

## General Studies Course Proposal

- I) Course Title: The Living Dead in Fact & Fiction  
Course Number: PE 388 – 03.  
Credit Hours: 3  
Department: Kinesiology and Sport Sciences  
Contact Person: Greg Brown, Cushing W221, (308) 865-8333,  
brownnga@unk.edu
- II) This is a new course
- III) This course is being proposed as a capstone course
- IV) GS Program Level Learning Outcomes:
- 1) Evaluate information appropriate to the task – achieved through viewing movies, television episodes, and reading books, and then identifying physiologic symptoms of disease that are ascribed to the Living Dead
    - a. For example: if werewolves\* are described or portrayed as being able to lift cars, this implies superhuman strength, which would be the result of either lots of muscle mass or something different about their muscles causing extreme strength.
  - 2) Apply principles of critical thinking to demonstrate integrative learning – achieved through analysis of how realistically each film, TV episode, or book portrays symptoms allowing for possible diseases to be identified
    - a. For example: if werewolves are described or portrayed as being uniformly large and muscular, students could evaluate medical conditions that cause abnormally large growth (e.g. acromegaly)
  - 3) Communicate effectively in spoken form – achieved through discussions of books, TV episodes, journal articles and films. Also achieved through narration of the final project.
  - 4) Communicate effectively in written form – achieved through completion of an integrative term paper that demonstrates a critical analysis of one specific Living Dead creature, symptoms, and the relevant medical conditions. Citations to books, TV episodes, journal articles and films will be a required part of this paper.

*\* Werewolves are used as examples, but werewolves are not Living Dead and hence will not be evaluated in this course*

- V) GS Capstone course Learning Outcomes:

1. Evaluate information from more than one academic discipline – this course will incorporate the fields of physiology, popular fictional literature, and film study.
2. Formulate logical connections between disciplines as they relate to the topic – this will be demonstrated by evaluating artistic presentation of symptoms and then translating those into realistic diseases.
3. Employ the approach of more than one academic discipline in completing a Capstone project – achieved through the critical analysis of book, TV, and film depictions in comparison to scientific understanding of various categories of human disease. The Capstone project will be a term paper, and also a 5-10 minute documentary film of the Living Dead evaluated in the term paper.
4. Synthesize knowledge related to the topic in completing a Capstone project – achieved through successful completion of a term paper and short documentary film.
5. Communicate effectively in the medium chosen for the Capstone project – achieved through successful completion of a term paper and short documentary film.

Short Course Description: The Living Dead, such as Zombies and Vampires, are pervasive in fictional literature, television, and movies. During this course, novels, television episodes, and movies will be used to identify disease symptoms displayed by the living dead, and these symptoms will then be evaluated regarding what type of medical condition might cause the symptoms.

VI) Proposed Syllabus

**PE 388 – 03. The Living Dead in Fact & Fiction (3 credits)**

**Instructor**

**Gregory A. Brown, Ph.D. FACSM**

Office: Cushing W 221 (in the Physical Activity and Wellness Lab)

Email: [brownga@unk.edu](mailto:brownga@unk.edu)

Phone: 865-8333

Office Hours: As much as possible, I will be in my office between 2:00 – 3:30 PM Monday, Wednesday, and Friday as well as 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM on Tuesday and Thursday. These hours may be occasionally interrupted by meetings or other currently unforeseen events.



**Course Overview.** Zombies, Vampires, and other Living Dead creatures have permeated literature since medieval times (at least). There have been innumerable movies and TV shows about the living dead as villains as well as heroes. Indeed, the popularity of the living dead can be well illustrated by the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention developing a Zombie Preparedness webpage to raise public awareness of the need for being prepared for emergencies and natural disasters. This course will use fictional novels, movies, and television shows to identify the characteristics of the Living Dead in regards to human physiology and disease. Internet resources, such as the *WebMD Symptom Checker*, will be used to associate the symptoms displayed by the Living Dead to identify possible diseases, and then peer reviewed scholarly articles gleaned from the PubMed database will be used to identify further information on the medical conditions or diseases that might give someone symptoms of being a Living Dead. Information on disease transmission and prevention will be also be reviewed.



Since the Living Dead are fictional, and there is no known disease that causes a person to become a Living Dead, students will develop a close approximation for a multiple disease profile that, when all of the diseases are added together, could result in someone appearing to be the Living Dead. This profile will, of course, be incomplete as no known disease gives its victim the ability to fly and to pass through solid objects (which are some of

the more fantastical abilities ascribed to Vampires).

