Get Out now has its own online class about black horror

Jordan Peele's Oscar-nominated film *Get Out* now has its own webinar. It's called "The Sunken Place: Racism, Survival, and Black Horror Aesthetic," based on the UCLA course on black horror put together by Professor and author Tananarive Due and her husband, science fiction writer and lecturer Steven Barnes last year. Due and Barnes' six-week online course that discusses works including 1972's *Blacula,* Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, and the 1968 zombie film *Night of the Living Dead,* which Peele named as one of his biggest influences.

Now, anyone with internet access can buy access to the online seminar, which costs $348. The course began on January 13th, but newcomers can catch up with streams of previous class sessions. The webinar's name is a reference to one of the scenes of *Get Out*, where the protagonist Chris (Daniel Kaluuya) is hypnotized by his girlfriend's mother Missy (Catherine Keener), a hypnotherapist ostensibly trying to get him to quit smoking. She traps him inside himself, in an empty realm called the Sunken Place. Stuck there, he's helpless to react or defend himself in the real world.

Peele has explained the Sunken Place on Twitter, saying, "The Sunken Place means we're marginalized. No matter how hard we scream, the system silences us." It's an analogy for the systemic racism black people continue to experience in the US, from the microaggressions in *Get Out* to more overt acts of discrimination.

The works Due and Barnes' webinar engages have all played important roles in addressing racism in America. For instance, *Night of the Living Dead* has a black male character who is

stuck in a house with white people, while zombies reanimate outside. He survives the ordeal, only to be shot by a white sheriff at the end of the film. Some critics have interpreted the 1968 film as indicating his character is better equipped to survive against the zombies because he's had to live with racism and its consequences for his whole life, while the white people have not.

60 students enrolled in the original UCLA course last year, and Due and Barnes told *io9* that they decided to expand into a webinar to meet public demand. It's a timely course, given the growing interest in diversity in media, and the recognition Peele's film has gotten for addressing racial issues in an insightful and absorbing way. But not every book or film that carries a racial subtext is as overt about it as *Get Out*. Due and Barnes' class aims to explore contextual messages about racism in cinema and literature that may not have been apparent to casual audiences.

The seminar is set to end in late February. It also comes with access to a bonus screenwriting course, for "everything you need to understand or create the next *Get Out*," according to the site. Peele himself has visited the UCLA course before, and the site hints that he may return.

https://www.theverge.com/2018/1/27/16938664/get-out-jordan-peele-ucla-seminar-online-course