

**RUSSN-UA 0870
COLIT-UA-866
The Unquiet Dead:
Imagining the Afterlife in Film and Fiction
Fall 2016**

**T-TH 11:00-12:15
412 Silver**

**Prof. Eliot Borenstein
19 University Place, 210
19 University Place, 503**

**Office Hours:
(in person in Room 503
and on Skype chat)
MW 1-2:00**

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Course Description: Human life and artistic narrative can both be presumed to share one crucial defining feature: each always comes to an end. This course explores the persistent connections between various forms of storytelling (particularly fiction, poetry, film, and television) and imagined scenarios for life after death. While many of the most famous afterlife genres have strong roots in folklore (stories of vampires, ghosts, and zombies), one also finds stories that do not fit such conventional classifications. We will pay particular attention to the phenomenon of the posthumous narrator, a storytelling device that is deployed more often than many might think.

As we examine a large variety of narratives that make use of these "afterlife" devices, our goal will not be simply to provide a typology, or to show the evolution of a particular character type over time. Rather, we will ask ourselves about the nature of the fascination with the "unquiet dead" (the dead who cannot or will not rest). How do tales of the unquiet dead affect the very nature of narration (which usually assumes a final stopping point)? What is the political and ideological potential for the deployment of the unquiet dead in popular and elite storytelling? In particular, we will examine the possible connections to socioeconomic anxieties (zombies and haunted houses), cultural and sexual purity (vampires), and collective guilt (ghost stories, and the perennial American trope of the desecrated Indian burial site). We will also be looking at the roles that race and gender play in the imagination of undead "monsters." Finally, we will pay close attention to the problem of the sovereign corpse: the body of the leader left in state to both reassure and haunt the body politic (Lenin will be our primary example).

Though we will pay particular attention to the Slavic world (as the source of some of the most compelling tales of the unquiet dead), our primary sources will come from a wide range of times and linguistic traditions, including folk tales, novels, short stories, films, and television episodes. We will also read a number of critical works that will help illuminate the material.

NYU Classes and the Internet. NYU Classes, which is accessible through the "Academics" tab of NYU Home, is an important part of course, facilitating announcements and the distribution of course materials.

Please keep in mind that, by default, NYU Classes uses your NYU email account. Many of you may have other email accounts that you use. If so, it is a quite simple matter to arrange for your email from one account to be forwarded automatically to the other. I strongly urge you to do so. It is **your responsibility** to make sure that you are receiving official email sent to your NYU account.

Writing Assignments: There will be two short analysis papers, a midterm paper (5-7 pages), and a final paper (8-10). In addition, there will also be unannounced, in class writing assignments of a less structured nature.

The *short analysis papers* may be no longer than *three* pages, and they can be about any of the works we are reading. These papers are a tool to help you think about an aspect of the text that interests you, and any ideas you generate in the course of these assignments would be welcome contributions to class discussion. You must turn in the short paper by the beginning of the last class during which the text is being discussed, and you must show up for that class. That is, if you want to write a short paper about "The Queen of Spades," you must turn this paper in no later than **October 6**. If we are only spending one class period on the work, then you must turn in the short paper at the beginning of that class. No late short papers will be accepted under any circumstances, nor will short paper be accepted from students who did not attend that day's class.

These papers are not response papers. They are to be analytical, text-based arguments backing up a thesis that you state in your first paragraph. They are not personal essays. **Please refrain from talking about yourself in any written work for this class.**

You may not wait until December to turn in three short papers. The semester has been divided into two parts, and you must write one short paper by each of these two deadlines. That is, your first short paper must be turned in no later than **September 27**, your second is due no later than **November 8**, and your third is due no later than **December 6**. Though you are not allowed to wait to do all the short papers until the end of the course, if you feel you would rather do your short papers earlier (turning two short papers during the first segment of the course), you are free to do so.

The topics of your *midterm paper* and *final paper* are yours to choose, but you must talk to me about them in advance. It is hoped that the short papers will lead you toward topics

for your longer papers. Both your mid-semester and your final papers can be based on two-page papers, as long as you are not tapping the same paper for both longer works.

The midterm paper is due on **October 20**, and the final must be turned by **December 15**.

