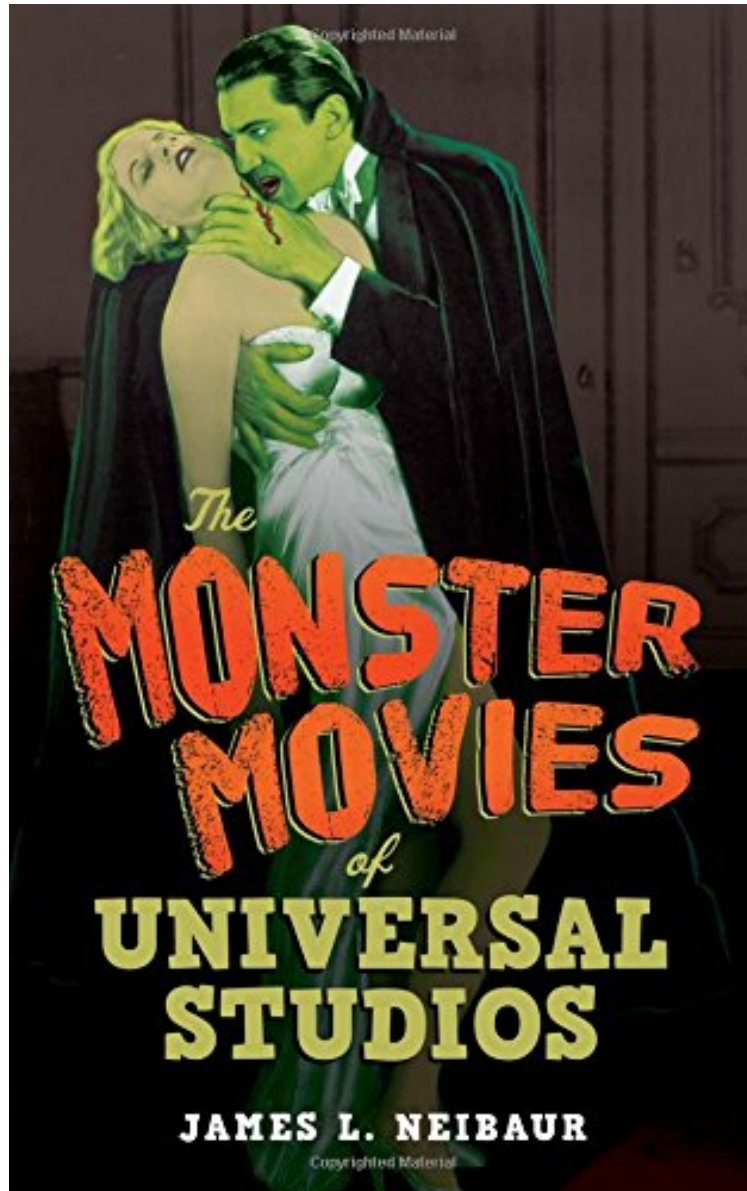


[Pdf free] The Monster Movies of Universal Studios

## The Monster Movies of Universal Studios

*James L. Neibaur*

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**James L. Neibaur : The Monster Movies of Universal Studios** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Monster Movies of Universal Studios:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Down monster memory laneBy Jerry MuellerUniversals classic monsters continue to captivate their legion of fans, whether its an older generation who were introduced to them on

television in the years long before home video, or younger viewers who discovered them on DVD and online. This astute, entertaining examination was written by an author from the former group, who clearly never lost his interest in or affection for these movies. By focusing on the Universals monster movies (as opposed to horror films such as *THE OLD DARK HOUSE* and *THE BLACK CAT*), the text covers twenty-nine titles in chronological order, from the landmark *DRACULA* (1931) to *THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US* (1956), the third and final entry in the Creature from the Black Lagoon series. Production histories, discussions of cultural significance, and critical assessments are provided for each title, tracing how these movies thrived and then were subsequently phased out by the studio. Though they would remain in the hearts of movie fans worldwide, for film buffs, this book is a trip down a familiar (and enjoyably macabre) memory lane. For those new to the game, whoever they might be, it will serve as an informative and comprehensive introduction to some of cinema's most iconic creations.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating study of genre-defining classics

By Katie Carter

Universal Studios monster movies provided a blueprint for much of the horror movie genre. Boris Karloff's Frankenstein monster, Bela Lugosi's Dracula, and other depictions of monsters from this era have become the defining images of these creatures over the decades, across all mediums.

In *The Monster Movies of Universal Studios*, author and historian James L. Neibaur details these classic monster movies film by film, beginning with 1931's *Dracula* and going up to 1956's *The Creature Walks Among Us*. A chapter is dedicated to each of Universal's monster movies produced during this period, and not just the heavy-hitters like *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, and *The Mummy*, but to their sequels as well, which may not be as familiar to casual fans. There's even a chapter on *Werewolf of London*, the studio's 1935 precursor to their 1941 classic *The Wolf Man*, as well as an extensive discussion of the team-ups with the monsters and the comedy team Abbott and Costello, beginning with 1948's *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*. Each chapter provides a plot synopsis of the film as well as behind-the-scenes anecdotes about the films and the cast and crew who made them. Neibaur's thoroughly-researched book brings a wealth of new information to the table, and he provides context to help the reader understand why these movies were so successful, and how they changed along with the studio. But beyond the facts, Neibaur also breaks each film down in a detailed critical analysis, explaining what makes the films so effective, from the actors' performances (for Karloff, Lugosi, and Chaney, these roles became their most memorable) to the sets to the directors' choice of shots. Even when the films aren't so good, the author exhibits an appreciation for those low-budget sequels to the classics that isn't often seen.

