

Zombies in Popular Media

Syllabus

Welcome to Zombies in Popular Media!

Why do zombies captivate us? Why do they terrify us? What does our fascination with the living dead tell us about our culture, our society, ourselves? In this course, you will embark on an intense, three week exploration of the history and theory behind one of the most macabre and terrifying tropes in modern horror.



Most of the work for this course will occur in Canvas. The syllabus, assignments, and course requirements are posted here. Your readings are posted in each day's entry, and are cross-listed as "resources." You should hold on to the first-day handout so that you can get in contact with Brendan in case you have any questions.

Important Dates for J-Session

Drop Deadline: 9 January 2018

Withdrawal Deadline: 12 January 2018

Course Description

This course explores the history, significance, and representation of the zombie as a figure in horror and fantasy texts. We will pursue an intense schedule, using critical theory to think about zombies as they appear in literature, comics, and films. Our daily readings and discussion will focus on critical evaluation and reflection about the zombie trope, and your final project will ask you to integrate these ideas in a project within your discipline.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the zombie figure as it has appeared in literary, filmic, and comic texts (among others), from early incarnations in the first half of the 20th century to more recent revisionist texts.
- Improve comprehension and application of critical theory as it pertains to horror texts (such as hermeneutics, postmodern theory, media studies, and critical lenses such as feminism or psychoanalysis).
- Explore how the zombie figure relates, symbolically and critically, to modern culture. Depending on the texts explored, such themes might include capitalism, individuality, the information age, and xenophobia.

Coursework warning (or Challenge)

This course will be a rigorous experience. We will meet for 3 hours each morning and have a screening each day in the afternoon. You will have daily reading and response assignments and a presentation proposing a creative exploration of a zombie text. In the last week of the course, you will write a final essay exploring an outside zombie text and drawing connections between it and the texts we explored during the course.

Syllabus modification warning:

This syllabus is intended to give the student guidance in what may be covered during the semester and will be followed as closely as possible. However, instructors reserve the right in their discretion to modify, supplement, and make changes as course needs arise.

Course Information

Course: Zombies in Popular Media
Course no.: 52-2575, Section 01
Meetings: Class meetings: M-F, 9:00am-12pm; 12:15pm-3pm
Instructor: Brendan Riley, Ph.D.
Dept. phone: (312) 344-8817
Home: (708) 466-7370*
Fax: (312) 344-8001
Email: briley at colum.edu**

Office hours: immediately after class, or by appointment
Office: English Department, 3rd floor, Room 300-N
33 East Congress
Institution: Columbia College Chicago
600 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60605-1996

* Please don't call after 9 p.m.

Required Texts

Here is the list of books you will need for our course. I have ordered them from the bookstore, but I recommend getting the books from Amazon or another retailer -- it will be cheaper, probably. If you are going to do this, though, PLEASE ORDER THE BOOKS RIGHT AWAY. The course is only three weeks, so we need to have the readings right away at the beginning.

Nights of the Living Dead: An Anthology
ed Jonathan Maberry and George Romero
ISBN: 1250112249

Race, Oppression and the Zombie: Essays on Cross-cultural Appropriations of the Caribbean Tradition
ed Christopher Moreman et al
ISBN: 0786459115

Excerpts distributed by PDF



Films (subject to change):
Night of the Living Dead (1968)
White Zombie
I Walked With a Zombie
Zombies on Broadway
Carnival of Souls
Invasion of the Body Snatchers
Dawn of the Dead (1978)
Zombi 2
My Boyfriend's Back
Zombie Honeymoon
Day of the Dead
Dead Snow
Return of the Living Dead
Pontypool
[REC]
Life After Beth
Fido

Assignments and Grading

Category	Points	Percentage
In-class work and participation	200	20%
Reading responses	200	20%
Discussion Lead	100	10%
Creative Presentation	250	25%
Final Essay	250	25%
Total	1000	100%

Grade	Score
A	1000 – 930 points
A-	929 – 900 points
B+	899 – 870 points
B	869 – 830 points
B-	829 – 800 points
C+	799 – 770 points
C	769 – 730 points
C-	729 – 700 points
D	699 – 600 points
F	599 or fewer points

Grading Scale

In-class work and participation

Throughout the term, we will engage in a wide variety of in-class activities. Aside from lectures and discussions, we will use break-out groups, short writing assignments, games, and other activities to explore the ideas we're considering. We will also have quizzes on the films we watch in screening.