*GENERAL STUDIES MISSION: The UNK General Studies program helps students acquire knowledge and abilities to: understand the world, make connections across disciplines, and contribute to the solution of contemporary problems.*

**GS Program Level Learning Outcomes:**

- 5) **Evaluate information appropriate to the task** – achieved through viewing movies, television episodes, and reading books, and then identifying physiologic symptoms of disease that are ascribed to the Living Dead
  - a. For example: if werewolves\* are described as being able to lift cars, this implies superhuman strength, which would be the result of either lots of muscle mass or something different about their muscles causing extreme strength.

- 6) **Apply principles of critical thinking to demonstrate integrative learning** – achieved through analysis of how realistically each film, TV episode, or book portrays symptoms allowing for possible diseases to be identified
  - a. For example: if werewolves are described as being uniformly large and muscular, students could evaluate medical conditions that cause abnormally large growth (e.g. acromegaly)
- 7) **Communicate effectively in spoken form** – achieved through discussions of books, TV episodes, journal articles and films. Also achieved through narration of the final project.
- 8) **Communicate effectively in written form** – achieved through completion of an integrative term paper that demonstrates a critical analysis of one specific Living Dead creature, symptoms, and the relevant medical conditions. Citations to books, TV episodes, journal articles and films will be a required part of this paper.

*\* Werewolves are used as examples, but werewolves are not Living Dead and hence will not be evaluated in this course*

### **GS Capstone course Learning Outcomes:**

- 1) **Evaluate information from more than one academic discipline** – this course will incorporate the fields of physiology, popular fictional literature, and film study.
- 2) **Formulate logical connections between disciplines as they relate to the topic** – this will be demonstrated by evaluating artistic presentation of symptoms and then translating those into realistic diseases.
- 3) **Employ the approach of more than one academic discipline in completing a Capstone project** – achieved through the critical analysis of book, TV, and film depictions in comparison to scientific understanding of various categories of human disease. The Capstone project will be a term paper, and also a 5-10 minute documentary film of the Living Dead evaluated in the term paper.
- 4) **Synthesize knowledge related to the topic in completing a Capstone project** – achieved through successful completion of a term paper and short documentary film.
- 5) **Communicate effectively in the medium chosen for the Capstone project** – achieved through successful completion of a term paper and short documentary film.

### **Course Objectives:**

The major goal of this course is to help students to develop the ability to identify symptoms of illness or disease (even when presented in fictional and fantastic situations), and evaluate these symptoms relative to a likely cause. The diseases may be linked to genetic mutation, or viral or bacterial illness.

### **The method of teaching will include:**

**1. Reading assignments.** Students will be expected to acquire selected novels, either by purchasing or borrowing from a library. Selected scholarly articles will be provided on Blackboard. Students will be expected to complete the assigned readings, whether book chapters or scholarly articles, before the in-class discussion. Students will also be expected to seek out and share scholarly articles that are relevant to a study of Living Dead physiology.

**2. Movie and TV Episode viewing.** Movies and TV episodes will be assigned and students will be responsible for viewing the movie before the associated in-class discussion. These viewings may be through such resources as Netflix, Amazon Prime, or YouTube.

**3. Class discussions.** Students will be expected to participate in regular discussions. The discussions will be aimed at exploring what symptoms are depicted in the film or book, and whether or not the symptoms could be due to disease. Sometimes, the symptom will be very obviously stated, while at other times the symptoms will be discerned from subtle hints in things such as skin tone or gait abnormalities.

**4. Final Project.** Each student develop a final written project in which a specific type of Living Dead (e.g. zombie, vampire, etc) is selected, the disease symptoms presented by the creature will be identified, classified as realistic or not, and then the realistic symptoms ascribed to an identified disease. The written project will also be accompanied by a short “documentary film” produced by the student,

which summarizes the disease. The observations of disease symptoms and possible causes must be supported by appropriate citations. The written project must be 3-5 pages of text. The documentary film will be 3-5 minutes.

- For example, a student might identify Lycanthropy (werewolves) as suffering from a combination of the realistic symptoms of hypergonadism, acromegaly, lunar effect, and hirsutism.

