

Gettysburg College Philosophy and Film Seminar

“Vampires, Mummies, and Zombies: Searching for Sophia Among the Undead”

Call for Abstracts

April 12 – 14, 2018

Seminar Director: Vernon W. Cisney,
Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Gettysburg College

Keynote Speaker:

Kyle William Bishop, Associate Professor of English, Southern Utah University
Author of *How Zombies Conquered Popular Culture: The Multifarious Walking Dead in the 21st Century*, and
American Zombie Gothic: The Rise and Fall (and Rise) of the Walking Dead in Popular Culture

The Gettysburg College Philosophy Department, in cooperation with the Cinema and Media Studies Program, are delighted to announce the 3rd annual meeting of the Gettysburg College Philosophy and Film Seminar, entitled “Vampires, Mummies, and Zombies: Searching for Sophia Among the Undead.” The undead seem to be everywhere these days. From Voldemort’s horcruxes to the vampires of *True Blood*; from the white walkers of *Game of Thrones*, to the walkers of the hit AMC series, *The Walking Dead*, the undead appear to have taken up indefinite residence in popular culture. Confronting us with our own anxieties surrounding mortality and the concomitant anxieties of life itself, the undead challenge us to rethink the nature of the human being, call into question our ethical and religious assumptions, and offer critiques of reigning political ideologies. The undead therefore provide multiple avenues of theoretical exploration and analysis, from the philosophical to the cultural, economic, sociological, theological, aesthetic, and psychological.

The Gettysburg College Philosophy and Film Seminar will be held on the campus of Gettysburg College in historic Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, just one hour from Baltimore and ninety minutes from Washington, D.C. The vision of the seminar is to provide an intimate setting where collegial and rigorous intellectual enrichment of an interdisciplinary nature can take place. In the true spirit of the liberal arts, we invite submissions of abstracts from across the spectrum of academic disciplines.

Suggested questions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What, if anything, do the undead reveal about human nature?
 - In what ways do the undead call into question oppressive structures of race and gender?
 - What is the significance of the recent rise in popularity of the undead?
 - Does the category of moral considerability apply to the undead?
 - In what ways does the category of the undead call into question religious and theological assumptions?
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Seminar Details and Submission Instructions

Dates and Events: The seminar will take place on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, April 12 – 14, 2018. In addition to the seminar sessions, there will be a public presentation by Gettysburg College Professor of Cinema and Media Studies, Jim Udden; a public keynote address delivered by Professor Kyle William Bishop from Southern Utah University; a Gettysburg College Student Panel, titled ‘The Social and Political Implications of the Zombie’; and a public film screening. To ensure the intimate collegiality of the event, we will accept no more than twelve participants to the seminar. For this reason, we ask that seminar participants plan to attend all associated events over the course of April 13 and 14, and you are more than welcome to attend Professor Udden’s public presentation on the evening of the 12th as well.

Format: To optimize intellectual enrichment, the primary format of the seminar will be discussion, as opposed to presentation. Accepted papers will be collected and distributed to seminar participants one week prior to the seminar, to allow a basic familiarity with the arguments in advance. The participant’s allotted time at the seminar will then be forty-five minutes, ten of which will be devoted to the presentation of key passages and elements of the argument. The remaining thirty-five minutes will be dedicated entirely to discussion. With this in mind, in preparing an abstract, participants should think in the direction of approximately 12-15 pages for their papers.

Travel and Costs: There is no registration fee for the seminar, and shuttle transportation to and from either Dulles airport in Washington, D.C. or BWI in Baltimore will be provided at no cost to seminar participants. In addition to light breakfasts, there will be light snacks, lunches, and dinners provided on the days of the seminar (April 13 & 14). As the events span the entirety of both days, participants traveling by air will want to plan to arrive on April 12 and depart on April 15, though we also encourage extending your stay should you wish to visit the battlefield or the Gettysburg National Cemetery. The GCPFS has blocked rooms at a conference rate, discounted for seminar participants, at the Gettysburg Hotel in the heart of downtown Gettysburg, just a few blocks from campus.

Please submit detailed abstracts of no more than 600 words, in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format, to the seminar director, Vernon Cisney, at vcisney@gmail.com, no later than January 7, 2018. Any questions may be so directed as well. In the abstract, please include title, author name and institutional affiliation, and contact information.
