



Fanged Females: Women Vampires in Contemporary Film

The Rosenbach Library and Museum
Sept. 9, Oct. 6, Nov. 3, Dec. 1, Jan. 12, Feb. 2
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

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Course Description:

"There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear."

In Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Jonathan Harker's reaction to two beautiful female vampires is a mixture of attraction and revulsion. Stoker's woman vampire is perhaps the ultimate femme fatale, equal parts alluring and deadly, and an embodiment of Victorian anxieties about female sexuality.

In popular film, depictions of female vampires are fascinating in their variety; while some hew more closely to Stoker's rather one-dimensional Victorian prototype, others are more nuanced and psychologically complex, reflecting changing cultural attitudes about women, and also reflecting the changing ways in which women view themselves. This class will include a selection of films made after 1980 from a diverse group of filmmakers, all of which feature female vampires as the protagonists. Like real women, our protagonists have an array of identities: girlfriend, wife, lover, mother, daughter. We will analyze these films and discuss how their formal and thematic components function as critique of female identity within society. Films shown include *The Hunger*, *Near Dark*, *Let the Right One In*, *Byzantium*, *Only Lovers Left Alive*, *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*.

Week 1: September 8th, 2019

Film: *The Hunger* (1983) d. Tony Scott

Reading:

“Female Vampirism.” Women and the Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion, edited by Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2016, pp. 150–166.

Week 2: October 6th, 2019

Film: *Near Dark* (1987) d. Kathryn Bigelow

Reading:

“Near Dark: Vampires Die” in Our Vampires, Ourselves. Nina Auerbach. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1995. pp. 186-192.

Week 3: November 3rd, 2019

Film: *Let the Right One In* (2008) d. Tomas Alfredson

Readings:

“Warm-Blooded: True Blood and Let the Right One In,” *Film Quarterly*. J.M. Tyree. Vol. 63, No. 2. pp. 31-37.

“‘Be Me’: I-Vampire/I-Zombie.” Undead Apocalypse: Vampires and Zombies in the 21st Century. Stacey Abbott, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2016, pp. 142–176.

Week 4: December 1st, 2019

Film: *Byantium* (2012) d. Neil Jordan

Reading:

McGrath, Declan, and Neil Jordan. “Life Among the Undead: An Interview with Neil Jordan.” *Cinéaste*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2013, pp. 10–14.

Week 5: January 12th, 2020

Film: *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2014) d. Jim Jarmusch

Readings:

“Jim Jarmusch.” Cinematic Encounters 2: Portraits and Polemics, Jonathan Rosenbaum. Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 2019. pp. 81–95.

“Exhausting horror: twenty-first-century vampires in Jim Jarmusch’s *Only Lovers Left Alive*.” Zachary Price. *Screen*, Vol. 59, Issue 3, Autumn 2018. pp. 333–349.

Week 6: February 2nd, 2020

Film: *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (2014) d. Ana Lily Amirpour

Reading:

“Blood, Bodies and Borders.” Vampires, Race, and Transnational Hollywoods. Dale Hudson. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 2017. pp. 21–44.