

ANTHROPOLOGY 4DD3 –The Anthropology of Zombies and the Undead

Winter 2020

Course Instructor: Dr. Karen McGarry

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Office: CNH 531

Office Hours: By appointment. Just email me to set up a time.

Class Time: Mondays 8:30-11:20 a.m. in UH 101

Course Description:

In recent years, there has been a steadily growing cultural interest in liminal beings that occupy ambiguous spaces between the cultural binarism of “living” and “dead.” This intensified interest is manifested, for instance, in various pop culture genres including films, comic books, video games, action figures, zombie walks and other phenomena. This course explores this cultural fascination and asks questions such as: Why should anthropologists study the undead?; How are notions of the undead understood and how do they manifest themselves cross-culturally?; What socio-cultural forces or anxieties have contributed to this cultural fascination with the undead?; How do liminal beings such as zombies or vampires intersect with pervasive anxieties concerning social change, disease, the effects of globalization, mobilities, borders, and other phenomena?

Course Text:

The Serpent and the Rainbow, by Wade Davis (available in the McMaster bookstore)

All other course readings are posted on Avenue.

Evaluation:

1. **In-class test: (25%)** – On February 24, we will have an in-class test that will cover all class material up to and including the material.
2. **Group Presentation: (25%)** – Various due dates. By the second week of classes, you will be asked to sign up for a group presentation date/topic. More information will be provided during the first class.
3. **Final paper: (30%)** – due April 6. You will have a choice of topics for this question.
4. **Participation: (15%)** – Weekly class attendance and relevant contributions to discussion are expected. 7.5 marks are allocated to weekly attendance, and 7.5 marks are for active participation (answering and asking questions, showing evidence of engagement with readings, etc.).
6. **Peer Review Session (5%)** – Bring two copies of your final paper to class on date specified.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, [Academic Integrity](#)

The following illustrate only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one’s own for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Email Forwarding in MUGSI:

[UTS Support for Email Forwarding](#)

*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link (Approved at the Faculty of Social Sciences meeting on Tues. May 25, 2010)

Policy on the Submission of Assignments - Assignments submitted by e-mail **will not be accepted**. No extensions will be given unless written certification, approved by your Faculty office, is provided. Please note that policies concerning the use of MSAFs (McMaster Student Absence Forms) have changed (see [McMaster Student Absence Forms](#)). Late assignments without appropriate documentation will be penalized **10% per day** late, including weekend days. No assignments are accepted after 72 hours of the submission deadline, and you will receive a 0.

Missed Assessments or Exams -Students are responsible for arranging make-up exams/assignments with the instructor. A makeup exam/assessment will be granted on a case-by-case basis, and documentation from a physician is required. **Please note – make-up exams will be in essay format.**

Course Materials and Avenue to Learn (ATL) -Lectures will be presented using Power Point, an abbreviated version of which will be posted weekly on ATL. You must be registered in the course to have access to the 4DD3 site. **Please familiarize yourself with the Avenue to Learn system.** You can access ATL at:
<http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/?logout=1>

Correspondence - I will check my email regularly throughout the week, so you can expect a response within approximately **48 hours**. Please put **4DD3 in the subject line** of your email and **include your name and student number** at the end of all correspondence.

Student Behavior and Responsibilities –

Your learning – it is your responsibility to **keep up with the readings** – do not leave them until the night before the exams. Attendance in this class is **essential** if you want to do well in this course. You are expected to think about the readings and integrate them into the information and concepts presented during lecture.

Classroom behavior – Please **do not be afraid to ask questions** or provide constructive comments! If you do not understand something, or if I have gone over a concept too fast, stop me and ask a question. Chances are if you do not understand something, other people in the class are in the same position.

Please ensure that cell phones are turned “off”(including text messaging, Twitter, etc...) and **arrive on time for class**. If you have to leave class early, please sit near one of the exits. **Laptop computers** may be used in class for taking notes, but students using their computers for any other purpose (e.g., checking Facebook) will be asked to turn their computers off. Please be polite to your neighbors and **keep conversation to a minimum**.

Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student’s religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict.

In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Please review the [RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences](#) about how to request accommodation.

Privacy Protection

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class;
2. Return of materials to students during office hours;
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail;
4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

Student Accessibility Services: <http://sas.mcmaster.ca> MUSC-B107 905-525-9140 x28652

NOTE: Disclosure of disability-related information is personal and confidential.
Student Accessibility Services offers various supports for students with disabilities. We work with full time and part time students. SAS provides or assists students with their academic and disability-related needs, including: Learning Strategies, Assistive Technologies, Test & Exam Administration, Note-Taking Programs, Classroom Accommodations. Please inform the instructor if there are disability needs that are not being met.

McMaster University Policy on Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities & McMaster University Anti-Discrimination Policy

- [McMaster Policy on Academic Accommodation and Anti-Discrimination](#)

Special Accommodations -

Any student with special learning needs should contact Dr. McGarry by the end of the **second week** of classes at the latest. You must have written confirmation from Student Accessibility Services (formerly the Center for Student Development). Students can contact SAS to arrange assistance in the completion of exams. [Student Accessibility Services](#)

Student Success Centre: <http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca> GH-110 905-525-9140 x24254 Provides the following services: student orientation, academic skills, leadership, service-learning, volunteerism, educational planning, employment and career transition.
Student Wellness Centre <http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/> MUSC-B101& B106 905-525-9140 x27700 Provides services in: Personal and Psychological Counseling, Mental Health Support, Medical and Health Services

Class Schedule:

January 6: Introduction to the course

Readings: Please read the course syllabus carefully.

January 13: Haitian Zombies and Voodoo/Voudun “Origins?”

Readings:

[When Zora Met Zombie](#)

Shaw, Rosalind, “The Production of Witchcraft”

Mars, Louis P., “The Story of the Zombie in Haiti”

Phillips, Gyllian, “White Zombie and the Creole”

Keresztesi, Rita, “Hurston in Haiti”

January 20: Wade Davis – Concepts and Critiques

Reading: Davis, “The Serpent and the Rainbow”

Inglis, David, “Putting the Undead to Work”

January 27 and February 3: Zombies as “Others”

Readings: Sheller, Mimi, Chapter 5: Eating Others – Of Cannibals, Vampires and Zombies

Hamako, Erik, “Zombie Orientals Ate My Brain! Orientalism in Contemporary Zombie Stories”

Behuniak, Susan M, “The Living Dead?: The Construction of People with Alzheimer’s Disease as Zombies”

February 10: Race, Colonialism and Capitalism

Readings: Comaroff and Comaroff, “Alien-Nation: Zombies, Immigrants and Millennial Capitalism”

McAllister, Elizabeth, “Race, Cannibals and Infected Hyper-Whites: The Race and Religion of Zombies”

February 17: Reading Break. No class.

February 24: In-class Test

March 2: Zombies and Popular Culture/State Security

Readings:

Paffenroth, Kim, “Zombies as Internal Fear or Threat”

Graham, Becki, “Post 911 Anxieties”

Riley, Brendan, "The E-Dead: Zombies in the Digital Age"

March 9: Vampires, Zombies Death and the Body

Reading: Leszek et al, "Vampires, criminals or slaves? - Reinterpreting 'deviant burials' in early medieval Poland"

Bell, Michael, "Vampires and Death in New England"

Barber, Paul, "The Real Vampire"

Dawdy, Shannon, "Zombies and a Decaying American Ontology"

March 16: Gendered Monstrosities: Vampires, Gender, and Sexuality

Readings: Beck, Bernard, "Fearless Vampire Kissers"

Winnubst, Shannon, "Vampires, Anxieties and Dreams"

March 23: Vampires and Colonialism in East Africa

Reading: "Why is Petrol Red?" In: Speaking with Vampires, by Luise White

March 30: Peer review session

April 6: Final papers due, along with the peer review forms and workshop review sheet.