



## LIT 348A: "THE ZOMBIE"

[zombieclass.com](http://zombieclass.com)

**Course Description:** We're at a point in our evolution as a species where we've become not quite living not quite dead. With the advent of virtual bodies (in video games, social media, etc.), cloning, cyborg technology, and even the cell phone, we are seeing ourselves become more and more disembodied. This feeling of disembodiment is why we've become so obsessed in our entertainment media with bodies, dead and otherwise--with cadavers, crime scenes, bodily mutilation, and torture. We crave a truly visceral experience of the body--of bodies torn apart and reassembled, bodies breathing and stopped of breath, bodies scrutinized post-mortem, and bodies (no matter how gruesome) as aesthetically viable objects. The zombie is part and parcel of this cultural obsession, but it is also the antidote. The zombie threatens to devour us, but in an altogether different way from the machine. Machines take our flesh away. Zombies, which are the epitome of flesh, proffer it back.

In this course, we examine a multimedia array of texts that explore the zombie and its literary and figurative precursors, including Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Mary Roach's *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*, George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, and Robert Kirkman's *The Walking Dead*. We also ask larger philosophical questions about what it is to be "human," what it is to be "living," and what it is to be "dead." In addition to working on a multimodal project over the course of the term, students engage in activities/assignments that consider the material and immaterial nature of media itself. What constitutes the flesh of an essay? Does a word have flesh? Does film have flesh? Do interactive texts have flesh? And to what extent do they engage us at the level of flesh? The subject leads us through difficult terrain, and we'll have to sludge through some gore along the way. If you're squeamish, you may have to cover your eyes at certain moments, but we're in this together, so talking about what, how, and why we recoil will be one of the subjects of this class.

**SPRING  
2013**

Instructor

**Jesse Stommel**

This is a hybrid course. We will meet online from 4/22 - 5/19. We will meet together on-campus on 4/26 from 6:00pm to 9:00pm, 4/27 from 10:00am to 5:00pm, 5/10 from 6:00pm to 9:00pm, and 5/11 from 10:00am - 5:00pm.