (Bibliobazaar, 2008) [links to online version on StudyNet]. The novel we look at this week casts Wilde in the role of vampire while art itself is the vampiric province of a master race. We read this text alongside debates around homosexuality, decadence and evolutionary anxiety as discussed in Elaine Showalter, Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle, pp. 169-87. David Skal’s analysis of the relationship between Stoker’s Dracula and the writings and public persona

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of Oscar Wilde, ‘Mr Stoker’s Book of Blood’, in Hollywood Gothic, pp. 9-75, and Talia Schaffer above will also be discussed in relation to the vampiric representation of Wilde in the novel. See also Nina Auerbach, ‘Vampires, Vampires’ in Our Vampires, Ourselves, pp. 102-6 [LRC]. For Viereck more broadly, see Lisa Lampert-Weissig, ‘The Vampire as Dark and Glorious Necessity in George Sylvester Viereck’s House of Vampire’, in Open Graves, Open Minds, pp. 79-95.

Part Three: New Directions: Vegetarian Vampires, Zombies, and Undead Teens

Week 9 ‘Vampire Lore in the Twentieth Century’

Week 10 ‘Paranormal Romance: Sex and the Body in Buffy and Twilight’

Week 11 ‘Generation Dead: Zombies and the Politics of Difference’

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Undead’, in Open Graves, Open Minds, pp. 245-261 [version on StudyNet]. We also look briefly at ‘dark romance’ or contemporary genres of vampire fiction [handout and notes on StudyNet].

Week 12 ‘A Return to Folklore and Confronting Death in Young Adult Vampire Fiction’
Workshop text: Marcus Sedgwick, My Swordhand is Singing (London: Orion, 2006).
We conclude by looking at the return of the East European folklorish vampire in Sedgwick’s novel and discuss his departure from the alluring romanticised creature that dominates young adult fiction elsewhere. We read this against debates around ethnicity, national identity, and the folk tale. See Ken Gelder, ‘Ethnic vampires; Transylvania and Beyond’, in Reading the Vampire, pp. 1-23 [LRC] and G. David Keyworth, ‘Was the Vampire of the Eighteenth Century a Unique Type of Undead-Corpse?’, Folklore, 117 (December 2006), 241-60 [StudyNet]. Marcus’s novel deals sensitively with ‘otherness’ and confronting death and we consider these themes in relation to the vampire in the context of young adult fiction. We look at Marcus’s essay ‘The Elusive Vampire: Folklore and Fiction, Writing My Swordhand is Singing’ in the Open Graves, Open Minds, pp. 264-275 and at one or two of his interviews as a starting point [StudyNet], and explore the importance of early folklorist accounts and theories of the folktale in relation to both the structure and content of the narrative. See extracts from Vladimir Propp, Theory and History of Folklore (1984) and Morphology of the Folktale (1968), and James George Frazer’s The Golden Bough (1890, 1906-15) [on StudyNet].

*In addition to this reading you should also try to watch the following: F.W. Murnau, Nosferatu, Germany, 1922; Tod Browning, Dracula, USA, 1931; Neil Jordan, Interview with the Vampire, USA, 1994; Joss Whedon, ‘Innocence’, Buffy the Vampire Slayer (season 2, episode 14).