

CTCS 464 – **Zombies!**
Spring 2013
M: 10-1:50p (RZC 111)

Nitin Govil
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(o) W: 2-4 (SCA 317)

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Course Description

Tragic and terrifying figures: they live, die, and then come back - hungry for us. Without any doubt, the figure of the zombie has completely captured contemporary media. Where does our fascination with the undead come from and what does it tell us about our anxieties and priorities today?

In addition to providing a history of the zombie genre, this course examines zombie media across a range of contemporary cultural practices, from film and television, to graphic novels, video games, and "viral" media. Along the way, we'll learn about the critical importance of genre and popular culture in everyday life (and death).

Readings, writing, screenings, and class discussion will be required. Breathing is optional.

Required Texts

1. Ben Hervey, *Night of the Living Dead*. Palgrave, 2008
2. Colson Whitehead, *Zone One*. Anchor, 2012
3. Mira Grant, *Feed*. Orbit, 2010
4. Robert Kirkman, et al., *The Walking Dead*, Compendium 1. Image Comics, 2009
5. Other required readings to be made available on our course Black Board site.

Assessment

In Class Mid-Term Exam: 30%
8-10 Page (or eq.) Paper/Project: 30%
2 page Review Paper: 10%
Take-home Final: 30%

Grading Scale		
100-98: A+	97-94: A	93-90: A-
89-87: B+	86-83: B	82-80: B-
79-77: C+	76-73: C	72-70: C-
69-60: D	59-0: F	

Course Requirements and Policies:

Attendance at all lectures is *required*. You are responsible for all the material covered in lecture. Read all required reading before class. There will be no late or make-up assignments without adequate and sufficient documentation. Please refrain from using your own death as an excuse.

Laptop/tablet use in class is restricted to note-taking only. Please refrain from other uses while in the classroom.

Statement for Students with Disabilities: Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the professor or the TA as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Integrity: USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General Principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. The Student Guidebook contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/> Information on intellectual property at USC is available at: <http://usc.edu/academe/acsen/issues/ipr/index.html>.

Plagiarism (copying and modifying someone else's work or website and presenting it as your own) will not be tolerated. If you are doubtful about how to use citations, please see the Teaching Assistant or the Professor.

Course Exam, Project and Paper Retention Policy: It is the responsibility of all students in Critical Studies courses to retrieve all papers, projects, assignments and/or exams within one academic year of completion of a course. These records may be essential in resolving grade disputes and incompletes as well as assist in verifying that course requirements have been met. The Critical Studies Division will dispose of all records from the previous academic year in May of the current academic year. No exceptions. Please be in contact with your TA about collecting these documents while you are taking the course.

Welcome aboard.
Now, run for your life.

Course Schedule

Session 1 – Jan 28

Introductions

See: *Fido* (Andrew Currie, 2006) 91m

****See *Warm Bodies* (Jonathan Levine, 2013), releasing on 2/1/13****

Session 2 – Feb 4

Textual Politics

Read: 1. Jennifer Fay, "White Zombie, Black Baghdad." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 8.1 (Spring 2008): 81-101.

2. Neil Gaiman, "Bitter Grounds." (2003) *Fragile Things: Short Fictions and Wonders*. Harper, 2006. 82-103.

See: Joss Whedon on Mitt Romney: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TiXUF9xbTo>
ABC News on Homeland Security and the Zombie Apocalypse:

<http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/video/homeland-security-preps-zombie-apocalypse-17898609>

XXL Advertisement (Norwegian sports retailer):

<http://www.adweek.com/adfreak/zombie-ad-too-violent-prime-time-tv-145519>

Zombie Temp Worker:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjHXk8DCmsQ&list=SPCF90B0CAE3B4C36D>

Live and Let Die (Guy Hamilton, 1973) clip

The Serpent and the Rainbow (Wes Craven, 1988) clip

White Zombie (Victor Halperin, 1932) 67m

Session 3 – February 11

Jarrett Conaway Guest Lecture

Media Distribution in Theory and Practice

Read: 1. Linda Williams, "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess." *Film Quarterly* 44.4 (Summer 1991): 2-13.

2. Jon Stratton, "Zombie Trouble: Zombie Texts, Bare Life and Displaced People." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 14.3 (2011): 265-281.

See: *Bite Me* (Jarrett Conaway, 2012) Selections

****NO CLASS: February 18 – President's Day****

Session 4 – February 25

The Originary Body

*****Warm Bodies* Review Paper Due****

Read: Ben Hervey, *Night of the Living Dead* (entire book)

See: *Night of the Living Dead* (George Romero, 1968) 96m

Session 5 – March 4

From Accident to Allegory

Read: 1. Steve Neale, "Questions of Genre." *Screen* 31.1 (1990): 45-66.
2. Steven Shaviro, "Contagious Allegories: George Romero." *The Cinematic Body*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. 83-105.

See: *Zombieland* (Ruben Fleischer, 2009) clip
The Road (John Hillcoat, 2009) clip
28 Days Later (Danny Boyle, 2003) 113m

Session 6 – Mar 11

Suzanne Scott Guest Lecture

Undead Authorship

Read: 1. Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author." *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath. Hill and Wang, 1977. 142-148.
2. Jonathan Gray, "Bonus Materials: Digital Auras and Authors." *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts*. NYU Press, 2010. 81-115.

See: *Sucker Punch* (Zack Snyder, 2011) 128m

****NO CLASS: March 18 – Spring Recess****

Session 7 – March 25

****In-Class Mid-term Exam****

See: *Juan of the Dead* (Alejandro Bruges, 2011) 96m

Session 8 – April 1

Reanimating History

Read: 1. Jane Austen and Seth Grahame-Smith, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. Quirk, 2009. 7-30.
2. Richard Dyer, "White Death." *White: Essays on Race and Culture*. Routledge, 1997. 207-222.

See: *Exit Humanity* (John Geddes, 2011) 113m

Session 9 – April 8

Mediating Crisis

Read: Mira Grant, *Feed* (entire book)

See: *Diary of the Dead* (George Romero, 2007) 95m

Session 10 – April 15

Media Afterlives

Read: 1. Allan Cameron, "Zombie Media: Transmission, Reproduction, and the Digital Dead." *Cinema Journal* 52.1 (Fall 2012): 66-89.

2. Matthew Weise, "The Rules of Horror: Procedural Adaptation in *Clock Tower*, *Resident Evil*, and *Dead Rising*." In Bernard Perron, ed., *Horror Video Games: Essays on the Fusion of Fear and Play*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland. 238-266.

See: *Pontypool* (Bruce McDonald, 2009) 95m

Session 11 – April 22

Apocalypse, Soon

Read: Colson Whitehead, *Zone One* (entire book)

See: *Make-Out with Violence* (The Deagol Brothers, 2008) 105m

Session 12 – April 29

The Future of Imagining the Future

Read: Kirkman et. al., *The Walking Dead* (entire volume)

See: *The Walking Dead* (AMC, 2010-present), Selections

****Take-home final – hard copies due Monday, May 13 @3pm****

****Summer assignment - See *World War Z* (Marc Foster, 2013), releasing June 21****