I welcome full or partial drafts of any of these writing assignment. Drafts of the papers must be shown to me no later than one week before the due date..

Electronic submission of written assignments. You must submit your papers to me by email, as attachments. The preferred format is any version of Word (97 or above, any platform)--such documents usually take the ".doc" extension. Failing that, .rtf files (which can be generated by most word processing programs) are also fine. I can open most other formats as well, including Word Perfect (.wpd), but this requires some extra effort on my part. Please feel free to consult with me about file format questions.

When you submit a paper electronically, please give it a descriptive filename. I have dozens of students, and if all of you send me files called "Unquiet Dead Assignment" or "Eagleman Paper," this will be confusing and frustrating. After the first time you make this mistake, I will not accept another paper with an unidentifiable file name.

The preferred (but not required) format for file names is <Student last name> <Type of assignment> <Assignment number> <Topic >. Examples: if Bonnie Tyler has written a second short paper on Stoker, the file should be something like "Tyler Short Paper 2 (Stoker).doc". If Eric Roberts has written a midterm paper on Shirley Jackson then the file should be something like "Roberts Midterm (Jackson).doc". A final paper on Nabokov by Scott Baio would be "Baio Final (Nabokov).doc".

Finally, please note that I have two different email accounts (eb7@nyu.edu and eliotb2002@me.com). The NYU account automatically forwards mail to the me account. Please do not send email to both accounts at once ("cc"); if you do, I will end up with three copies of your message.

Final Grade. Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Class participation:	20%
Two-page papers:	30%
Midterm paper:	20%
Final paper:	30%

Class participation. Most class periods will be a mix of lecture and discussion; only occasionally will I spend the entire class giving a lecture. Everyone is encouraged to participate in discussion, which will be facilitated by questions that I will be distributing in advance over electronic mail, and by the short papers.

Active and constructive class participation can significantly improve your final grade. Frequent absences can have a negative effect on your final grade.

Disability Accommodations. Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

NYU's Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities
726 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003-6675
Telephone: 212-998-4980
Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114
Web site: www.nyu.edu/csd

Useful Reference Material:

For writing papers and citation formats (you may choose any citation format so long as you use it consistently):

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

** This site reproduces much of the information located in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th ed.

Strunk, William & White, E.B. *The Elements of Style*. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon, 2000)

Williams, Joseph. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 8th ed.

Required Texts, Part One (NYU Book Store)

*Crace, Jim. *Being Dead*. New York: Picador, 2001.

*Eagleman, David. *Sum: Forty Tales from the Afterlives*. New York: Vintage, 2010.

*Jackson, Shirley. *The Haunting of Hill House*. New York: Penguin, 2006.

*Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. New York; Knopf, 2004.

*Nabokov, Vladimir. *The Eye*. New York: Vintage, 1990

*Scheffler, Samuel. *Death and the Afterlife*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. New York: Dover Publications, 2000.

*On two-hour reserve at Bobst.

[**Please note:** The full text of *Dracula* is also available on NYU Classes.]

Required Texts , Part Two (On NYU Classes)

The rest of the readings for this class will be available in two formats on NYU Classes: Rich Text Format (.rtf), which can be read and printed using virtually any word processing program on any platform, and .pdf, which treats the articles as images rather than texts. Occasionally, the files are in .html format rather than .rtf.

Please also note that the first two readings on NYU Classes are not assigned for specific days; rather, they are ancillary materials designed to help you perform well in the class. I expect you to familiar yourself with them before you turn in any written assignment.

Finally, please note that you must **bring the texts with you to class.**

A-1 Advice for Student Writers.

A-2 Citation

Selected Folk Tales

Ashliman, D.L. (Translator and/or editor). " Human Sacrifice in Legends and Myths." <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/sacrifice.html>. Last Accessed January 1, 2011.

Borges, Jorge Luis. "The Immortal." *Labyrinths*. New York: New Directions, 2007. 105-118.

Brockmeier, Kevin. "The Brief History of the Dead." *The New Yorker*. September 9, 2008.

Bronfen, Elisabeth. "Chapter 1"; "Chapter 4." *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*. New York: Routledge, 1992. 1-14; 59-75.

