

**RUSSN UA 0870**  
**COLIT-UA 866**  
**The Unquiet Dead:**  
**Imagining the Afterlife in Film and Fiction**  
**Fall 2013**

**MW 2:00-3:15**

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

**Office Hours:**  
**(in person and on Skype chat)**

**(212) 998-8676**  
**Skype: eliotb2002**

**T 12:00-1:00**

**W 12:00-1:00**

**eb7@nyu.edu**

**<http://homepages.nyu.edu/~eb7/index.html>**

**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 three 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 2**. 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. **Late short papers will be lowered by one letter grade. Short papers turned in on a day you are absent will also be lowered one letter grade.**

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 two short papers. The semester has been divided into three parts, and you must write one short paper by each of these three deadlines. That is, your first short paper must be turned in no later than **September 30**, your second is due no later than **November 11**, and your third is due no later than **December 9**. 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 23**, and the final must be turned by **December 11**.

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 are welcome to submit hard copies of your short and long papers. However, I prefer to receive students' papers electronically. Blackboard has a "digital drop box" feature, but I have not found it to be particularly reliable. Therefore, please send me your assignments 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 "Morrison 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](mailto:eb7@nyu.edu) and [eliotb2002@me.com](mailto: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.

**Office Hours.** I have set aside office hours to meet with students either in person or on Skype (by chat, not as a voice call). In-person conversations take precedence over Skype chats. If you want to contact me by Skype, you'll need to add me as a contact.

**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.

### **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*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7<sup>th</sup> 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*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed.

### **Required Texts, Part One (NYU Book Store)**

\*Crace, *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.

\*Lem, Stanislaw. *The Investigation*. Translated by Adele Milch. New York: Mariner Books, 1986

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

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

\*Sebold, *The Lovely Bones*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 2009.

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

Wellington, David. *Monster Island*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006

\*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>

Capek, Karel. *The Makropulos Secret*. Translated by Peter Kussi. Kussi, Peter (ed.) *Towards the Radical Centre: A Karel Capek Reader*. North Haven, CT: Catbird Press, 1990. 131-215.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. "Bobok." *The Eternal Husband and Other Stories*. Translated and Annotated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Bantam, 2000. 214-232

---. "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man." *The Eternal Husband and Other Stories*.

Translated and Annotated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Bantam, 2000. 278-300.

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 Hides. "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
- Krzhizhanovsky, Sigizmund. "The Phantom." *Red Spectres: Russian 20th-Century  
 Gothic Fantastic Tales*. Selected and Translated by Maireann Maguire. London:  
 Angel Books, 2012. 125-148.
- 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)
- Poe, Edgar Allen. "The Tell-Tale Heart." (1843) <http://www.poemuseum.org/works-telltale.php>
- 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](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,  
 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.
- Williams, Bernard. "The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality." *Problems of Self: Philosophical Papers, 1956-1972*. Cambridge: Cambridge  
 University Press, 1973. 82-100.

**Recommended Text  
(On Blackboard)**

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

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 5 (W) Introduction

#### September 9 (M) 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 11 (W) 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)
  - ✪ Eagleman, Chapter 2

#### September 16 (M) "The Blood is the Life" (1)

- ▼ For Today:
- ✪ Gogol, "Viy"
  - ✪ Eagleman, Chapter 3

#### September 18 (W) "The Blood is the Life" (2)

- In Class:**  
Watch various *Draculas* (excerpts)
- ▼ For Today:
- ✪ Stoker, *Dracula* (Chapters 1-15)
  - ✪ Ellmann, Explanatory Notes (recommended)
  - ✪ Eagleman, Chapter 4

#### September 23 (M) "The Blood is the Life" (3)

- In Class:**  
Watch various *Draculas* (excerpts)
- ▼ For Today:
- ✪ Stoker, *Dracula* (finish)
  - ✪ Ellmann, Explanatory Notes (recommended)
  - ✪ Eagleman, Chapter 5

### September 25 (W) 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 6

### September 30 (M) Dead Girls (2)

- In Class:**  
▼ For Today:
- ✪ Gaiman, "Snow, Glass, Apples"
  - ✪ Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body* (excerpts)
  - ✪ Freud, Mourning and Melancholia
  - ✪ Eagleman, Chapter 7
- Final Deadline for Short Paper # 1**