Students who miss class may make up some of these points by posting to the in-class assignments in Canvas as directed. This must be done before the beginning of the next class period. (200 points)

Reading Responses:

Because many of the readings for this course are challenging, I will provide a set of questions and thinking prompts for you to use with each. After you have completed the reading, you should type up your answers to the response questions I have provided. To get full credit, follow the directions on the reading guide and turn in your response on the Canvas forums. Each response is worth 15 points. Initial responses are due before class on the due date.

You will also be asked to post comments to generate discussion with your classmates. You must post two comments in each forum for 5 points each. Comments are due within three days of the reading's due date. (200 points)

Discussion Lead:

Once during the course, you will be assigned to lead the class in discussion of a critical article. Your group will present a brief description of the article's key ideas (2 min max) and then present a couple key quotes to lead discussion. Details for this assignment are on the Discussion Lead assignment page. (100 points)

Creative Presentation:

Your "midterm" product for this course will be to propose and plan a creative project within your own major based on the ideas, theories, and texts we encountered in this course. You will present the idea and plan for this course to the class sometime in week 2 or 3. (250 points, See Appendix B, handout 2)

Final Project:

You will sign up to read/ watch/ play zombie texts and craft an essay about them for your final project of the class. The details for the essay are on the final essay assignment page. (250 points, See Appendix B, handout 3)

Course Schedule

Detailed assignment deadlines and daily homework assignments are available on Canvas. Go to <http://canvas.colum.edu/> and log in using your OASIS userid and password. Then follow the links to our course homepage. (See Appendix B, handout 1)

Meeting/Day	Date	Topic/Activities
1/T	1/2	Introductions, prior knowledge, themes of the course, introduce the projects SCREEN: <i>Night of the Living Dead</i>
2/W	1/3	Discuss film, discuss Bruce, story, character analysis, assign projects SCREEN: <i>White Zombie</i> , <i>I Walked with a Zombie</i>
3/R	1/4	Discuss films, GROUP 1 discusses Inglis , Davis, story, Voodoo SCREEN: <i>Carnival of Souls</i> , <i>Zombies on Broadway</i>
4/F	1/5	Discuss films, GROUP 2 discusses Kordas , story, Philosophical Zombie SCREEN: <i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i> . GAME: <i>Last Night on Earth</i>
5/M	1/8	PRESENTATION A , Discuss films, GROUP 3 discusses Beisecker , story, play <i>The Resistance</i> . SCREEN: <i>Dawn of the Dead (1978)</i>
6/T	1/9	PRESENTATION B , Discuss film, GROUP 4 discusses Bishop , story, Metaphor in horror SCREEN: <i>Zombi 2</i>
7/W	1/10	PRESENTATION C , Discuss film, GROUP 5 discusses Keresztesi , story, Neocolonialism SCREEN: <i>My Boyfriend's Back</i> ; <i>Zombie Honeymoon</i>
8/R	1/11	PRESENTATION D , Discuss film, GROUP 6 discusses Rushton , story, romance SCREEN: <i>Day of the Dead (1985)</i> . Essay proposal due today.
9/F	1/12	PRESENTATION D , Discuss film, GROUP 6 discusses Datta , story, apocalypse SCREEN: <i>Return of the Living Dead (1985)</i> . GAME: <i>Mall of Horror</i>
10/M	1/15	Martin Luther King Jr. Day. No class meeting – work on rough draft of essay.
11/T	1/16	PRESENTATION E , Discuss film, GROUP 7 discusses Carroll , story, metacommentary SCREEN: <i>Dead Snow</i> .
12/W	1/17	Scott Kenemore author visit, Discuss film, GROUP 8 discusses Miller , story, Nazi zombies SCREEN: <i>Pontypool</i> , [REC]. Rough draft of essay due today.
13/R	1/18	PRESENTATION F , Discuss film, GROUP 9 discusses Dutton , story, zombies SCREEN: <i>Fido</i> .
14/F	1/19	PRESENTATION F , Discuss film, GROUP 10 discusses Braun , story, zombies SCREEN: <i>No screening</i> . GAME: <i>Dead of Winter</i>
	1/22	Final draft of Essay due

Policies

The policies in this course have three interlocking designs: first, they help me craft the best learning environment I can; second, they build a foundation for an even-handed, fair evaluation process; third, they help foster respect for one another, our work, and ourselves.

