

## **The Vampire in Literature** **Curt Herr, Ph.D.**

This class will study the shifting images and themes of the Vampire's rise as a literary obsession. We will begin with the first literary vampire, Sir Frances Varney, star of the notorious penny dreadful, *Varney the Vampire, or, The Feast of Blood*. Then, we will study Bram Stoker's classic, *Dracula* and look at the way Stoker shifted the tropes started by Rymer. How did Stoker borrow Rymer's themes and images? How did he shift them? Improve them? Alter them?

Then, for the second half of the semester, we will study the vampire in contemporary literature. How does the vampire reflect the shifting political landscape? How do these authors manipulate metaphor and theme? And finally, why do we take it so personally when authors re-image vampiric themes and images?

### **Required Texts:**

I strongly recommend these editions- though I am fully aware that cost may be an issue.

***Varney the Vampire, or, The Feast of Blood.*** James Malcolm Rymer. Zittaw Press edition is recommended due to the amount of annotations and historical context. Wordsworth Publishing has a less expensive edition, but it lacks all historical context and gets some information wrong, and the entire Penny Dreadful is also available on line for free. Warning: Many cheap publishers have reprinted the novel in incomplete volumes. You will need the entire series for this class.

***Dracula***, Bram Stoker. Norton Critical editions.

***Salem's Lot***, Stephen King. Any edition

***Interview With the Vampire***, Anne Rice. Any edition.

***Lost Souls***, Poppy Z. Brite. Anyt edition

### **Readings:**

**November 11:** *Varney the Vampire, Or, The Feast of Blood* by James Malcolm Rymer (Zittaw Press edition Preferred)

chapters 1 through 10.

chapters 156 through 160.

chapters 166 to the end.

**Dec. 16:** *Dracula*, first 1/2

**January 13:** Finish *Dracula*

**Feb 10:** *Salem's Lot*

**March 10:** *Interview with the Vampire*

**April 14:** *Lost Souls*