

ThinkStrong Initiative

Alyssa Mathewson, staff writer

Critical thinking skills are a hallmark of Meredith graduates. The ThinkStrong initiative is trying to expand critical thinking into existing classes at the school, as well as using freshman seminars to get new, fresh ideas out into the education environment. ThinkStrong will bring more attention to co-curricular programs that have a focus on critical thinking and the language of thought.

“Meredith College has a commitment to teach and enhance critical thinking skills.”

ThinkStrong was originally known as PRISM, which stood for Purposeful Reasoning Inquiry Scholarship at Meredith. This critical thinking initiative was known primarily through its freshman seminars. When Meredith College rebranded, the initiative also rebranded and became ThinkStrong. Assistant Professor of Religious & Ethical Studies and Director of ThinkStrong, Dr. Steven Benko says critical thinking is, “deliberate, intentional thinking.” It uses the various elements of thought: point of view, purpose, question at issue, information, interpretation, inference, concepts, assumptions, implications and consequences. These elements are part of what Dr. Benko calls the “language of thinking.” Students should expect a bigger focus on critical thinking as a part of ThinkStrong’s initiative. The purpose is to teach students to be aware of how they are thinking through ideas, allowing them to figure out how to achieve their end goal.

Administrators of ThinkStrong, such as director Dr. Steven Benko would like to see the concepts

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of critical thinking in the presentation of research at CSA Day as well as in the activity of the research itself. Meredith College has a commitment to teach and enhance critical thinking skills – ThinkStrong is the representation of that commitment. Employers want to hire students with these skills of deliberate; they are in high demand. ThinkStrong wants to help Meredith students become more aware of how they go about achieving their goals. For more information on the program, contact Dr. Benko or Dean Gleason.

Meredith Course on Zombie Survival, Make it Out Alive

Anita Holliday, staff writer

It’s best to have a plan for any and everything, right? How about a zombie apocalypse? What would you do and how? What should you keep in mind? Sociology of Zombies is a summer course taught by Dr. Lori Brown, the Program Coordinator of Sociology at Meredith College. The course uses two seasons of *The Walking Dead*, the novels *World War Z* and *I Am Legend* as references along with a “how-to” survival guide.

Brown instructs the course with a heavy emphasis on the sociology aspect of a zombie takeover. Themes such as gender roles, structure of society, group dynamics and government response are some of many factors that are considered. “The course uses things from the show and real life, focuses on gender issues, who should be in charge, age becoming a factor, disability, mental and physical strength. Who’s going to be left behind? Where would you go for safety? By the end, how would we start a new world?” said Brown.

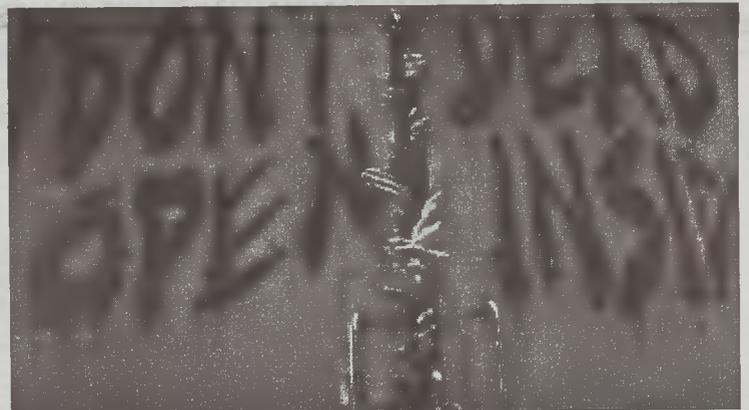
With numerous dynamics of

thinking about the sociology of a zombie takeover, the question on how long people can go on fighting is dependent on a number of things. “What are ethics in the world of survival?” said Brown.

Government response may not be as strong as it once was. Brown specified on the government presence topic and noted how much people rely on the government. “When the government is not there you are on your own. We have gotten used to the idea that we are taken care of,” said Brown. “We may not realize how much we should be prepared to take care of ourselves.”

A fan herself of *The Walking Dead*, Brown enjoys teaching the course and calls it “the most fun class she has ever taught.” Brown started up the course herself from watching *The Walking Dead* and became fascinated in observing how the program could be looked at as something more than just a show. “Best part about this is the people who are often at the bottom of the society become the heroes” said Brown.

Senior Swannatha Smith took the course last summer and enjoyed the open discussions and scenarios



via geeksfordoom.com

that were incorporated. “I feel like if a zombie apocalypse were to happen, I would have an idea on what to do, what to look for and how to survive,” said Smith.

Smith who became a fan of the *Walking Dead* after taking the course, recommends those who show even the slightest interest on the topic to take it. “The course is really interesting and will help with logic and problem-solving while also teaching you the val-

ues of teamwork and leadership,” said Smith.

Sociology of Zombies will be offered this summer as a six-week online/hybrid course. This summer marks the second time the course is offered since starting last summer. Registration for summer and fall 2014 semesters begin April 7, 2014.

“What are ethics in the world of survival?”

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