Tardiness

Class starts on time. If you are late, you will miss information and disrupt other students when you arrive. Consistent tardiness will hurt your in-class participation grade.

Phones, Texting, Laptops in class

In order for us to have a productive, concentrated class, it's important that we all be on task. The distractions in the room caused by ringing mobile phones or individuals sending or reading texts are significant. Please turn off your phone during class. You can check your messages afterward. If you are using a laptop in class, I ask that you only do class-relevant work, such as taking notes or looking at the syllabus. Please resist the temptation to open other windows and do work (or pleasure-reading)

Attendance

Since much of our work is collaborative, it is absolutely necessary that you attend each class. When you miss class, you miss the “heavy lifting” that we do, the effort we make to understand the materials together. Students who miss more than two classes after the first week will find their class participation grade reduced significantly.

These two absences are your emergency reserve – they should cover illness or accident, and be held in reserve in case you have an appointment or obligation that keeps you away from class. If you face issues that make it difficult to meet these requirements, please speak to me about it right away.

COLLEGE ATTENDANCE STATEMENT:

Students are required to attend class regularly. Failure to attend class in the first two weeks of the term will negatively impact financial aid. If your professor reports that you failed to attend and participate in class during the add/drop period, a grade of NS (no-show) will be entered on your record for the course. Please note, you will still be charged tuition and fees for any course for which you receive a NS grade. For more information on non-attendance please visit the Student Financial Services website.

Turning in work

All work is due at the beginning of class on the day it is assigned through Canvas. As an emergency measure, I will accept work via email or in hard copy, but do not make this a habit.

Computers are fickle beasts. You should make a backup of everything you produce for this class.



Late work and makeup assignments

Daily assignments posted late will earn partial credit only. Daily assignments posted more than 1 week late will not be accepted at all.

Extensions

For whatever reason, if you discover that you will not be able to meet the project deadline, you may ask for an extension. I do not guarantee that I will grant one, but I usually do. Below are two tips for extension seekers:

- Ask for the extension either in class or by email 48 hours before the project is due. If seek an extension with less time remaining, you probably won't get it.
- Keep up with the “stepping stone” assignments. If I see that you've been working on the project all along, I'm much more lenient.

Extra Credit

I do not offer extra credit.

Academic Integrity

I take academic integrity very seriously, and am deeply insulted by cheating. Do not plagiarize work for this class.

Collaboration is at the heart of academic work. In a college setting, students and faculty join together to benefit from each other's work, to share knowledge and ideas, to engage in open debate, and to influence and be influenced by other people. Because there is an active exchange of information and ideas, it is essential that members of the community recognize the importance of acknowledgement and learn the conventions of citation and attribution. To that end Columbia endorses continuing efforts in education on this important topic for both students and faculty alike as well as active monitoring of the number and types of academic integrity misconduct.

Please review the full college statement on academic integrity, attached in Appendix A of this syllabus.

Students suspected of violating these policies will meet with the instructor to discuss the matter. If the student has indeed violated the policy, the instructor will impose an appropriate penalty up to and including failure for the course. Students who plagiarize work will receive an F for the course.

Conduct

All students are expected to be familiar with (and follow) the CCC Student Code of Conduct. If you haven't read it, you can download a copy from <http://www.colum.edu/codeofconduct>

Essentially, I expect you to be respectful and open to one another.

Harassment

In order to succeed in class, every student has to be willing to be open, honest, and involved. At the same time, we must have respect for one another's ideas, beliefs and statements. Therefore, each student is expected to participate in a reasonable, respectful manner in class--we can disagree and discuss, but we need to do so in a way that is not offensive or causes discomfort. Failure to do this, or disruptive behavior in class, will not be tolerated, and will result in disciplinary action.

