TOPICS IN FOLKLORE & FOLKLIFE:
Spectral Evidence & Narrative Form
ENG 5670 001 CRN: 25146
6-9 p.m. TH
0125 State Hall
Winter, 2009

Dr. Janet Langlois
5057 Woodward, #9305.4
OH: 1-3 p.m. T; 3-5 p.m. TH & by appointment
313-577-7708
ad5634@wayne.edu or janet_langlois@wayne.edu

Course Description
Avery F. Gordon tells us in her introduction to Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination (2007) that haunting “is neither pre-modern superstition nor individual psychosis” but “a generalizable social phenomenon of great import.” If “to study social life one must confront the ghostly aspects of it,” then the course’s aim will be to trace the ghostly and its ramifications in both everyday lives and in theorizing about literal and metaphorical aspects of haunting. We will confront the spectral in various media and multidisciplinary cultural criticism in which it manifests itself: ethnographies, anthologies, literature and literary criticism, feature films and film criticism, folk and popular culture studies.

Required Texts (Available for purchase online and at Marwil’s Bookstore. On reserve at Purdy-Kresge Library)
Bennett, Gillian. Alas, Poor Ghost: Traditions of Belief in Story and Discourse. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1999 (paper)
Garcia, Christina. Dreaming in Cuban. NY: Ballantine Books, 1992 (or more recent ed.)

Additional Reading
Additional course readings, primarily journal articles and book chapters, can be accessed through ERes (Electronic Reserves) and/ or Blackboard as noted on the syllabus or in class sessions.

Film Clips
Occasional film clips will be shown and analyzed within the critical discussions for that class period, esp. in Part V. Visual Hauntings.

Blackboard-Assisted Course
Please check the Blackboard website for this course regularly as I will post some full-text readings noted in the syllabus as well as announcements, class information, assignments, exam review summaries and website links. To access Blackboard and to communicate by email, you will need to activate your WSU Access ID at http://computing.wayne.edu/accessid/activate.php. You should do this even if you have another email address. If you do use another email address, you should have email that is sent to your WSU account forwarded to you by going to http://computing.wayne.edu/email/forwarding.php.
Course Requirements
Course requirements will include essay exams (40%); term projects, one critical research and one ethnographic (45%), and class participation (attendance, discussion & discussion board, oral work-in-progress report) (15%) (fuller guidelines forthcoming).

Syllabus
1. 1/15 I. Introduction: Haunting Issues

2. 1/22 II. Personal Encounters with the Ghostly & Ethnography


4. 2/5 III: Haunting & the Commodification of Place in Cultural Studies


5. 2/12 Readings: Richardson, Judith. *Possessions*, chapters 3-4, pp. 81-172; selections from websites focusing on NY folklore TBA.


Assignment #1 Brief ethnographic interview and analysis on haunting due (20%). Brief oral reports on ethnographic findings

7. 2/26 IV: Cultural Haunting & American Ethnic Novels and Criticism
Readings: Brogan, pp. 1-29.
Midterm review (weeks 1-6)
Brief oral reports on ethnographic findings

8. 3/5 MIDTERM EXAM

9. 3/12 Readings: Brogan, pp. 30-60, Erdrich, *Tracks*

10. 3/19 SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS
11. 3/26
Readings: Brogan, pp. 30-60, Erdrich, Tracks
   Work-in-progress reports on final research paper

12. 4/2
Readings: Brogan, pp.61-92; Morrison, Beloved
CLASS CANCELLED, THURSDAY, APRIL 2, BUT CONTINUE READINGS AND COME TO HAUNTINGS CONFERENCE, FRIDAY, APRIL 3, IN MACGREGOR CENTER, ROOMS B-C, FOR CLASS CREDIT. DR. BROGAN SPEAKS AT 9:10 A.M.

13. 4/9
Readings: Brogan, pp. 61-92; Morrison, Beloved;
   Work-in-progress reports on final research paper
   Morrison: Profile of a Writer

14. 4/16
Readings: Brogan, pp. 93-128; Garcia, Dreaming in Cuban
   Work-in-progress reports on final research paper

15. 4/23
Readings: Brogan, pp. 129-171; Garcia, Dreaming in Cuban
   Final exam review
   Student evaluations
   Work-in-progress reports on final research paper

Assignment #2 Research paper on topic of student’s choice due (25%) (no extensions)

FINAL EXAM SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2009 FROM 6:00 P.M.

