

## ENGLISH 254, Themes in Literature Spring 2023



### Zombies in American Popular Culture

Carrie Sheffield Section 001, TR 2:30-3:45, CRN# (20654)

**Course Description:** There's no doubt that the zombie has taken over the American imagination over the past several years. From video games, to comic books, to films, zombies are all around us. But where did this fascination come from? How do zombies reflect America's fears about disease, race, control, and power? How have zombies become a coping mechanism for addressing those fears? This course will begin with a historical examination of the zombie in American history. Beginning with a study of the zombie in Haitian Voodoo and Hoodoo, we will investigate how the fascination with the first black-governed country in the Americas turned the zombie into an undead monster. The course will then move forward into the latter-half of the 20th Century when the zombie shifted from a reflection of the exotic, and also terrifying, racialized Other to more recent manifestations of the "walking dead." At the core of this course is the zombie as cultural lens. How does the rise of the zombie help us understand our own shifting culture, our own history, and our own fears?

### Books that Shaped America

Julia McLeod Section 002, TR 11:20-12:35, CRN# (20655)

**Course Description:** This course features readings from the Library of Congress's list of books that "shaped Americans' views of their world and the world's views of America." Through writings by Benjamin Franklin, Washington Irving, Frederick Douglass, Louisa May Alcott, James Baldwin, Cesar Chavez, Maxine Hong Kingston, Ray Bradbury, and others, we will examine continuing national debates, including: How do we define "American"? What ideals unite us? What is the role of the American citizen? How has our vision of national purpose changed, and how will it be defined in the future? The course meets AH and WC requirements.

### Climate Fictions

Mark Tabone Section 004, TR 9:45-11:00, CRN# (20657)

**Course Description:** This course focuses on science fiction that examines humanity's relationship to nature and the environment. We will look at works from the twenty-first century genre known as "Cli-Fi" which speculate about possible future effects of anthropogenic climate change. However, we will also look back through literary history to examine the influence of science, the Enlightenment, industrialization, romanticism, and the Judeo-Christian and Buddhist traditions on the ways we think, imagine, hope, fear, and write about the environment. Using

fiction as our guide, we will discuss the current state of our changing environment as well as the ecology, science, technologies, worldviews, and developments that led to this point in history.

**All sections of English 254 satisfy UT's General Education requirements in both Arts & Humanities (AH) and Communicating through Writing (WC).**