**Grading will be based on the following items:**

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 10% | Reading Contribution<br>Each student will be expected to find articles that help understand the Living Dead being discussed. Each student must submit unique 1 scholarly article per Living Dead creature being studied   |
| 15% | Quizzes.<br>Brief quizzes will be periodically given to evaluate whether students completed the assigned readings or viewings.  |
| 25% | Class discussion<br>Based on your contribution to the class discussion on the quality of what was said and how it added to the discussion. Meaningful contribution to the discussion is more than saying "I agree" or "good point", but provides meaningful insight to the topic of discussion. |
| 50% | Final Project<br>The final project will be weighted 75% on the written project and 25% on the "documentary"   |

**Grading Scale:**

| <b>A</b> | <b>A-</b> | <b>B+</b>  | <b>B</b>   | <b>B-</b>  | <b>C+</b>  | <b>C</b>   | <b>C-</b>  | <b>D+</b>  | <b>D</b>   | <b>F</b>  |
|----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| 93-100%  | 90-92.99% | 87-89.999% | 83-86.999% | 80-82.999% | 77-79.999% | 73-76.999% | 70-72.999% | 67-69.999% | 60-66.999% | ≤ 59.999% |

\*Grades are calculated to at least 3 decimal places before any rounding occurs. For example a final percent of 79.996% is still a C+ and DOES NOT round up to 80%.

**Grade Disputes:** Occasionally, mistakes in grading can occur. Or, a student may disagree with the grade received on an assignment or test for some reason. If a student thinks that their grade on a test or assignment should be different from what they received, then the student MUST talk to Dr. Brown in person or on the telephone at a pre-established appointment to resolve the grade discrepancy.

**Attendance:** The attendance policy can be summarized simply as this "Attend every class meeting if at all possible. If you cannot attend, the reason for the absence needs to be an extremely good reason and even then it may not be possible to make up missed points."

When students register for a class, they know well in advance which days and times the course will meet. Students are therefore expected to arrange all other activities around their course schedule. Students are expected to attend all meetings of classes (both lecture and laboratory) for which they are registered, including the first and last scheduled meetings and the final examination period. Participation in official University activities, military service, jury duty, personal emergencies, severe communicable illness, and religious observances are valid reasons for absence from classes. The instructor may request that any such absences be verified by the Dean of Student Affairs. Unacceptable reasons for missing class include

(but are not limited to) paid or volunteer employment, attendance at sporting events, concerts, or other forms of entertainment, attending family reunions, parties, weddings, and such; or any type of vacation. Students **MUST** take the final exam at the appointed time and place.

Another way to look at this is "If you want to pass, you must attend class"

**Academic Honesty.** All student work for this course must be in accordance with the Academic Integrity Policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney (which can be found in the current course catalog). It is the student's responsibility to know, understand, and abide by the student codes of conduct. Any student in violation of these codes (including plagiarism) will receive a failing grade on the assignment, possibly for the course, and may be subject to further disciplinary action by the university.

**A few notes on plagiarism.** The purpose of writing in academic classes is for students to learn to express ideas and concepts in their own words. Copying and pasting, or simply re-writing verbatim from another source, is considered plagiarism unless the writing is appropriately cited and formatted to indicate a quotation is being used. Quoting is NOT really writing, but is using someone else's words. So, the use of quotations should be kept to a minimum.

Avoid plagiarism completely. See the following example.

- **Published Statement:** Regular Exercise has a number of health benefits, which can lead an improved quality of life.
- **Plagiarized Version:** **Exercise** Training **has a number of health benefits**, leading to **improved quality of life**. (11 of 16 plagiarized words, 68.7% plagiarized)
- **Properly Rewritten:** It is well documented that regular physical activity can lower fasting cholesterol and glucose, which may reduce morbidity. (0 of 16 plagiarized words, 0% plagiarized).

While it is expected that students will discuss the writing assignments with one another, all writing must be individually completed. Thus, if you are working with another student on an assignment, make sure your writing is unique and not excessively similar to the other person's in order to avoid any appearance of academic dishonesty.

Be aware that the written assignments will be screened for plagiarism using Safe Assign software, which evaluates the written document compared to what can be found on the internet as well as assignments submitted by current and former students in the class.

**Grammar and Spelling.** If any part of the written assignments are turned in with so many grammar and/or spelling errors that the document is difficult to read the assignment will have the score reduced by 25%. What constitutes excessive grammar and spelling errors will be determined by the instructor on a case by case basis.

For instance, if a 50 point assignment is turned in with excessive grammar and spelling errors, the final score earned on that assignment will be reduced by 12.5 points (25% of 50). So, if the author earned a score of 40 on the assignment, the final score would be 27.5 (40 – 12.5).

\*If a student feels uncomfortable with their mastery of the basics of English grammar and/or spelling, the student should consult with the tutors in the writing center or the academic success center early in the semester and frequently before submitting any assignment.