Contract between Instructor and Students
I ask students to come to class, read and discuss readings, write term projects without plagiarizing, and have fun in the process. In turn, I, as instructor, agree to present concepts, examples and term project guidelines as clearly as possible, to give fair exams, and to return graded student exams and projects in a timely manner (usually one week later for exams and critical reviews, and no more than two weeks later for ethnographic projects). See the fine print below for more detailed discussion of class policies.

Attendance
The English Department attendance policy is as follows:
Enrolled students in any English classes must attend one of the first two class sessions; otherwise, they may be required to drop the class. In addition, I count attendance as part of the class participation grade(5%), based on % of classes attended. Students are allowed up to 2 excused absences that require advance notice to instructor; 3 or more unexcused absences, however, entails losing attendance points and may constitute withdrawal.

Late Assignments
Students may ask for extension of assignment due date up to a two-day grace period; after that time, two points marked down per day late (A=95% - 4 days late = 95-8 = 87 = B+/B). Papers over 7 days late will not be accepted.

Paper Format
Reports should be typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins, no larger than 12 pt. type, no binders. (Material in appendices need not follow this format.)

Paper Revision TBD

Exam Make-ups Considered if student arranges with instructor before exam.
Incompletes (REVISED UNIVERSITY POLICY)
The mark of “I” (Incomplete) is given to either an undergraduate or a graduate student when he/she has not completed all of the course work as required for the term and when there is, in the judgment of the instructor, a reasonable probability that the student can complete the course successfully without again attending regular class sessions. The student should be passing at the time the grade of “I” is given. A written contract specifying the work to be completed should be signed by the student and instructor and filed with the English Department. Students receiving incompletes must finish their assignments by the end of a year or the grade will be replaced by an “F.” The University will not allow any extensions past the year’s deadline.

Withdrawals (REVISED UNIVERSITY POLICY)
The grade of “WN” replaces the “X” grade and applies to any student who has never attended class, or did not complete any assignments, or did not participate in credit-earning activities by the withdrawal date. If a student decides not to go to class after having received a grade for any component of a course, these grades will be issued only as follows: “WP” (Withdrawal with a passing grade earned to date) or “WF” (Withdrawal with a failing grade earned to date).

Plagiarism
The College of Liberal Arts Policy on Plagiarism states:
The principle of honesty is recognized as fundamental to a scholarly community. Students are expected to honor this principle and instructors are expected to take appropriate action when instances of academic dishonesty are discovered. An instructor, on discovering such an instance, may give a failing grade on the assignment or for the course. The instructor has the responsibility of notifying the student of the alleged violation and the action being taken. Both the student and the instructor are entitled to academic due process in all such cases. Acts of dishonesty may lead to suspension or exclusion.
My policy, on a case-by-case basis, follows the English Department’s guidelines based on college and university guidelines.

Writing Center information:
The Writing Center (2nd floor, UGL) provides individual tutoring consultations free of charge for students at Wayne State University. Undergraduate students in General Education courses, including composition courses, receive priority for tutoring appointments. The Writing Center serves as a resource for writers, providing tutoring sessions on the range of activities in the writing process – considering the audience, analyzing the assignment or genre, brainstorming, researching, writing drafts, revising, editing, and preparing documentation. The Writing Center is not an editing or proofreading service; rather, students are guided as they engage collaboratively in the process of academic writing, from developing an idea to correctly citing sources. To make an appointment, consult the Writing Center website: http://www.clas.wayne.edu/writing/. To submit material for online tutoring, consult the Writing Center HOOT website (Hypertext One-on-One Tutoring): http://www.clas.wayne.edu/unit-inner.asp?WebPageID=1330.

Educational Accessibility Services
If you have a physical or mental impairment that may interfere with your ability to complete successfully the requirements for this course, please contact the Educational Accessibility Services Office in Room 1600 of the David Adamany Undergraduate Library to discuss appropriate accommodations on a confidential basis at 577-1851.

Honors Option
“The Honors Option allows a student in any course taught by a full-time, regular faculty member to elect honors level work, provided the instructor agrees to furnish commensurate extra instruction. If a grade of ‘B’ or above is earned in the course, the student will receive honors credit for the course on the transcript. Application forms for the Honors Option are available in the Honors Program Office and the Associate Chair’s Office. The application form must be signed by the instructor and departmental honors adviser and should be returned to the Honors Program Office (via the Assistant to the Associate Chair) by the end of the first week of classes. The completed form must then be returned to the Honors Program Office at the end of the semester.”