

ANTHROPOLOGY 4DD3: ANTHROPOLOGY OF ZOMBIES AND THE UNDEAD

Fall 2020

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Seminar: Thursdays 11:30-2:20

Office Hours: Please email me to set up a phone or virtual meeting

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?

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Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Critically reflect upon, and communicate the anthropological significance of various mediums of popular culture, using examples of zombie narratives in various genres, including film, video games, and comics
- Integrate relevant anthropological theory into a analytical research paper
- Work collaboratively to produce a virtual group presentation on an assigned topic

Required Materials and Texts

Links to course articles are posted under “Content” on Avenue. You do not need to purchase any texts or other materials for this course.

Class Format

Weekly **asynchronous lectures** will be recorded and posted to Avenue each Wednesday prior to our Thursday classes. Please watch these short lectures and ensure that you have completed the weekly readings prior to Thursday seminars.

Synchronous Zoom seminars will be held during a portion of the official class time, between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. The midterm exam will also be **synchronous** (11:30 a.m. - 2:20 p.m.), and will be held on Thursday October 22 (see below for details).

Note: links to weekly Zoom meetings will be posted to Avenue announcements at least 48 hours in advance of each meeting

Course Evaluation – Overview

Midterm test (choice of short essay questions based upon readings, lectures, seminar content) – 25%

Final paper proposal – 10%

Final research paper – 30%

Seminar participation – 10%

Group seminar presentation – 25%

Course Evaluation – Details

Midterm test (25%) – October 22nd

The midterm test is an open-book, **synchronous** test held during class time on **Thursday October 22nd, 11:30-2:20 p.m.** You will find it under “quizzes” on Avenue. It will consist of a choice of essay questions, and will be based upon the content of course readings, seminar discussions/topics, and lecture material. More detailed information will be provided well in advance of the test day.

Final paper proposal (10%) – due October 8 by 11 p.m. to the Avenue drop box (located under “Assignments”). The proposal will consist of a 2-3 page outline of your final essay topic, plus a bibliography. A list of essay questions, and further directions, will be provided during the second week of classes.

Final research paper (30%) – due December 3 by 11 p.m. to the Avenue drop box (located under “Assignments”). The final research paper is an 8-10 page (double-spaced) paper that incorporates course readings and external research. More information and a grading rubric will be provided in class.

Seminar participation (10%) – Attendance and active participation are expected during our Zoom seminars and workshops (dates/times below). “Active” participation includes

asking questions, answering questions, showing evidence of critical engagement with readings, and participating in group work (where relevant). Zoom links for seminars will be posted to Avenue at least 48 hours prior to each Zoom seminar.

Group Seminar presentation (25%) - various due dates. By the second week of classes, you will be asked to sign up for a group presentation date. Topics will be distributed, and an overview of the assignment presented, on the first day of class. You will work in groups of about four students to construct a Powerpoint/virtual presentation during one of our Zoom seminars. Your presentation will be a polished, succinct group effort of about 15-20 minutes total. More details provided in class.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (September 10): Introduction to the course

Readings: Please read the course syllabus and assignment outlines carefully and watch the introductory lecture posted to Avenue.

Notes: I will post an asynchronous lecture/overview of the course, expectations, assignments, etc. by Wednesday September 9. We will NOT have a Zoom seminar this week. Please note that you will also be asked to sign up for a group presentation date, and I will cover this information in my lecture.

Week 2 (September 17): Zombie Origins

Readings:

King, Charles <https://zora.medium.com/when-zora-met-zombie-dbcf0fb45d11>

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, "Hurstons in Haiti"

Notes: Our Zoom seminar is on September 17 from 11:30-1 p.m.

Week 3 (September 24): Wade Davis and Haitian Zombies – Myths and Critiques

Readings: Inglis, David, "Putting the Undead to Work"

Davis, Wade, Excerpts from "Serpent and the Rainbow"

Notes: Our Zoom seminar is on September 24, 11:30-1 p.m.

Week 4 (October 1): Race and Zombies

Readings: Hamako, Erik, "Zombie Orientals Ate My Brain! Orientalism in Contemporary Zombie Stories"

Kee, Chera, "Good Girls Don't Date Dead Boys: Toying with Miscegenation in Zombie Films"

Brooks, Kinitria, "The Importance of Neglected Intersections: Race and Gender in Contemporary Zombie Texts and Theories"

Notes: Our Zoom seminar is from 11:30-1 p.m. on October 1.

Week 5 (October 8): Zombie Narratives, Orientalism, and "Healthy" Bodies

Readings: Behuniak, Susan M., "The Living Dead?: The Construction of People with Alzheimer's Disease as Zombies"

Nasiruddin, Melissa, et al., "Zombies: A Pop Culture Resource for Public Health Awareness"

Notes: Our Zoom seminar is from 11:30-1 p.m. on October 8.

DUE: **Final paper proposal due on October 8 by 11 p.m. to Avenue Drop box**

Week 6 (October 15): Reading Week. No classes.

Week 7 (October 22) – MIDTERM TEST

The midterm test is synchronous, and will be held on **Thursday October 22** during our scheduled class time (11:30-2:20). It is open book and will consist of a choice of essay questions; you will have 2 hours, 50 minutes to complete it.

Week 8 (October 29): Zombies and Popular Culture/State Security

Readings:

Paffenroth, Kim, "Zombies as Internal Fear or Threat"

Graham, Becki, "Post 9/11 Anxieties"

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

Notes: Zoom seminar on Oct. 29 from 11:30-1 p.m.

Week 9 (November 5): Gendered Monstrosities: Vampires, Gender, and Sexuality

Readings: Beck, Bernard, "Fearless Vampire Kissers"

Winnubst, Shannon, "Vampires, Anxieties and Dreams"

Notes: Zoom seminar on Nov. 5, 11:30-1 p.m.

Week 10 (November 12): Vampires, Zombies, Death and the Body

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

Leszek et al., "Vampires, criminals or slaves?: Reinterpreting Deviant Burials in early Medieval Poland"

Barber, Paul, The Real Vampire

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

Notes: Zoom seminar from 11:30-1:30 p.m. November 12.

Week 11 (November 19): Vampires and Colonialism in East Africa

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

Notes: Zoom seminar on Nov. 19 from 11:30-1 p.m.

Week 12 (November 26): Peer Review Session

Notes: Please ensure that you have uploaded a rough draft of your final paper to both the Avenue drop box and the appropriate Discussion board by 11:30 a.m. today. Note that this activity is asynchronous. There is no Zoom seminar this week. More details provided on the assignment sheet.

Week 13 (December 3): Final Paper is due to Avenue by 11 p.m. on Dec. 3.

COURSE POLICIES

Submission of Assignments

All written assignments must be submitted electronically to the Avenue drop box by 11 p.m. on the specified due date. Please ensure that your work is in PDF format or in a Word document. All submitted assignments will be automatically filtered through Turnitin.com.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

Late assignments will receive a **10% deduction per 24-hour period late, or part thereof**. So, for instance, an assignment that is two hours late will have 10% deducted, unless you have arranged an extension or you use an MSAF.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Please use an MSAF to cover missed work that is worth less than 25% of your grade. An MSAF exception can be requested through your faculty office for work worth greater than 25% (with appropriate documentation).

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please to go www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

University Policies/Social Sciences Policies

Online Elements

This course includes on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior 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 types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

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

Authenticity/Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

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.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

Academic Accommodations for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar’s Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes,

assignments, and tests.

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.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (eg. severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.