Complaints

Complaints about the class and/or grades should be addressed to the instructor, either before/after class, or during office hours (or another scheduled appointment). If I am unable to satisfactorily address your issue, we can arrange a meeting with the chair of English and Creative Writing to discuss the issue.

Academic Progress Reports

During week 6 of fall and spring terms, Columbia College Chicago measures the academic progress of all undergraduate students. The academic progress report is meant to provide a sense of your performance at this point in time. For each course in which you are enrolled, your instructor will assign you one of the following academic progress reports:

- *Exceeds basic expectations*: Demonstrating performance at a very high level in the course, typically shown as consistent attendance, earning high grades on assignments and displaying a deep engagement with course content.
- *Meets basic expectations*: Demonstrating behavior proven to produce success in college, such as consistent attendance, class participation, and on-time completion of assignments.
- *Does not meet basic expectations*: Demonstrating behaviors known to put students at risk for failure, such as excessive absences, lack of class participation, and missed or incomplete assignments.

While the academic progress report is not a final grade and will not affect your grade point average, it is a valuable indicator of your performance in the course to date. Columbia College Chicago is committed to your success, and this process is important to understand your progress towards that success. If you are not meeting basic expectations, you will receive this progress report via email and you are strongly encouraged to discuss course expectations with your instructor(s).

Statement of Non-discrimination

In accordance with civil rights legislation and its commitment to a non-discrimination policy, Columbia College Chicago does not discriminate in its admissions, employment, housing, services, or in the educational courses or programs that it operates based on age, gender, race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. It is also a Columbia College Chicago policy to ensure that no qualified student with a disability is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in any College program or activity.

Other Useful Information

There are no simple rules for how to succeed in this course, but I can give you a few tips that seem to have helped my students in the past.

Be prepared for class. You should bring your class materials every day; you should also bring relevant books every day. Don't forget to bring paper and something to write with.



Do your homework. If you look at the grading policies and breakdown, you'll see that 40% of your grade comes from small assignments and participatory activities rather than the projects. Students who keep up with the daily assignments usually do very well in my classes. (Also, since the daily assignments help prepare you for the big projects, you'll do better on those too.)

Come to class. Each semester I have one or more students drop or fail because they missed too many classes. Make the most of your time here.

Participate actively in the collaborative work. You'll get more from your peers when they are getting more from you.

Don't cheat. Passing off someone else's work as your own is just about the most insulting thing you can do in this course. It does a disservice to your classmates who are working hard and it defeats the purpose of taking this class.

Keep in touch. If you keep in contact with me, we can work together to help you keep up if life gets in the way of your studies. If you drop out of touch for a while, it will be much harder to catch up later.

Feedback:

Teaching is very important to me. I work hard at it and hearing about your experience helps me grow as an instructor. At least once during the term, I will ask for your input regarding how the course is going and how we should proceed. Even when I'm not explicitly asking, though, I welcome comments and suggestions.

Resources Available to you

Students with Disabilities, 623 S. Wabash, Room 311 312-369-8296 ssd@colum.edu

Columbia College Chicago seeks to maintain a supportive academic environment for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodations for a disability must register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office. Once registered, a Columbia College Chicago accommodation letter will be provided to the student each semester. Students are encouraged to present their current accommodation letters to each instructor at the beginning of the semester so that accommodations can be arranged in a timely manner by the College, the department, or the faculty member, as appropriate. Accommodations begin at the time the letter is presented. Students with disabilities who do not have accommodation letters should visit the SSD office or <http://colum.edu/ssd>.

Counseling Services, 731 S. Plymouth Court, suite 112 312.369.8700 counselingservices@colum.edu

Services are designed to help students address concerns and increase self-awareness, while empowering to manage challenging areas in their lives. All counseling staff follows professional standards of confidentiality. Information discussed within a counseling relationship will not be disclosed without written permission of the individual. Counseling Services are provided free of charge. Services include individual, couple, and group therapy for students. All currently enrolled students are eligible to receive services. Counseling Service provides students with 10 free individual counseling sessions per academic year.

