

ANTHROPOLOGY 4DD3: ANTHROPOLOGY OF ZOMBIES AND THE UNDEAD

Spring 2021

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Seminar: M&W 6:30-9:20 p.m.

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 Monday prior to weekly synchronous 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

Final take home test (choice of short essay questions based upon readings, lectures, seminar content) – 35%

Synchronous Seminar participation – 10%

Short Discussion Paper (choice of topics) – 30%

Seminar Discussant and 2 page write-up– 25%

Course Evaluation – Details

Seminar participation (10%) – Attendance and active participation are expected during our Zoom seminars (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.

Seminar discussant (25%) - various due dates. By the end of the first 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. Your discussant assignment also included a two-page (double spaced) write-up

Short Discussion paper (1000-1200 words) – (30%) – During the first week of classes, a list of short essay topics based upon class readings. Students will be asked to select one topic and write a short essay of 1000-1200 words. **Due date: May 25**, by 11 p.m. to Avenue to Learn Assignment drop box.

Final take home test – (35%) – During the first week of June, a list of take-home paper topics will be distributed. More information to be provided in class. **Due date: June 18** by 11 p.m. to Avenue to Learn Assignment drop box.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Week of May 3): Introduction to the course

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

Synchronous Meeting: Monday May 3 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom (see link on A2L)

Wednesday May 5: Introductory Lecture posted to A2L. No synchronous Zoom meeting today.

Notes: Please note that you will also be asked to sign up for a discussant date; more info provided at our first meeting.

Week 2 (Week of May 10): 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, "Hurston in Haiti"

Monday May 10: Asynchronous lecture posted to A2L. No synchronous meeting.

Wednesday May 12: Synchronous Meeting at 6:30 p.m via Zoom (see link on A2L)

Week 3 (Week of May 17):

1. Wade Davis and Haitian Zombies – Myths and Critiques

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

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

2. Race, Colonialism and Zombies

Readings: McAllister, "Slaves, Cannibals and Infected Hyper-Whites"

Kee, Chera, "Good Girls Don't Date Dead Boys"

Monday May 17: Asynchronous lecture posted to A2L

Wednesday May 19: Our Zoom seminar is on May 19, 6:30 p.m.

Week 4 (Week of May 24): Zombies, Capitalism and Consumption

Readings: Comaroff and Comaroff, "Alien Nation"

Kempner, "Proliferation, Blockages and Paths of Escape in *Resident Evil* and *Call of Duty*"

Harper, Rowena, "Being" post-death at Zombie University

Tuesday May 25: Asynchronous lecture posted to A2L.

Wednesday May 26: Our synchronous Zoom seminar is at 6:30 p.m. on **May 26.**

*******DUE: May 25 by 11 p.m.: Short Discussion paper to A2L Assignment drop box.**

Week 5 (May 31): Zombies and Cultural Perceptions of Illness and Death

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

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

Monday May 31: Asynchronous lecture posted to A2L.

Wednesday June 2: Our Zoom seminar is at 6:30 p.m. on June 2.

Week 6 (June 7): Apocalypse, Fear, Terror and Infection

Readings: Cantor, Paul, "The Apocalyptic Strain in Popular Culture"

Graham, Becki, "Post-9/11 Anxieties"

Monday June 7: Asynchronous lecture posted to A2L.

Wednesday June 9: Our Zoom seminar is at 6:30 p.m. on June 9.

Week 7 (June 14) – No asynchronous lecture this week.

June 16, 6:30-8 p.m. – online office hours for help with take home

******Due: June 18: Final take home due to A2L by 11 p.m.**

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.