

# ANTHROP 4DD3: ANTHROPOLOGY OF ZOMBIES AND THE UNDEAD

Fall 2022

**Instructor:** Dr. Karen McGarry  
**Email:** mcgarry@mcmaster.ca  
**Lecture:** Thursdays 8:30-11:30 a.m. in MDCL 1115

**Office:** CNH 531  
**Office Hours:** Email me to set up a time to meet in person or via Zoom

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## **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 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**

- All required readings are posted via links on Avenue to Learn.

## **Class Format**

In-person seminars consisting of lecture, class discussions, occasional group work, and class presentations.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Participation - 15%
2. Group presentation – 25%; various due dates
3. Midterm test – 25%; October 6
4. Peer review session – 5%; due on Dec. 1
5. Final paper – 30%; due on Dec. 8

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **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.).

## **Group Presentation (25%), various due dates**

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.

## **Midterm Test (25%), October 5**

On October 6, we will have an online test on A2L that will cover all class material up to and including the previous week's class.

## **Peer review session (5%), December 1**

You will be asked to bring a complete draft of your final paper to class on November 30 so that you can participate in a peer review exercise.

## **Final paper (30%), due on December 8**

You will have a choice of essay topics distributed during the second week of class to choose from. Your paper will be 8-10 double spaced pages, not including References Cited.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (September 8)**

**Introduction to the course**

**Readings:** none (other than the course syllabus)!

### **Week 2 (September 15)**

**Haitian Zombies and Voodoo/Voudun "Origins?"**

**Readings:** <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"

### **Week 3 (September 22)**

**Wade Davis – Concepts and Critiques**

**Readings:** Davis, "The Serpent and the Rainbow"

Inglis, David, "Putting the Undead to Work"

### **Week 4 (September 29)**

**Zombies, Capitalism, Colonialism and Consumption**

**Readings:** Comaroff and Comaroff, "Alien Nation"

White, Luise, "Why is Petrol Red?"

**Week 5 (October 6)**

Test held online on A2L during class time. Choice of short essay questions. No in-person class this week.

**Week 6 (October 13)**

Reading Week. No class.

**Week 7 (October 20)**

**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”

**Week 8 (October 27)**

**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”

<https://theconversation.com/zombie-apocalypse-how-gene-editing-could-be-used-as-a-weapon-and-what-to-do-about-it-171343>

Dawdy, Shannon, “Zombies and a Decaying American Ontology”

**Week 9 (November 3)**

**Zombification of Education?**

**Readings:** Westrup, Rebecca, “Students as Zombies: How Can We Awaken the Undead?”

Harper, Rowena, “Being” Post-death at Zombie University

**Week 10 (November 10)**

**Gendered Zombies: (Re)Thinking Femininity**

**Readings:** Priyadharshini, Esther, “From Prom Queen to Zombie Barbie: A Tutorial in Make up, Gender and Living Death”

Wohlwend, Karen, “Girls, Ghouls and Girlhoods: Horror and Fashion at Monster High”

**Week 11 (November 17)**

**Vampires, Zombies, Death: Perspectives from Archaeology and Biological Anthropology**

**Readings:** 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"

**Week 12 (November 24)**

**Gendered Monstrosities: Vampires, Gender and Sexuality**

**Readings:** Beck, Bernard, "Fearless Vampire Kissers"

Winnubst, Shannon, "Vampires, Anxieties and Dreams"

**Week 13 (December 1)**

**In class peer review session** – please bring a complete draft of your final paper to class.

**Week 14 (December 8)**

**Final paper is due today by 11 p.m. to Avenue to Learn.**

**Course Policies**

**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 <http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>). 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. I give a 48-hour extension for any MSAF's that I receive.

**Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
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 be penalized 10% per calendar day late, including weekend days. No assignments are accepted after 72 hours of the submission deadline, and you will receive a 0.

## **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

Please get in touch with Dr. McGarry as soon as possible if you are sick. A makeup exam/assessment will be granted on a case-by-case basis. Please note – make-up exams will be in essay format. I do not re-weigh missed work. All course components/assessments must be completed.

**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) 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 social media) will be asked to turn their computers

## **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, usernames 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](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## **University Policies**

### **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.

## **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.

## **Course Modification**

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.



## ADVISORY STATEMENTS

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

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 behaviour 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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- 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](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

### COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

**Some courses may** use 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, usernames 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.

### ONLINE PROCTORING

**Some courses may** use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

## **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.

## **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](mailto: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”: <https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=9020#requests-for-relief-for-missed-academic-term-work>

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR 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.

## **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.

## **EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES**

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