College Advising, 623 S Wabash, suite 300 312.369.7645 collegeadvising@colum.edu

The College Advising Center provides undergraduate students with information, guidance, and support to create and implement an integrated educational and professional plan in the arts and media fields. College advisors assist students with all transitional issues to help them navigate the entire college experience. The Advising Center helps students clarify and take responsibility for their academic and career goals. First-year students are expected to meet with their college advisor at least once a semester during their first year.

The Learning Studio, 618 S. Michigan, first floor 312.369.8130 colum.edu/learningstudio

The Learning Studio is an excellent resource for academic progress and success for all students at any level. The Learning Studio provides tutoring in a number of disciplines including Accounting, the Science and Math Learning Center, the Foreign Languages Lab and the Writing Center. Students are encouraged to go to the Learning Studio and work with the tutors. Students can make an appointment through Oasis (using the "Make Appointments" tab) or call the Learning Studio.

The Library, 624 S. Michigan library.colum.edu

The Library serves students with resources and support for research, study, collaboration, fun, and information in all formats—books, ebooks, articles, primary sources, images, film, music, space, programs, technology, and equipment. Our specialized materials and services focus on what students need and want—textbook reserves, study rooms, collaborative technology, maker lab, 3D printer, light boxes, scanners, equipment checkout (cameras, camcorders, projectors) and research assistance by chat, text, email, phone, or in-person.

Appendix A: Full College Statement on Academic Integrity

This statement is posted online at: <http://colum.edu/integrity>

Academic integrity is giving credit to the ideas, research, and creations of others; and part of one's education is learning how to give this credit. When a writer inserts a citation into her work, she is not only being honest about the source of her knowledge, but also making visible the ways in which her work depends on the support of others—whether they are students or faculty members at her institution or thinkers and writers from distant times and places. The citation is a way of paying tribute to the contributions of others and to situate one's own work in the broader intellectual tradition. Citations may be particular to writing; however, every area of creative endeavor requires some form of acknowledgement of sources. Academic and artistic integrity require scrupulous care for these forms.

Sometimes acknowledging sources is a way of insulating work against criticism, a way of saying to the audience, "You can check my facts on this; I've done my homework; and I know what is my own thinking and what I owe to others." But avoiding charges of dishonesty, fabrication, or theft is not the only reason for making clear the influences on a work. It can also be a way of inviting colleagues, present and future, near and far, to join in the project at hand. Acknowledging sources gives others the information they need to follow in the author's footsteps and become part of an ongoing intellectual or artistic journey.

Collaboration is at the heart of academic work. In a college setting, students and faculty join together to benefit from each other's work, to share knowledge and ideas, to engage in open debate, and to influence and be influenced by other people. Because there is an active exchange of information and ideas, it is essential that members of the community recognize the importance of acknowledgement and learn the conventions of citation and attribution.*

To that end Columbia endorses continuing efforts in education on this important topic for both students and faculty alike as well as active monitoring of the number and types of academic integrity misconduct.

Violations of Academic Integrity*

Plagiarism is copying another person's work and presenting it as one's own. Plagiarism is committed when a student knowingly represents another person's work as his/her own. A student who has tried in good faith to credit his/her source but has "misused a specific citation format, or incorrectly used quotation marks" has not plagiarized. Such a student has "failed to cite and document sources appropriately," according to the Council of Writing Program Administrators.

Plagiarism is often associated with written work when a writer copies a section of another writer's work and fails to acknowledge the source by using quotation marks and proper academic citation. However, plagiarism may exist in other works, such as painting, music, dance, and film as well. Sources must be acknowledged in a manner appropriate to the discipline when images, composition, or conceptions are copied, even when the appropriated material is reconfigured to make a new meaning. Other types of plagiarism are 'mosaic plagiarism' and paraphrasing. In mosaic plagiarism, pieces of other people's work are rearranged without acknowledgement. Paraphrasing is rewording someone else's work without acknowledging the original author's research or thinking.

Information that is “common knowledge” does not need attribution (for example, George Washington was the first president of the United States). However, common knowledge is relative to specific contexts, and it may be difficult for a student to distinguish between alluding to material that is commonly known and plagiarizing. Therefore, students are advised to credit anything that was new to them when they encountered it in the course of their research.