### October 2 (W) Never Let Me Go

- ▼ For Today:
- ✪ Read Pushkin, "The Queen of Spades"
  - ✪ Read Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart"
  - ✪ Eagleman, Chapter 8

### October 7 (M) Unreal Estate

- ▼ For Today:
- ✪ Jackson, *The Haunting of Hill House*
  - ✪ Eagleman, Chapter 9

### October 9 (W) The Marxist Undead

- ▼ For Today:
- ✪ Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*
  - ✪ Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener"
  - ✪ Eagleman, Chapter 10

### October 14 (M) FALL BREAK NO CLASS

### October 16 (W) Autothanotography

- ▼ For Today:
- ✪ Read Nabokov, *The Eye*
  - ✪ Eagleman, Chapter 11

**October 21 (M) The Stillborn Dead**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Krzhizanovsky, "The Phantom"  
✪ Eagleman, Chapter 12-14

**October 23 (W) The Polling Dead**  
▼ In Class  
✪ Watch *Heaven* (excerpts)  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Eagleman, Chapter 15-17  
**Midterm Paper Due**

**October 28 (M) The Lives of Corpses**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Read Crace, *Being Dead*  
✪ Eagleman, Chapter 18

**October 30 (W) Dead Letters**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Dostoevsky, "Bobok"  
✪ Dostoevsky, "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man"  
✪ Eagleman, Chapter 19-20

**November 4 (M) Maimed Rites**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Lem, *The Investigation*  
✪ Eagleman, Chapter 21

**November 6 (W) Post-Colonial Ghosts (1)**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Watch *Poltergeist*  
✪ Morrison, *Beloved*  
✪ Eagleman, Chapter 22

**November 11 (M) (Post-)Colonial Ghosts (2)**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Watch *Pet Semetary*  
✪ Morrison, *Beloved*  
✪ Eagleman, Chapter 23  
**Final Deadline for Second Short Paper**

**November 13 (W) (Post-)Colonial Ghosts (3)**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Morrison, *Beloved* (finish)  
✪ Buffy the Vampire Slayer, "Pangs"  
✪ Eagleman, Chapter 24

**November 18 (M) The Theory and Practice of Zombies (1): The Unthinking Dead**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Zombie Radio Broadcasts 1 & 2  
✪ Jacobs, "The Monkey's Paw"  
✪ Eagleman, Chapter 25-26  
**Recommended:**  
✪ Seager, "Are Zombies Logically Possible?"

**November 20 (W) The Theory and Practice of Zombies (2): The Walking Dead**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Romero, *Dawn of the Dead*  
✪ Eagleman, Chapter 27-28

**November 25 (M) Dead Girls (2): The Democratic Dead**  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Sebald, *The Lovely Bones*  
✪ Eagleman, Chapter 29

**November 27 (W) The Theory and Practice of Zombies (3): Thinking Dead**  
▼ In Class  
✪  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Read Howey, *I, Zombie* (Chs. 1-5)  
✪ Read Saunders, "Undead Spaces"  
✪ Eagleman, Chapter 30-31

**December 2 (M) The Theory and Practice of Zombies (4): Cities of Refuge**  
▼ In Class  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Read Wellington, *Monster Island*  
✪ Eagleman, Chapter 32

**December 4 (W) Cheating Death**  
▼ In Class  
▼ For Today:  
✪ Read Borges, "The Immortal"  
✪ Read Capek, *The Makropulos Case*  
*Secret Case*  
✪ Read Williams, "The Makropulos Case"  
✪ Eagleman, Chapters 33-34

**December 9 (M) Spectres Haunting Europe**  
**In Class:**  
▼ For Today:  
✦ Abuladze, *Repentance*  
✦ Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies* (excerpts)  
✦ Eagleman, Chapter 35-37  
**Final Deadline for Third Short Paper**

**December 11 (W) The Reading Dead**  
▼ For Today:  
✦ Brockmeier, "A Brief History of the Dead"  
✦ Kis, "The Encyclopedia of the Dead"  
✦ Eagleman, Chapter 38-40  
**FINAL PAPER DUE**