Brothers Grimm. "50 Briar Rose." *Household Tales* (1857) Translated by Margaret Hunt (1884). <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/5314/pg5314.html>

---. "53 Little Snow-white." *Household Tales* (1857) Translated by Margaret Hunt (1884). <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/5314/pg5314.html>

Freud, Sigmund. "Mourning and Melancholia."

Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny"

Gaiman, Neil. "Snow, Glass, Apples." *Smoke and Mirrors: Short Fictions and Illusions*. New York: Avon Press, 1998

Gogol, Nikolai. "Viy." *The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol*. Translated and Annotated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Vintage, 1999. 155-193.

Groome, Francis Hinder. "No. 5.--The Vampire. Chapter II: Roumanian-Gypsy Stories." *Gypsy Folk Tales*. London: Hurst and Blackett, Limited, 1899/ <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/roma/gft/gft065.htm>

- Howey, Hugh. *I, Zombie*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012. Chapters 1-5
- Jacobs, W.W. "The Monkey's Paw." (1902) *The Lady of the Barge* (6th ed.) London and New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers: 1906
- Kis, Danilo. "The Encyclopedia of the Dead (A Whole Life)." *The Encyclopedia of the Dead*. Translated by Michael Henry Heim Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997. 37-66
- Krzhozhanovsky, Sigizmund. "The Phantom." *Red Spectres: Russian 20th-Century Gothic Fantastic Tales*. Selected and Translated by Maireann Maguire. London: Angel Books, 2012. 125-148.
- Lem, Stanislaw. *Solaris*.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. 1848.
<http://www.anu.edu.au/polsci/marx/classics/manifesto.html>
- McClelland, Bruce. "Chapter Three: Conversion in the Balkans: A Thousand Years of the Vampire." *Slayers and Their Vampires*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006.
- Melville, Herman. "Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-street." From *Four Short Novels*. New York: Bantam Books, 1959. 1-41.
- Poe, Edgar Allen. "Annabel Lee" (1849)
- Pushkin, Alexander. "The Queen of Spades." Translated by Natalie Duddington *The Queen of Spades*. Ed. Natalie Duddington. Progress Publishers
- Ralston, W. R. S. *Russian Fairy Tales: A Choice Collection of Muscovite Folk-lore*. New York: Hurst & Co., 1872. 33-37, 112-127, 312-329.
http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22373/22373-h/22373-h.htm#Page_32
- Rappall and Leonard Bacon (Editors and Translators). "The Building of Skadar." *Heroic Ballads of Servia*. Boston: Sherman, French and Company, 1913. 16-24.
- Saunders, "Undead Spaces: Fear, Globalization, and the Popular Geopolitics of Zombiism." *Geopolitics* 16.1 (2012): 1-25.
- Sebold, *The Lovely Bones*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 2009.
- Starobinets, Anna. "Yasha's Eternity." *An Awkward Age*. Translated by Hugh Aplin. 2010.
- Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. <http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Dracula>
- Verdery, Kathleen. "Introduction"; "Chapter 1." *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. 1-54.

Recommended Text (On NYU Classes)

Ellmann, Maude. "Explanatory Notes." Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Maude Ellmann. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. 380-389.

Required Texts, Part Three: The EBook Options

Some of you might prefer to read the required texts as eBooks. You should feel free to do so. All of the books ordered at the NYU bookstore are available as eBooks from various Internet vendors (Amazon, Barnes & Noble, iBooks, etc.).

If you are using eBooks, make sure to bring the text with you to class, just as you would a physical book.

In addition, I have made all of the NYU Classes readings available in the "Course Documents" tab as eBooks.

I have made them available in two different formats:

- 1) Mobi format. This is the format that Amazon acquired for the Kindle, and can be read natively by any Kindle application.
- 2) Epub format. This is the format that was designed to be an industry standard. It is the only format read by Apple's iBooks app, and can also be read in Nook and Stanza.

How to download the NYU Classes files: You can either download each file individually from "Resources," or choose from one of three zip files (also in Resources). Each file is an archive containing *all* of the NYU Classes reading in a particular format (one zip file for epub, one zip file for mobi, and one zip file for rtf/doc).

