

# ENGL1102: FEAR APPEALS AND THE APPEAL OF FEAR

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Rhetoricians often conjure ghosts, ghouls, and monsters to influence their audiences through the power of fear. Why is fear such a powerful, controlling, and even addictive emotion? This rhetoric and composition course uses the theme of fear to explore how arguments can be constructed and expressed in a variety of modes. We will study ghosts and other horror creatures as manifestations of the social issues faced by the societies that produce them. We will also see how these spectres have jumped off the page through film, television, and literary reinterpretations of classic horror tropes. Major assignments will be multimodal literary and rhetorical investigations of one common fear and its consequences, from its origins to its contemporary remediations. Come prepared to be scared, as selections from horror and horror-adjacent material will be shown in class.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

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1. *WOVENText*: [available for free online](#).
2. *Writer/Designer*: Available as part of the Bedford Bookshelf. Check the [GT bookstore](#) or [this link](#).
3. Jan Harold Brunvand, *The Vanishing Hitchhiker: American Urban Legends and Their Meanings*, W.W. Norton and Company, 1981.

## MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

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Major assignments for English 1102 are called Artifacts. Smaller assignments that lead up to the artifacts are called scaffolds. They are often abbreviated in the syllabus as A1, A2, etc. Scaffolds might be shortened to A3S2 (artifact 3, scaffold 2). The last major assignment is the portfolio, which is due online at the time of your section's final exam.

**Artifact 1:** This project is a visual annotated bibliography of your research on some scary thing (a monster, legend, phobia, etc). You will choose a person, place, or thing generally considered scary and examine its origins, cultural receptions, and

psychological consequences. This project will establish the research you need for the rest of the semester. You should choose the topic based on your own interests (though it is ok and actually more common to go outside the syllabus), and scary is very broadly defined.

**Artifact 2:** This artifact will be a fun combination of rhetoric and research – though your information does need to be accurate, you may present it creatively. You will write as if you are a scientist, writer, journalist, or folklorist who went out to the field to research your subject. The frame of this project will be creative, but your research should be accurate and based on the scholarly research we’ve done this semester. It will include an introduction, a section on your methodology, and a review of your results. You can present this as a traditional essay with some photos/video added, as a Wordpress site, or as a podcast with a script and cover image.

**Artifact 3:** Write and tell an original story based on your own research. You should try to scare or otherwise convey a moral or lesson using pathos. The story will be written entirely by you about your own topic, but you will work with a group for the presentation.

## WEEK 1

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M Aug 19

readings: before or after class, you should read the entire syllabus including the linked common [GT WCP policies](#)

W Aug 21

WOVENText (available for free online [here](#)) chapters 1 and 5

## WEEK 2

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M Aug 26

WOVENText chapters 2 and 3

W Aug 28

Writer/Designer (must be purchased – it’s part of the [Bedford Bookshelf](#)) chapters 1 and 2

### WEEK 3

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W Sept 4

Joe Nickell, "[A Skeleton's Tale: The Origins of Modern Spiritualism](#)" (PDF on Canvas)

### WEEK 4

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M Sept 9

John G. Fuller, "[Aboard A Flying Saucer: The Adventures of Two 'Kidnapped' Humans](#)" (PDF on Canvas. If you choose to read at the link, stop at p. 121)

Darren Naish, "[Sea Serpents, Seals, and Coelacanths: An Attempt at a Holistic Approach to the Identity of Large Aquatic Cryptids](#)"

W Sept 11

Make sure to have *The Vanishing Hitchhiker* by Jan Brunvand by this date. Readings: Jan Brunvand, *The Vanishing Hitchhiker* chapters 1 and 2.

A1S1 Due 9/11 by 11:59pm on Canvas

### WEEK 5

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M Sept 16

Michael Dalili, "[Phobias](#)" entry from *Encyclopedia of Evolutionary Psychological Science* (PDF on Canvas. If you use the link, you'll need to sign in through GT Library)

Pavol Prokop, "[Universal Human Fears](#)" entry from *Encyclopedia of Evolutionary Psychological Science* (PDF on Canvas)

W Sept 18

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "[Monster Culture \(Seven Theses\)](#)" (PDF on Canvas)

A1S2 Due 9/18 by 11:59pm on Canvas

### WEEK 6

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M Sept 23

Go to this [online archive](#), read "[Confession of Agnes Samson](#)," and observe at least one other page that catches your interest.

W Sept 25

No readings other than your own research. Come to class familiar with 2-3 of the pieces you have chosen to read for your project.

**Artifact 1 Due 9/27 by 11:59pm on Canvas**

#### WEEK 7

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M Sept 30

Brunvand, *Vanishing Hitchhiker* Ch. 3 and Dan Ben-Ahmos, "[Analytical Categories and Ethnic Genres](#)" (PDF on Canvas)

W Oct 2

Joseph Stubbersfield, Emme Flynn, and Jamshid Tehrani, "[Cognitive Evolution and the Transmission of Popular Narratives](#)" (PDF on Canvas)

**A2S1 Due 10/4 by 11:59pm on Canvas**

#### WEEK 8

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M Oct 7

Brunvand, *Vanishing Hitchhiker* Ch. 5

W Oct 9

Joe Nickell, "[Enfield Poltergeist](#)" (PDF on Canvas)

**A2S2 Due 10/9 by 11:59pm on Canvas**

#### WEEK 9

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W Oct 16

Writer/Designer Ch. 3 and Ch. 6

Vanishing Hitchhiker Ch. 7

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WEEK 10

M Oct 21

Sommer, "Are You Afraid of the Dark? Notes on the Psychology of Belief in Histories of Science and the Occult" . PDF on Canvas

**A2S3 Due 10/21 by 11:59pm on Canvas**

W Oct 23

Aspray and Cortada, "From Debunking Urban Legends to Political Fact-Checking".

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WEEK 11

M Oct 28

Today we will begin watching *Candyman* (2021). I think the movie is moderately scary but very violent. If you would like to be prepared, you can check this guide (relatively spoiler free).

**Artifact 2 Due 10/28 by 11:59pm on Canvas**

W Oct 30

Today we will complete *Candyman* (2021). I think the movie is moderately scary but very violent. If you would like to be prepared, you can check this guide (relatively spoiler free).

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WEEK 12

M Nov 4

Unit Three Intro: *Vanishing Hitchhiker* Ch. 8

W Nov 6

Portfolio Intro: Review Writer/Designer chapters 7 and 8 as well as the portfolio instructions

**A3S1 Due 11/8 by 11:59pm on Canvas**

### WEEK 13

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M Nov 11

Read *WOVENText* ch. 6. Come prepared to collaborate.

W Nov 13

Read *WOVENText* ch. 7. Come prepared to collaborate.

**A3S2 Due 11/15 by 11:59pm on Canvas**

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### WEEK 14

M Nov 18

Performance Date for Groups A and B

W Nov 20

Performance Date for Groups C and D

**A3 will be performed on the date you are assigned.**