There are also opening and closing chapters briefly discussing the early history of Universal Studios, as well as the legacy the studio's monster movies have had, from re-releases to remakes and parodies, like Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein*, which has become a classic in and of itself. The book is also filled with photos and images from many of the films, providing the finishing touch to this fascinating study of Universal's monster movies that is a must-read for any horror or film fan.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Enjoyable book!

By Theresa Lynch

As a newcomer to the genre, I found this book to be a great read. I had never actually seen many of these films, so it was fun seeking them out and reading the accompanying chapters. The movie descriptions helped me notice elements of the technical aspects of filming that otherwise may have gone over my head. I found the interviews with the actors to be particularly fascinating. The details about behind-the-scenes issues, budgets, and personnel were varied and interesting. I feel that the author did a good job of collecting pertinent and insightful information and presenting it eloquently and logically. This is a great addition to my growing film book library.

In 1931 Universal Studios released *Dracula* starring Bela Lugosi. This box office success was followed by a string of films featuring macabre characters and chilling atmospherics, including *Frankenstein*, *The Mummy*, and *The Invisible Man*. With each new film, Universal established its place in the Hollywood firmament as the leading producer of horror films, a status it enjoyed for more than twenty years.

In *The Monster Movies of Universal Studios*, James L. Neibaur examines the key films produced by the studio from the early 1930s through the mid-1950s. In each entry, the author recounts the movie's production, provides critical commentary, considers the film's commercial reception, and offers an overall assessment of the movie's significance. Neibaur also examines the impact these films had on popular culture, an influence that resonates in the cinema of fear today.

From the world premiere of *Dracula* to the 1956 release of *The Creature Walks among Us*, Universal excelled at scaring viewers of all ages and even elicited a few chuckles along the way by pitting their iconic creatures against the comedic pair of Abbott and Costello. *The Monster Movies of Universal Studios* captures the thrills of these films, making this book a treat for fans of the golden age of horror cinema.

Like *Dr. Frankenstein*, Universal Studios under Carl Laemmle Jr., brought the monster movie genre to terrifying new life with the 1931 Tod Browning-directed film *Dracula* starring Bela Lugosi in his most iconic role. The characterizations of *Dracula* and *Frankenstein's* monster by Lugosi and Boris Karloff, as well as the studio's costume and makeup design, ensured that Universal's monsters would become the standard representation of these literary monsters in popular culture. In chronological order, historian Neibaur (*The Fall of Buster Keaton*) details the production and reception of each monster movie produced by the studio between 1931 and 1956, including such

classics as *Frankenstein*, *The Invisible Man*, *The Mummy*, *The Wolf Man*, *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, and each of their respective sequels. The author provides insight into the challenges that the actors faced in the roles that made them household names. Verdict: Neibaurs book honors Universals horror legacy with exhaustive research. The detailed breakdowns of each film makes this an excellent resource for film students and monster movie fanatics. (Library Journal)The horror movies produced by Universal Studios from the 1930s to the early 1950s featured some of the most iconic movie monsters in film history. *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *the Wolf Man*, *the Mummy*, *the Invisible Man*, and *the Creature* have been portrayed more than once since their first appearances on screen, but there are many who prefer these classic movie monsters to todays CGI film fiends. Entries document the initial films as well as their sequels. After a summary with full credits, release date, running time, and availability, there is an essay that provides background information, a plot synopsis, and other details. Studio stills and trade ads for several of the films add a suitably scary touch to this treat for fans and scholars alike. (Booklist)A must-read for any avid horror fan or classic movie buff, *The Monster Movies of Universal Studios* is an fascinating look back at a struggling studio and the genre that saved it. For those who weren't around at the time, the book provides a wealth of insight trivia, and if it prompts the reader to revisit any of these classics, then it's done its job. (Free Kittens Movie Guide)Neibaur does a good job discussing ... films.... [A]ny monster fan would have fun reading over some of their favorite titles of these classic monster films. (Kitley's Krypt)I was impressed by the research and smooth writing skills of the author, which have become a staple of his books.... [I]t's a fact-filled, genre-fun read of a piece of Hollywood history that so many cult film fans love. It merits real estate in your book case. (Plan 9 Crunch: All About Cult Films)About the AuthorJames L. Neibaur is a film historian and educator who has written hundreds of articles, including more than forty essays in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. He is the author of several books on film, including *The Fall of Buster Keaton* (2010), *Chaplin at Keystone* (2012), *The Silent Films of Harry Langdon* (2012), and *The Charley Chase Talkies* (2013), all published by Scarecrow. He is also the author of *The Elvis Movies* (2014), *The Clint Eastwood Westerns*, (2015), *The Essential Mickey Rooney* (2016), and *The Essential Jack Nicholson* (2017)all published by Rowman Littlefield.