Required Texts, Part Four (Films)

[Please note: not all films will be assigned in their entirety. Some will be screened in class (as excerpts), while others are to be viewed at home. Please consult the syllabus for the details]

Abuladze, Tengiz. *Repentance* (1984)

Babbit, Jamie (dir.) *Sleeping Beauties* (1999)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4itLXzWeI0>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsQ7IBw_NFs

"David Chalmers on Consciousness" (2009)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NK1Y06VbRoo>
Hooper, Tobe (dir.). *Poltergeist* (1982)
Keaton, Diane. *Heaven* (1987)
Lambert, Mary. *Pet Semetary* (1989)
Lange, Michael (dir.). "Pangs." (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Season Four, Episode Eight) (1999)
Romero, George A. *Dawn of the Dead* (1978)
The Leftovers. Seasons One and Two (2014-2015)
Various versions of *Dracula*.

**Required Texts, Part Five
(Radio Broadcast)**

"Zombies and Consciousness." ABC (Australian Radio) September 10, 2011.
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/philosopherszone/zombies-and-consciousness/3585554#transcript>
"Zombies and Human Consciousness." ABC (Australian Radio) September 21, 2002.
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/allinthemind/zombies-and-human-consciousness-transcript-now/3506156#transcript>

**Recommended Texts
(NYU Classes)**

Seager, William. "Are Zombies Logically Possible? And Why It Matters."
<http://www.scar.utoronto.ca/~seager/zombie.html>

CLASS SCHEDULE

September 6 (T) Introduction

September 8 (Th) Happily Ever After (1): Where the Bodies Are Buried

- ▼ For Today:
 - ☛ Ashliman, "Human Sacrifice"
 - ☛ Rappall and Bacon, "The Building of Skadar"
 - ☛ Ralston, "Koshchei the Deathless" in *Russian Fairy Tales*, 112-127
 - ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 1

September 13 (T) Happily Ever After (2): The Dead and the Restless

- ▼ For Today:
 - ☛ Groome, "The Vampire"
 - ☛ McClelland, *Slayers and Their Vampires* (excerpts)
 - ☛ Ralston, *Russian Fairy Tales* (finish)
 - ☛ Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia"
 - ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 2
 - ☛ The Leftovers Season 1, Episode 1

September 15 (Th) "The Blood is the Life" (1)

- ▼ For Today:
 - ☛ Gogol, "Viy"
 - ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 3
 - ☛ The Leftovers Season 1, Episode 2

September 20 (T) "The Blood is the Life" (2)

- In Class:**
- ▼ For Today:
 - ☛ Stoker, *Dracula* (Chapters 1-15)
 - ☛ Ellmann, Explanatory Notes (recommended)
 - ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 4
 - ☛ The Leftovers Season 1, Episode 3

September 22 (Th) "The Blood is the Life" (3)

- In Class:**
- ▼ For Today:
 - ☛ Stoker, *Dracula* (finish)
 - ☛ Ellmann, Explanatory Notes (recommended)
 - ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 5

September 27 (T) Who Needs an Afterlife?

- In Class:**
- ▼ For Today:
 - ☛ Scheffler, *The Afterlife*
 - ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 6
 - ☛ The Leftovers Season 1, Episode 4
- Final Deadline for 1st Short Paper**

September 29 (Th) Dead Girls (1)

- In Class:**
- Watch Babbit, *Sleeping Beauties*
- ▼ For Today:
 - ☛ Brother Grimm, "Little Snow-white"
 - ☛ Brother Grimm, "Briar Rose"
 - ☛ Poe, "Annabel Lee"
 - ☛ Freud, "The Uncanny"
 - ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 7
 - ☛ The Leftovers Season 1, Episode 5

October 4 (T) Dead Girls (2)

- In Class:**
- Watch Babbit, *Sleeping Beauties*
- ▼ For Today:
 - ☛ Freud, Mourning and Melancholia
 - ☛ Gaiman, "Snow, Glass, Apples"
 - ☛ Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body* (excerpts)
 - ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 8
 - ☛ The Leftovers Season 1, Episode 6