### **References.**

You should acknowledge a source (cite a reference) any time and every time you use a fact or an idea that you obtained from that source. Thus, clearly, you need to cite sources from which you paraphrase or summarize facts or ideas (even if an idea might be considered "common knowledge," but you didn't know it until you found it in a particular source). All written assignments must include in text references to appropriate literature, and the references must be listed in a bibliography.

References are to be cited and formatted according the citation style used by the Journal of Applied Physiology. <http://www.the-aps.org/mm/Publications/Info-For-Authors/Composition/Example-References.html>

For in text citations, the reference number should be placed in normal font in parentheses at the appropriate place in the text. For example

|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Bjorntorp (5) ...                             | (1 author)                         |
| Jones and Carlson (5) ...                     | (2 authors)                        |
| Smith et al. (5)...                           | (more than 2 authors)              |
| Previous research has demonstrated... (1).    | (authors names are not being used) |
| It is claimed that this product will ... (1). |                                    |

References in the bibliography are to be formatted as follows, double-spaced, arranged alphabetically by 1st author, and numbered serially. The style of citation should be as follows, with journal name abbreviated as in Medline, PubMed, and Index Medicus.

#### Journal References

Ref #. 1st author last name Initials, 2nd author last name Initials, (list all authors), Last author last name initials. Manuscript title. Index medicus abbreviation for the journal title Volume: 1st page – last page, year of publication

1. Leekha S, Zitterkopf NL, Espy MJ, Smith TF, Thompson RL, Sampathkumar P. Duration of influenza A virus shedding in hospitalized patients and implications for infection control. Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol. 28:1071-6, 2007.
2. Villalobos AR, Parmelee JT, Renfro JL. Choline uptake across the ventricular membrane of neonate rat choroid plexus. Am J Physiol Cell Physiol 276: C1288-C1296, 1999.

#### Book References

Ref #. 1<sup>st</sup> author last name Initials, 2<sup>nd</sup> author last name Initials, (list all authors), and Last author last name initials. Book title (edition). City of Publisher: Name of publisher, Year of publication, pages referenced.

1. Ausubel FM, Brent R, Kingston RE, Moore DD, Seidman JG, Smith JA, Struhl K. Current Protocols in Molecular Biology. New York: Wiley, 1995, p. 25-26.

#### Internet References

Ref #. Author/editor (if known). (Revision or copyright date, if available). Title of page [Publication medium]. Page publisher. URL (Protocol://Site/Path/File) [Access date].

1. Dudoit S, Yang YH, Callow MJ, Speed TJ. Statistical methods for identifying differentially expressed genes in replicated cDNA microarray experiments [Online]. Dept. of Statistics, Univ. of California at Berkeley. <http://www.stat.berkeley.edu/users/terry/zarray/Html/matt.html> [3 Sept. 2000].
2. Friedman N, Linal M, Nachman I, Peter D. Using Bayesian networks to analyze expression data [Online]. Stanford University. <http://robotics.stanford.edu/people/nir/Abstracts/FLNP1Full.html> [2000].

#### Movie or TV References

Ref #. Director. (Release date). Title of Movie or Title of television series and episode name [Publication medium]. [viewing date].

1. Wright E. (24 September 2004) Shaun of the Dead. [Movie]. [viewed October 3, 2014].
2. Solomon D. (8 December 2011). Grimm - Danse Macabre [Television Series]. [viewed October 3, 2014]

### **Paper Formatting**

The written portion of the final project must be produced using Microsoft Word, 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced with no extra line or spacing between paragraphs, and 1-inch margins. The written portion of the assignments that do not meet these formatting criteria will be penalized 10-25% of the possible score on the assignment, plus any other point deductions for grading. Assignments are to be submitted electronically through Blackboard by the due date and time.

### **Students with Disabilities or Those Who are Pregnant**

Students with disabilities or those who are expecting are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to students with

documented disabilities or those who are pregnant. To receive accommodation services for a disability, students must be registered with UNK Disabilities Services Coordinator, David Brandt, in the Academic Success Office, 163 Memorial Student Affairs Building, 308-865-8214 or by email [brandtdl@unk.edu](mailto:brandtdl@unk.edu). For those needing accommodation due to pregnancy, you need to visit with Student Health. The following link provides information for students and faculty regarding pregnancy rights.

<http://www.nwlc.org/resource/pregnant-and-parenting-students-rights-faqs-college-and-graduate-students>

If you have an accommodation plan please see me as soon as possible, so we can make any arrangements necessary for your learning. No accommodations can be provided until a Reasonable Accommodation Plan is in place. Please remember, plans are not retroactive and cannot be used for assignments prior to the date of my signature.

