

## VAMPIRES, SOCIETY, AND CULTURE: TRANSYLVANIA AND BEYOND



'Death, immortality, sexuality, rebellion and temptation. The vampire has embodied many literary and legendary images over the centuries. Whatever aspect holds your fascination, one thing is certain: the allure of vampires is eternal' (J. Gordon Melton, *The Vampire Book*).

Ever since the publication of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in 1897, the vampire has been one of the most loved villains in horror literature and on the silver screen. More importantly, the image of the vampire has had an important effect on Western ways of thinking about evil, social norms, and 'the East'. The roots of vampire lore, however, are far older than Stoker's work of fiction. This course examines the history, folklore, and cultural impact of the vampire from ancient Greece through 15<sup>th</sup> century Wallachia to modern Hollywood. The course is a half-unit course with ten weekly lectures given by five tutors.

The aim of the course is to give the student a framework for understanding the significance of the vampire as a cultural icon in the context of east European and wider western culture. The vampire is approached from a genuinely interdisciplinary perspective: history, linguistics, folklore, literature, cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, and film studies are all incorporated in the study of the vampire.

**Title:** TRANSYLVANIA AND BEYOND: VAMPIRES, SOCIETY AND CULTURE

**Course Code:**

**Course-unit value:** 0.5 cu

**Availability:** Annual (Autumn term)

**Open to:** East European Studies; East European Studies and Combined Degrees; History; History and Combined Degrees; Russian Studies; Politics and East European Studies; Affiliates

**Course leader:** Dr T Hjelm

**Other participants:** Dr D Abondolo, DR T Beasley-Murray, Dr R Halili, Dr R Haynes, Prof. M Rady

## Aims and objectives

The aim of the course is to:

- **Introduce** the figure of the vampire as a central icon in East European and wider western culture
- **Familiarise** students with the history and folklore of the vampire
- **Compare** factual and fictional accounts of vampirism and their social impact
- **Analyse** the significance of the vampire as a cultural icon in the context of East European and wider western culture

At the end of this course YOU are expected to be able to:

- **Understand** the significance of the vampire in (East) European culture
- **Apply** historical, sociological, and literary concepts in the study of vampires and European culture
- **Asses** academic texts critically
- **Make** clear, engaging, and coherent written presentations

## Course assessment

Students are required to write a 5000 word essay at the end of the course (100% coursework assessment). The essay should address a specific problem; it is not just an opportunity to merely list a succession of facts about an issue. The topic and title of the essay must be confirmed with a course tutor who will give further guidance on readings, question formulation, and so on.

## PRELIMINARY READING LIST

S Andreescu, *Vlad the Impaler (Dracula)*, 1999

P Bogatyrev, *Vampires in the Carpathians: Magical Acts, Rites, and Beliefs in Subcarpathian Rus'*, 1998

Kane, T., *The Changing Vampire in Film and Television: A Critical Study of the Growth of a Genre*, 2006.

Kaveney, Roz, ed. *Reading the Vampire Slayer*, 2001.

McNally, R and Florescu, R, *In Search of Dracula*, 1994

Perkowski, j, *the darkling: a treatise on Slavic vampirism*, 1989.

Ramsland, Katherine, *piercing the darkness: undercover with vampires in America today*, 1999.

Summers, Montague, *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin* (1928, also published as *Vampires and Vampirism*); *The Vampire in Europe* (1929, also published as *The Vampire in Lore and Legend*). Full texts available on several internet sites; try [unicornsgarden.com/vampires](http://unicornsgarden.com/vampires) .

b Stoker, *Dracula*

t Thorne, *Children of the Night: Of Vampires and Vampirism*, 1999.

M J Trow, *Vlad the Impaler: In Search of the Real Dracula*, 2003

