Cold War Cultural Language
Transference into Modern Media: Fallout 3

Student: Kyle Sitka
Advisor: Dr. Randi Cox

Findings:

The comparison of Cold War era language from the sources and Fallout revealed that traditional American concepts like Continuity of Government, Premillenialist religious thought linking God to nuclear war, post-apocalyptic survival stories, fallout shelters, and Cold War Iconography resurface, with slight modifications, in the Fallout universe. However, rather than be primarily terrifying these concepts are rendered darkly humorous by the phenomenon of “camp”.

Method:
The research phase of the project consisted mainly of analysis of primary and secondary sources that explained how the unique language of the Cold War arose. The next step was a comparison of that cultural language with its counterpart in the video-game Fallout 3.

Application:
The language of the Cold War was born of the fear endemic of the times, and offered people ways of dealing with that fear. Eventually people realized the futility of nuclear war and began to see the whole idea as foolish, at which point use of associated cultural language became campy. Because of this, imagery that once inspired only dread can today be used as entertainment in popular media.