

Dracula: Facts & Fictions

History 01:510:255:90

Online

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Online Portal (Course Management System): Sakai: <http://sakai.rutgers.edu/>

Course Description

This course explores the broad question: who was “the Dracula of history,” and how and why did Dracula come to be the most celebrated vampire in history? Our guiding aims will be to understand:

- What exactly happened in the course of Dracula’s life and three reigns as prince of Wallachia, throughout the years from ca. 1430-1476?
- How can historians uncover and interpret the life and career of “The Impaler” on the basis of surviving narratives, documents, pictures, and monuments?
- How and why did contemporaries of Dracula launch a project of vilifying his character and deeds, in the early decades of printed pamphlets and books?
- Did contemporaries of Dracula ever regard him as a “vampire,” and what characterized medieval and early modern vampire beliefs in central and eastern Europe?
- To what extent was Dracula known and remembered as a historical figure from the late 15th century down to the 1890s, when Bram Stoker was writing his famous novel ultimately entitled *Dracula*?
- How, and with what sources, did Bram Stoker construct his version of Dracula, and why did this image become and remain the standard popular notion of Dracula throughout the world?
- How have modern historians developed a credible reconstruction of Dracula’s life and career, from the 19th century to the present?
- How did Dracula evolve as an icon of 20th century popular culture, particularly in the media of film and the novel?

This class is an online course and consequently students will do their work on an independent basis. This requires a major time commitment to study the online materials, become familiar with Sakai and audio-visuals as modes of learning, participate in online class discussions, complete written work, and take examinations.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have:

- attained critical mastery of significant historical events in the mid-to-late 15th century pertaining to the histories of Wallachia, Byzantium, the Holy Roman Empire, Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire.
- attained a close understanding of the life and achievements of “the historical Dracula,” and the sources which make such understanding possible.
- attained a close understanding of late medieval/early modern beliefs regarding death, the nature of the soul, and the relationship between death and the “afterlife.”
- attained a close understanding of how celebrated historical figures become transformed, in the course of time, into fictional creations reflecting varying historical and cultural influences.

These objectives will align with the conceptual and practical learning goals set out by the History Department:

- How individuals are shaped by their own past and by the past of their society and institutions.
- The role of human agency in bringing about change in society and institutions.
- The operation of large-scale forces responsible for causing change over time, such as politics, economics, and religion.
- The role of diversity and difference in shaping human experience.

- The nature of cause-and-effect relationships in human affairs as they have played out over time and as they continue to operate in the present.

Practical Learning Goals. In this course, you will develop an understanding of the following practical skills:

- The ability to read and understand a variety of primary sources as well as secondary sources written in academic prose.
- The ability to analyze information effectively and to construct cause-and-effect relationships from disparate data sources.
- The ability to write persuasively and communicate effectively.
- The ability to work independently and to conduct independent research.

Books and Readings

Many of the assigned readings and study resources will be provided in PDF files on the course Sakai site.

Hard copies of the following required books are available at the Rutgers University Bookstore (Barnes & Noble):

- McClelland, Bruce A. *Slayers and their Vampires: A Cultural History of Killing the Dead* (2006). ISBN 0-472-06923-3.
- McNally, Raymond T. and Florescu, Radu. *In Search of Dracula: The History of Dracula and Vampires*. Revised ed. (1994). ISBN 0-395-65783-0.
- Skal, David. *Hollywood Gothic*. Revised ed. (2004). ISBN 0-571-21158-5.
- Stoker, Bram, *Dracula*, edited with an introduction and notes by Maurice Hindle, preface by Christopher Frayling. Revised ed. (2003). ISBN 978-0141439846.
- Kostova, Elizabeth. *The Historian: A Novel* (2005). ISBN 0-316.07063-7.

Key Assignments

Students are expected to participate fully in the course and complete all key assignments by the due stipulated due dates.

Grading

Objective Exams 1-2 (40%); Online Discussion Forums 1-2-3-4-5 (60%).

Your grade will be calculated along the following scale:

100%-90% = A	74%-70% = C
89%-85% = B+	69%-65% = D
84%-80% = B	64% and below = F
79%-75% = C+	

Clarification of Components of Course Grade

- Objective Exams — two multiple-choice format exams, staggered at midterm and final points of the course.
- Online Discussion Forums — five throughout the course, on topics directly related to readings, PowerPoint presentations, activities, resources, and/or media content discussed and/or assigned. These discussions are an extremely important part of the course and are meant to ensure the sharing of ideas and overall learning. Posting times and due dates are specified in the individual forum themes.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity policies will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and the grade for such a submission will be “F”. The software “Turn It In” is utilized to scan for plagiarism in written assignments.

For more information see: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-students>

Special Needs

Any student with a disability who needs accommodation should contact the professor at the outset of the course.

Structure & Themes of the Course

The Rutgers academic semester consists of fourteen weeks of instruction. Throughout those weeks, we will proceed through ten key topics or modules — the pacing, component reading assignments, PowerPoint presentations, and discussion requirements for which will be elaborated in the course Sakai site, which will be available to registered students the first day of the semester.

The key topics or modules forming the foundation of the course are:

- Navigating an online course using the Sakai “Learning Management System” and Netiquette
- Required Books on Order & Readings Available on Sakai
- Key Historians on Dracula & A Taste of the “Historiographic Tradition”
- Images of Dracula & Overview of His Career
- Career of Dracula’s Father, Vlad II Dracul, ca. 1395-1447
- Career of Vlad III Dracula, 1448-1462
- Vlad III Dracula’s Final Reign, Death & Burial, 1462-1476
- The Vilification of Dracula in the Early German Horror Story Pamphlets
- The Saxon Cities & Villages of Transylvania
- The Premodern East European Folkloric Vampire
- Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*
- The Earliest Dracula films — Murnau’s *Nosferatu* & Browning’s *Dracula*
- A Dracula Novel with a History Slant: Elizabeth Kostova’s *The Historian*
- Modern Historians on Dracula: 18th Century to the Present

To repeat, the timetable and expectations for working through these component modules will be specified in detail in the published course Sakai site. In addition, students will receive weekly navigational guidance via the “Announcements” tool on Sakai.

Computer Needs

Students can navigate this course using either Mac or PC computers. It is *essential*, however, that students have hardware with a fast processor as well as high-speed internet access. Many of the modules will include video clips, and all will have audio-enhanced PowerPoint presentations.