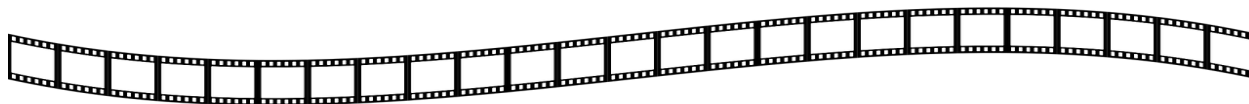
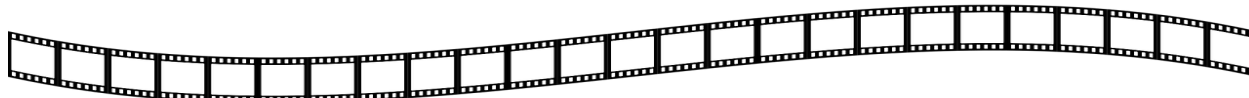




## [University Libraries](#)



### FILM THEORY OF HORROR: A GUIDE TO RESOURCES



#### Databases

- [Film and Television Index with Full Text](#)
  - This database includes articles from more than 300 publications about film and television shows. You can find academic articles, as well as reviews. An example search:

Searching: [Film & Television Literature Index with Full Text](#) | [Choose Databases](#)

<input type="text" value="night of the living dead"/>	Select a Field (optional) ▾	<input type="button" value="Search"/>	
AND ▾ <input type="text"/>	Select a Field (optional) ▾		<a href="#">Clear</a> ?
AND ▾ <input type="text"/>	Select a Field (optional) ▾		<input type="button" value="+"/> <input type="button" value="-"/>

[Basic Search](#) | [Advanced Search](#) | [Search History](#) ▶

#### Source Types ▾

- All Results
- Magazines (97)
- Reviews (46)
- Academic Journals (23)
- Trade Publications (22)
- Variety Movie Reviews (3)

[Show More](#)

On the left side of the screen, you can limit by type of source, as seen here. Choose "Academic Journals" for academic articles, or "Reviews" for reviews of a film. You can also limit by publication date or subject as well as others.

- [Feature Films for Education](#)
  - You can find some full-length films here.
- [Swank Digital Campus](#)
  - Provides access to a catalog of films Kent State has licensed for streaming.
- [Sci-Fi/Horror Collection from the Internet Archive](#)
  - A collection of sci-fi and horror films in the public domain. This is a good source for some early horror films.
- [Contemporary Theatre, Film, and Television](#)
  - Part of the Gale Virtual Reference Library, this series has “biographical and career information on people currently working in the entertainment industry”. This is a good source to find information about particular directors or actors in a film.

## Reference

**Note: If focusing on a recent film, pay attention to the release date when consulting these resources.**

- [A Companion to the Horror Film](#)(2014)- ed. Harry M. Benshoff
  - A collection of essays which describe some of the trends in film theory about horror. Look at the index for specific films. The reference lists at the end of each chapter can help find more resources as well. (Online)
- [Historical Dictionary of Horror Cinema](#)(2018)- by Peter Hutchings
  - Has a timeline of important moments in the history of horror film, as well as entries on individual films, notable movie villains, people involved in the making of horror films, and themes of horror films as well. (Print)
- [Movies in American History: An Encyclopedia](#)(2011)- ed. Philip C. DiMare
  - This 3 volume encyclopedia covers the entirety of American film history, not just horror films. There are entries on individual films, actors, directors, writers, and others, particular genres, and a variety of related topics. The table of contents is listed on the catalog record which is linked above, so you can check if it has the information you’re looking for without having to look in the physical volumes. (Print)
- [The Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory](#)(2014)- eds. Edward Branigan and Warren Buckland

- This encyclopedia discusses film theory in general. It is a good source to learn more about specific theories such as gaze theory or auteur theory that you may encounter in the academic literature. (Online)

## Articles

- Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema(1975)- Laura Mulvey in [Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works](#)(2001)
  - Ch. 20 in the linked book
  - This is an important article in the history of film theory, especially feminist film theory, which discusses gaze. It is cited in much of the literature about horror films. (Print)
- [Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film](#)(1987)- Carol Clover
  - This is a classic article which describes the trope of the “final girl” in slasher films, with a special focus on *Halloween* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. (Print)
- The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators in [Black Looks: Race and Representation](#)(1992, reprinted 2015)- bell hooks
  - In this essay, bell hooks writes about watching films as a black woman. This is in contrast to the above Laura Mulvey article, and is a good companion to the book, *Horror Noire*, mentioned below. (Print)
- [My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage](#)(1994)- Susan Stryker
  - Susan Stryker is a transgender academic. In this article, she compares the transgender body to monsters, especially Frankenstein’s monster, in a way that claims the term “monster” in a positive light. (Online)

## Books

In KentLINK, if you do a subject search for “horror films history and criticism”, you will find a variety of books on horror film theory as well as history. Here is a picture of what the search should look like:

