Horror goes beyond what most people think of when they hear the term – unnecessary and overabundance of killing, gore, or even “torture porn”. Unfortunately, for most, this concept of horror stems mostly from film. However, horror in literature goes far beyond this. Horror can be seen as art, commentary on society, a form that brings about community, shows the face of humanity, as history, and yes, a good scare and lingering disturbance.

What is horror?

- Concept of horror
  - Not just fear, but strong fear
  - Horror differs per individual
    - Known vs. unknown
      - One of H.P. Lovecraft's most famous quotes about the genre is that: "The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown"
    - Seen vs. hidden
    - Fight vs. flight
    - Fear or anxiety

- Why/how do we experience horror?
  - Different aspects of horror
  - Literary theories of horror
    - Rejection of filth / unclean (Kosher) / bodily fluids
      - Carnivore vs. herbivore
    - We are “above” that which has been rejected and abjected (objective vs. subjective)
    - Freud / Marx / Feminism
    - Mother – birth, menstruation, Oedipus
    - Expulsion of sin

- Why do we enjoy horror? [The paradox]

- Evolution of horror
  - Culture / history
  - Literature
    - From the epic poem to the classic to the schlock to the ???
      - Epic of Gilgamesh and mythology
      - Holy books
      - Beowulf
      - The Monk
      - Mary Shelley, Bram Stoker, Poe
    - Horror as a new genre

- Horror in books classified as horror
  - Divine Comedy – Dante Aligheri (14th century)
  - Doctor Faustus – Christopher Marlowe (1592)
  - The Monk – Matthew Gregory Lewis (1796)
Frankenstein – Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1818)
Tales of Mystery and Imagination – Edgar Allan Poe (1838)
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde – Robert Louis Stevenson (1886)
The Picture of Dorian Gray – Oscar Wilde (1891)
The Island of Dr. Moreau – H.G. Wells (1896)
The War of the Worlds – H.G. Wells (1898)
Dracula – Bram Stoker (1897)
The Turn of the Screw – Henry James (1898)
The Hound of the Baskervilles – Arthur Conan Doyle (1902)
The Lurker at the Threshold – H.P. Lovecraft & August Derleth (1945)
The Killer Inside Me – Jim Thompson (1952)
Psycho – Robert Bloch (1959)
The Haunting of Hill House – Shirley Jackson (1959)
Something Wicked This Way Comes – Ray Bradbury (1963)
Rosemary’s Baby – Ira Levin (1967)
The Exorcist – William Peter Blatty (1971)
Burnt Offerings – Robert Marasco (1973)
Ghost Story – Peter Straub (1979)
Red Dragon – Thomas Harris (1981)
Pet Semetary – Stephen King (1983)
The Damnation Game – Clive Barker (1985)
IT – Stephen King (1986)
The Stand – Stephen King (1989)

- Horror in books not classified as horror
  The Epic of Gilgamesh
  The Iliad and the Odyssey
  The Bible
  Beowulf
  Aesop’s Fables
  Grimm’s Fairy Tales
  Jane Eyre
  1984
  Helter Skelter
  Lord of the Flies – William Golding, 1954
  Blood Meridian – Cormac McCarthy, 1985
  The Hot Zone
  We Need to Talk About Kevin – Lionel Shriver
  Sharp Objects – Gillian Flynn
  Never Let Me Go – Kazuo Ishiguro