Recycling: Columbia does not have a College-wide policy on students reusing or reworking the contents of one assignment to meet the requirements of another. Therefore, students should not assume that recycling of assignments is acceptable; they must disclose their intention to reuse or rework material at the outset of the project to be sure that they have the faculty member’s approval.

Cheating: Assignments and examinations should be the products of the student’s own efforts. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the use of unauthorized materials for examinations or assignments, unauthorized assistance from other people, and papers from commercial companies or the Internet. Students should assume, unless told otherwise, that examinations and assignments should be completed without the use of books, notes, or conversation with others; however, individual faculty members may authorize certain types of materials or collaborations for specific assignments. Students should therefore follow the expectations of their instructor regarding the use of materials for their assignments.

Denial of access: Denying access of materials to other students is a particularly heinous violation of academic integrity. Examples of this violation include deliberately misplacing or destroying reserve materials; altering computer files that belong to another; unduly tying up equipment needed to complete an assignment; making library material unavailable to others by stealing, hiding, or defacing books or journals.

Fabrication: Fabrication occurs when there is falsification or invention of any information, citation, or data in an academic exercise with the intent to deceive. If a student believes that the nature of a particular assignment allows for fabrication, he/she must disclose his/her intention to fabricate to be sure she has the faculty member’s approval.

Facilitation: Facilitation occurs when a student knowingly allows his/her work to be used by another student or otherwise aids another student in a violation of academic integrity. Students who facilitate the dishonesty of others have violated academic integrity even though they may not themselves benefit from the act.

Falsification: Forgery of a grade change form or having a substitute take an examination are serious violations of ethics (see Categories of Violations).

Appendix B: Class Handouts

The pages that follow are the class handouts from the course.

First Day Handout

Welcome to Zombies in Popular Media!

Why do zombies captivate us? Why do they terrify us? What does our fascination with the living dead tell us about our culture, our society, ourselves? In this course, you will embark on an intense, three week exploration of the history and theory behind one of the most macabre and terrifying tropes in modern horror.

Most of the work for this course will occur in Canvas. The syllabus, assignments, and course requirements are posted here. Your readings are posted in each day's entry, and are cross-listed as "resources." You should hold on to the first-day handout so that you can get in contact with Brendan in case you have any questions.



Contact Information

Course: Zombies in Popular Media

Course no.: 52-2575J, Section 01

Meetings: M-F, 9:15am-12pm; 12:15pm-3pm
623 S Wabash, room 405

Instructor: Brendan Riley, Ph.D.

Email: briley@colum.edu**

Mobile: (708) 466-7370 (not after 9pm)
txt ok, include your name

Dept. phone: (312) 344-8817

Office hours: by appointment

Office: English Dept, room 300-XX
33 East Congress

Texts

We have three texts to buy (or rent) for the course:

Nights of the Living Dead: An Anthology
ed Jonathan Maberry and George Romero
ISBN: 1250112249

Race, Oppression and the Zombie: Essays on Cross-cultural Appropriations of the Caribbean Tradition
ed Christopher Moreman et al
ISBN: 0786459115



Creative Zombie PechaKucha

Project Assignment

Consider the theories, texts, and ideas we have encountered about zombies in this course. Working within your discipline (or another creative discipline agreed upon in advance), **propose and design a project** that engages with these texts and ideas to produce a profound statement, idea, or expression of the zombie as you understand it and its relationship to popular media. **Your work will culminate in a Pecha Kucha presentation** to the class explaining your project plan, your choices and your motivation for creating that project. You should engage with both source texts AND critical texts to give the reader a sense of what shaped your idea.



Expectations:

Be brief and pithy!

Tell us about your project, but don't spend all your time describing what you plan to make. We're exploring both your creativing and your ideas about the course material.

Be connected!

You should draw explicitly on ideas and texts we've discussed or engaged with before. If your text seems to be heavily influenced by the Haitian voodoo zombie, say so and explain why.

Be entertaining!

This presentation should be zesty and fun, but informative too.

Follow the format!

You must follow the format for the PechaKucha. (see below)

Pecha Kucha format

A Pecha Kucha is a presentation style that uses a slide-show with the following conditions:

- Exactly 20 slides, each set to advance after 20 seconds. The full presentation is 6 minutes, 40 seconds exactly.
- Slideshow must be submitted by class THE DAY BEFORE you present.
- Minimal words / text on the slides. Use images mostly.
- Well-rehearsed - this is a difficult presentation style so you should practice it. Some people like to work from a script.
- Check out <http://www.pechakucha.org/> for more info.