Search

horror films history and criticism

Search Type  
Subject

Material Type  
Keyword Searches Only  
ANY add

Collection  
View Entire Col

SEARCH

- [The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis](#)(1993)- Barbara Creed
  - Barbara Creed writes about Julia Kristeva’s theory of the abject in the context of horror films. This is a classic work of psychoanalytic film theory and is often referenced in the academic literature on horror. (Print)
- [Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film](#)(1992)- Carol J. Clover
  - This book contains the Clover essay mentioned above, as well as further essays on the topic. Note: “modern” in the title refers to films that were modern in 1992 at the time it was written. (Print)
- [Attack of the Leading Ladies: Gender, Sexuality, and Spectatorship in Classic Horror Cinema](#)(1996)- Rhona J. Berenstein
  - This work focuses on the women of the Universal monster films from the 1930s and 40s. (Print)
- [Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film](#)(1997)- Harry M. Benshoff
  - This is an essential text in queer film theory on horror. (Print)
  - The KSU library does not have a copy of this text, but it can be requested through OhioLINK.
- [Horror Noire: Blacks in American horror films from the 1890s to Present](#)(2011)- Robin R. Means Coleman
  - This is a history of Black horror films, starting with the very earliest films, with white actors in blackface portraying Black people as villains, through 2011 when the book was written. In 2019, a documentary, [Horror Noire: A History of Black Horror](#), was produced, which includes Coleman and a variety of Black actors and directors who have worked in horror. The documentary ends with a discussion of the film, *Get Out*, directed by Jordan Peele. (Online)

Films
1920s: German Expressionism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</a> (1920)(streaming)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Nosferatu</a> (1922)(streaming)</li> </ul>
1930s-40s: Universal monster movies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Frankenstein</a> (1931)(DVD)</li> </ul>
1950s: Science Fiction Horror <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Godzilla</a> (1954)(DVD)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Invasion of the Body Snatchers</a> (1956)(VHS)</li> </ul>
1960s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Psycho</a> (1960)(streaming)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Night of the Living Dead</a> (1968)(streaming)</li> </ul>
1970s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Carrie</a> (1976)(DVD)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Halloween</a> (1978)(DVD)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Alien</a> (1979)(streaming)</li> </ul>
1980s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Shining</a> (1980)(DVD)</li> <li>• <a href="#">A Nightmare on Elm Street</a> (1984)(DVD)</li> <li>• <a href="#">The Fly</a> (1986)(streaming)</li> </ul>
1990s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Misery</a> (1990)(DVD)</li> <li>• <a href="#">The Blair Witch Project</a> (1999)(streaming)</li> </ul>
2000s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">28 Days Later</a> (2002)(streaming)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Freddy vs. Jason</a> (2004)(DVD)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Jennifer's Body</a> (2009)(streaming)</li> </ul>
2010s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Get Out</a> (2017)(streaming)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ready or Not</a> (2019)(streaming)</li> </ul>

Contact: Katie Gresham [kgresham@kent.edu](mailto:kgresham@kent.edu) for more information.

**Topic:**

Film theory of horror movies

**Library:**

Kent State University Library

**Patron Group:**

Undergraduate students.

**Purpose of the pathfinder and how that purpose fits with the services, patrons, and/or collection of the library you have chosen:**

This pathfinder is to guide students to resources on film theory about a particular genre of films. This would be helpful for students who would like to research the horror genre or for a specific class focused on horror films. As it is an academic library, the resources are academic in nature. Though there is no film major at Kent State, there are minors in women's studies and LGBTQ+ studies. As much of the theory on horror is feminist film theory or queer film theory, this pathfinder could be helpful for students in those majors. It could also be helpful for English majors as well, since many of the films are based on novels.

**Appropriateness of resources:**

The resources chosen, other than the films themselves, are written for an academic audience. The books and articles chosen are cited regularly in the literature. The reference sources chosen are from reputable publishers and are written or edited by scholars in the area of film.

**How this pathfinder would be used:**

This pathfinder is meant to be used online. I tried to find as many online resources as possible, since I think undergrad students especially often prefer online resources, but some important resources are only in print. One book (*Monsters in the Closet*), is only available through OhioLINK, but I felt it was too important to leave off, since it's a very important book for queer film theory about horror. Students can use the Film and Television Literature Index database, which is listed, to find articles about a particular film, and this guide can help point them towards resources to understand ideas referenced in any articles found. They could directly use the resources listed as well.

**Justification of films chosen:**

Films were chosen partially based on their availability. I wanted a variety of films from different decades. I mostly chose films which will be recognized by the average person, even if they are not a horror fan. Many of these films would be considered to be classics, and most are important films in the history of horror. For the more modern decades, it's hard to tell yet which films will remain prominent.

I chose *28 Days Later* because it is an interesting look at how zombies have changed since *Night of the Living Dead*, it definitely has had academic literature written about it, and it has interesting ideas to analyze about gender, the military, and race.

I chose *Freddy vs. Jason* partially because it was one of the few movies available, but also because it is representative of a decade which was full of remakes of slasher films. While this is not itself a remake, it features two of the classic slasher villains.

*Jennifer's Body* is a movie which plays with classic horror movie tropes. It was not well accepted at the time it came out, but has more recently been re-evaluated. It could definitely be considered a feminist horror movie.

*Get Out* is a modern film that I would say is already a classic. It is one of my favorite movies, but it is also one that has a lot of depth to it and a lot of interesting things to analyze.

*Ready or Not* is only a few years old. It's another movie that plays with tropes of horror. It stars Samira Wiley, who is a modern "scream queen" in the vein of Jaime Lee Curtis. It was a very fun movie that could be very interesting to analyze in terms of gender or class.