October 6 (Th) Never Let Me Go

- ▼ For Today:
 - ☛ Read Pushkin, "The Queen of Spades"
 - ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 9
 - ☛ The Leftovers Season 1, Episode 7

October 11 (T) Unreal Estate

- ▼ For Today:
 - ☛ Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House*
 - ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 10

October 13 (Th) The Marxist Undead

- ▼ For Today:
 - ☛ Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*
 - ☛ Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener"
 - ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 11
 - ☛ The Leftovers Season 1, Episode 8

October 18 (T) Autothanotography

▼ For Today:

- ☛ Read Nabokov, *The Eye*
- ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 12-13
- ☛ The Leftovers Season 1, Episode 9

October 20 (Th) Human Remains

▼ For Today:

- ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 14-16
- ☛ The Leftovers Season 1, Episode 10

Midterm Paper Due

October 25 (T) The Lives of Corpses

▼ For Today:

- ☛ Crace, *Being Dead*
- ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 17

October 27 (Th) The Stillborn Dead

▼ For Today:

- ☛ Krzhizanovsky, "The Phantom"
- ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 18
- ☛ The Leftovers Season 2, Episode 1

November 1 (T) (Post-)Colonial Ghosts (1)

▼ For Today:

- ☛ Watch *Poltergeist*
- ☛ Morrison, *Beloved* (through p. 122, up to the section that begins with the words "Out of sight")
- ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 19
- ☛ The Leftovers Season 2, Episode 2

November 3 (Th) (Post-)Colonial Ghosts (2)

▼ For Today:

- ☛ Morrison, *Beloved* (through the end of **Chapter 1**)
- ☛ Buffy the Vampire Slayer, "Pangs"
- ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 20

November 8 (T) (Post-)Colonial Ghosts (3)

▼ For Today:

- ☛ Morrison, *Beloved* (finish)
 - ☛ Watch *Pet Semetary*
 - ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 21
- Final Deadline for 2nd Short Paper**

November 10 (Th) The Theory and Practice of Zombies (1): The Walking Dead

▼ For Today:

- ☛ Romero, *Dawn of the Dead*
- ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 22-25

November 15 (T) The Theory and Practice of Zombies (2): The Unthinking Dead

▼ For Today:

- ☛ Zombie Radio Broadcast 1 & 2
- ☛ Jacobs, "The Monkey's Paw"
- ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 26
- ☛ The Leftovers Season 2, Episode 3

November 17 (Th) The Polling Dead

▼ In Class:

- ☛ Watch *Heaven*
- ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 27
- ☛ The Leftovers Season 2, Episode 4

November 22 (T) Dead Girls (3): The Democratic Dead

▼ In Class

▼ For Today:

- ☛ Read Sebold, *The Lovely Bones*
- ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 28
- ☛ The Leftovers Season 2, Episode 5

November 24 (Th) Thanksgiving

NO CLASS

November 29 (T) The Theory and Practice of Zombie (3): The Thinking Dead

▼ For Today:

- ☛ Read Howey, *I Zombie* (Chs 1-5)
- ☛ Read Saunders, "Undead"
- ☛ Read Starobinets, "Yasha's Eternity"
- ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 29
- ☛ Watch "David Chalmers on Consciousness"
- ☛ The Leftovers Season 2, Episode 6

December 1 (Th) Space Ghost

▼ For Today

- ☛ Lem, *Solaris*
- ☛ Eagleman, Chapter 30
- ☛ The Leftovers Season 2, Episode 7

December 6 (T) The Reading Dead

▼ For Today:

- ✪ Brockmeier, "A Brief History of the Dead"
- ✪ Kis, "The Encyclopedia of the Dead"
- ✪ Eagleman, Chapter 31-33
- ✪ The Leftovers Season 2, Episode 8

3rd Paper Final Deadline

December 8 (Th) Spectres Haunting Europe

▼ For Today:

- ✪ Abuladze, *Repentance*
- ✪ Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies* (excerpts)
- ✪ Eagleman, Chapter 34-37

December 13 (T) Monday Schedule

NO CLASS

December 15 (Th) Humans Remain

▼ For Today:

- ✪ The Leftovers Season 2, Episode 9-10
- ✪ Eagleman, Chapter 38-40

Final Paper Due