Grading Rubric

Your presentation grade will be based on the four presentation expectations above. Here's a rubric that phrases them differently:

Preparation phase (20 points)

Did you submit your idea on time and submit your slideshow ahead of time?

Creative project idea (50 points)

Did the presenter explain their idea thoroughly?

Creative project mood/seed materials (40 points)

Did the presenter provide pieces of original or borrowed work to help the audience understand the feel of the project being proposed?

Connection to Coursework (50 points)

Did the presenter connect the ideas at work in the proposal to films and readings from the course?

Entertaining / Rehearsed (40 points)

Did the presenter deliver the pecha kucha well? Did they seem rehearsed? Was it entertaining?

Tips for Success

- Practice! It's hard to time a presentation to exactly 6:40 without practicing it. Talk through your presentation at least three times. You can do it for yourself in front of a mirror or for your roommate. Be sure to time yourself.
- Be prepared! This presentation is a big deal. Act like it.
- Be fun! You only have to present once, but you have to watch 19 of them. If they're boring, we'll ALL be bored.
- Take this proposal process seriously. You might be laying groundwork for a project you can complete as part of another course.
- Think about the three major communication channels -- image, sound, speech. Try to hit all of them.
- Remember that specificity is the soul of narrative.



Final Essay Assignment

Assignment

For the final project in the class, you will explore a text or set of texts outside of class, and craft an essay examining them in conversation with the texts we explored during the course to answer the question: what do these texts tell us about zombies, and about how better to understand the world?



Expectations

Be brief and pithy!

You may provide a brief plot synopsis, but the goal of the essay is NOT to explain the plot of your texts. The goal is to explain what the text says about zombies.

Be connected!

You should draw explicitly on ideas and texts we've discussed or engaged with before. If your text seems to be heavily influenced by the Haitian voodoo zombie, say so and explain why. Be sure to use quotes from the texts as necessary.

Be multimodal!

Use stills, posters, and other imagery to help make your point. This is especially true if the text you're using is visual - your analysis should play on that visuality.

Make a point!

Keep in mind the constant mantra of the skeptical reader: "so what?" Your essay should not just compare your texts to ones we've encountered, but should endeavor to answer the bigger question at the heart of all analysis - what do we learn from this text about life and how to live it?

Nitty Gritty

You should complete all three stages of the project - proposal, rough draft, final draft

Your essay should be approximately 1500 words. Try to be within 10% of that.

You may present on one novel or story collection, two films, two graphic novels, one TV series (watch at least 4 episodes) or one video game. Other texts may be considered - if you have one you want to do, propose it during that stage of the project.

Your project should follow standard academic citation rules, including using a Works Cited list. MLA citation format is preferred, but other formats are okay. If you use something other than MLA, indicate on the works cited page which format you're using.

Grading Rubric

Your essay will be graded on the expectations and requirements outlined above. Here's a rubric that rephrases them:

Preparation phase (20 points)

Did the student submit their ideas on time and according to the prompt? 20 points.

Plot versus meaning (50 points)

Did the student write about the plot and meaning of the zombie text? Did they convey some new knowledge about zombies in this essay?

Class materials (50 points)

Did the student draw on texts encountered during the course? Did they explore how those texts help readers understand their texts and vice versa?

Multimodal (40 points)

Did the student include images and/or other nontextual elements in the essay to good effect?

Requirements (40 points)

Did the student meet the requirements for the assignment, including approach, deadlines, and citation practices? Did they meet the word count?

Tips for Success

- Start early - these kinds of essays can be difficult. Getting going early will put you a long way toward doing your best.
- Get your texts watched/read early - you won't really know what you want to write until you've read or watched your source texts.
- Take advantage of the proposal and rough draft steps - the more complete your work in these steps, the better your final project will be.
- Try to say something. Don't look at this as an exercise, but a chance to make a statement, to think about how to use a popular text to make a point. Really work to make an argument about the world by means of this project.