To the greatest extent possible, University Representatives, shall observe confidentiality with respect to any request for accommodation.

***Student's Responsibilities.*** The student is expected to be respectful of themselves, their classmates, and the instructor at all time, attend all lectures and laboratories, take supplemental notes, read the assigned readings, refer to the supplemental references as necessary, and achieve a cumulative score > 80% on the quizzes and final exam. Students are expected to silence their cell phones or other portable electronic devices before entering class. Students whose phone "goes off" during class will have 10-points deducted from their final project grade per violation.

In the event there is some difficulty fulfilling these responsibilities, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor for advice and assistance.

***Instructors Responsibilities.*** The instructor is expected to attend all lectures, read the assigned reading, prepare informative lecture materials, prepare examinations that are fair and representative of the material covered, and treat all students with respect and dignity. The instructor will also be available at posted office hours to answer specific student questions and provide needed assistance unless otherwise noted.

#### ***University Success Coaching Services:***

Students that are struggling in classes are encouraged to participate in University Success Coaching. Success Coaching helps students to generate solutions and strategies to academic problems; Success Coaching also acts as a point of contact and connection with the University. Studies suggest that undergraduates who receive Success Coaching — including guidance on setting goals and time management — are more likely to remain in college and graduate. Students meet 1:1 with a Learning Strategies Peer Coach who will tailor the meeting to the students' specific needs, situations, and goals.

Success Coaching is a one-on-one appointment with a Learning Strategies student peer coach. Success Coaching is tailored to support the student's specific needs and goals. A partial list of services include: Time Management, Goal Setting, Study Skills, Getting to know your faculty, Test Preparation and taking, Note Taking and Listening, Memory Improvement, and Organization skills. Contact: Shelley Yentes, Instruction Coordinator, Learning Strategies, 2nd floor Library, 308.865.8997, [yentessj@unk.edu](mailto:yentessj@unk.edu)

#### ***Course Fiction Readings***

Dracula by Bram Stoker (1897).

I Am Legend by Richard Matheson (1954).

Cirque Du Freak by Darren Shan (2000).

Herbert West—Reanimator by H.P. Lovecraft (1921).

World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War by Max Brooks (2007).

Zom-B by Darren Shan (2012).

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley (1818).

#### ***Course Viewings***

Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992)  
Fright Night (2011)  
Night of the Living Dead (1968)  
Shaun of the Dead (2004)  
The Walking Dead – episodes 1 & 2 (2010)  
Young Frankenstein (1974)

**Course Scholarly Readings\***

Graafland M1, Vollebergh MF, Lagarde SM, van Haperen M, Bemelman WA, Schijven MP. A Serious Game Can Be a Valid Method to Train Clinical Decision-Making in Surgery. World J Surg. 2014  
Klemenc-Ketis Z, Kersnik J. Deficiency areas in decision making in undergraduate medical students. Adv Med Educ Pract. 16:223-7. 2014

\* this list will increase as the course progresses and students find relevant articles, such as: De Smet D, Van Speybroeck L, Verplaetse J. Why humans do not make good vampires. Testing the ability of humans to detect true blood. Ann Hum Biol. 39(1):1-10. 2012

**Tentative Schedule**

| Week | Topic   |
|------|---|
| 1    | Course introduction, Using PubMed and finding scholarly articles, Identifying symptoms          |
| 2    | Vampires – Read and Discuss Dracula by Bram Stoker (1897).                                      |
| 3    | Dracula / Vampires – Watch and Discuss Bram Stoker's Dracula                                    |
| 4    | Dracula / Vampires - Read and Discuss I Am Legend by Richard Matheson (1954).                   |
| 5    | Dracula / Vampires - Read and Discuss Cirque Du Freak by Darren Shan (2000).                    |
| 6    | Watch and Discuss Fright Night  |
| 7    | Zombies – Read and Discuss Herbert West–Reanimator by H.P. Lovecraft (1921).                    |
| 8    | Watch and Discuss Night of the Living Dead  |
| 9    | Zombies – Read and Discuss World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War by Max Brooks (2007). |
| 10   | Zombies – Read and Discuss Zom-B by Darren Shan (2012).   |
| 11   | Zombies – Watch and Discuss Shaun of the Dead   |
| 12   | Zombies – Watch and Discuss the first 2 episode of The Walking Dead                             |
| 13   | Read and Discuss Frankenstein by Mary Shelley (1818).   |
| 14   | Read and Discuss Young Frankenstein   |
| 15   | Discussion and preparation of final projects  |