

Carleton University  
Fall 2014  
Department of English

**ENGL 2107A: Science Fiction**  
*Science and Literature: The Importance of Science Fiction*

*M W 10:05 – 11:25*

*Location: Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

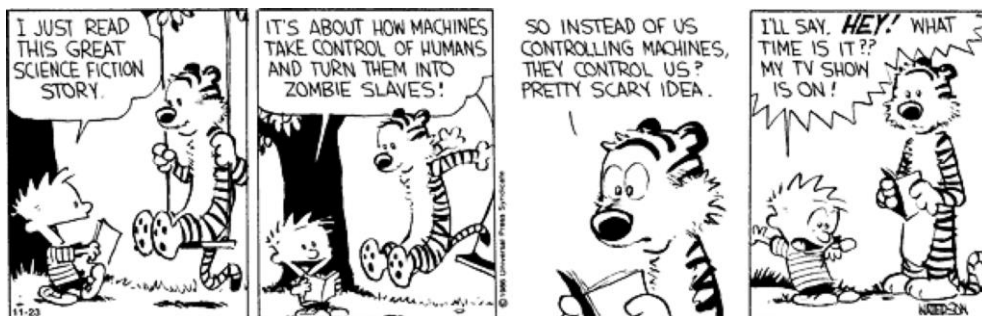
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*Office Hours: TBD and by appointment*

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

*"As we learn about each other, so we learn about ourselves."*  
- Dr. Who

*"You will be Absorbed. Your individuality will merge into the unity of Good. And in your submergence into the common being of the Body, you will find contentment and fulfillment. You will experience the Absolute Good."*  
- Landru

*"Human beings never think for themselves, they find it too uncomfortable. For the most part, members of our species simply repeat what they are told – and become upset if they are exposed to any different view. We are stubborn, self-destructive conformists. Any other view of our species is just a self-congratulatory delusion."*  
- Michael Crichton, *The Lost World*



Are we self-destructive conformists? Has our natural curiosity about the world and about ourselves been beaten down through a systematic, mind-numbing, technologically-driven (educational) paradigm? Or should we just resign ourselves to the “Force” or the “will of Landru” and give up our personal responsibility entirely?

This genre-specific course will focus on the roots, development, and allegory of science fiction literature, and then we'll apply these to contemporary issues. We will explore the relationship between scientific concepts and the arts, and progress through to our (sometimes) uneasy relationship with technology. As we consider our psychological attraction to speculative fiction, we will examine a number of issues in contemporary culture, specifically: our fascination with the “god complex”, the juxtaposition of hope and danger in the possibility of other worlds, postmodernism, our contemporary, social media-driven culture, politics and power, and ultimately what it means to be human.

Speculative (or science) fiction gives us special insight into making sense of the world in our everyday lives. Science fiction can uncover the ways ideology, narrative, and epistemology function on a day-to-day basis. As a result, we will be taking science fiction literature seriously and will consequently be dealing with a number of "human" issues that concern us in our contemporary culture.

This course will be taught through a combination of media-driven lectures, dialogic journaling, and class discussions in a format that provides you with an opportunity to work specifically with primary materials, introduces you to relevant collections and archives, and facilitates the development of critical thinking skills. To that end, you will be expected to prepare fully for each class by reading the required texts, preparing discussion questions, and participating (dialogically) in the discussions.

***Please note... this course has a heavy reading load along with weekly journaling assignments.***

Some of the questions informing the structure of this course include:

- How did (and how does) the rise in science and technology impact on romanticism and faith?
- How does the role of science in society subsequently inform the evolution of human identity?
- In what ways does a logical, “scientific” approach to understanding our world allow us to critically evaluate the nature of human beings?
- Can science, and by extension science fiction, solve our social problems?
- How do we reconcile ourselves to the monster within?

Since many of the course requirements are initiated, refined, or completed in class, full attendance and participation are expected.

Not sure this course is for you? Check out the unabridged feedback from your peers at the end of this outline.

## PRIMARY READINGS

*Please note: I expect you to have the texts entirely read on the first day we discuss them. The emphasis in this course is on the discussion of ideas, and in order to do that effectively, you must have actively read the texts.*

### Books

*The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*

[Arthur B. Evans](#) (Editor), [Istvan Csicsery-Ronay](#) (Editor), [Joan Gordon](#) (Editor), [Veronica Hollinger](#) (Editor), [Rob Latham](#) (Editor)

*The Science Fiction Hall of Fame, Vol. 1: 1929-1964*

Robert Silverberg (Editor)

*Black No More: A Novel*

George Schuyler

*Slaughterhouse Five*

Kurt Vonnegut

These texts should be available through the Bookstore or through Chapters. You may also be able to find some of the early individual stories on line.

All other stories and articles may be found on line or on CULearn. Please see the Weekly Breakdown for details.

## REFERENCES

The following texts are not mandatory reading; however, you may find them useful if you want to go deeply into the subject. Note they are really expensive!

The Road to Science Fiction; From Gilgamesh to Wells, 2002 (Scarecrow)

The Road to Science Fiction #2: From Wells to Heinlein, 2002 (Scarecrow)

The Road to Science Fiction #3: From Heinlein to Here, 2002 (Scarecrow)

The Road to Science Fiction #4: From Here to Forever, 2003 (Scarecrow)

The Road to Science Fiction #5: The British Way, 1998 (White Wolf)

The Road to Science Fiction #6: Around the World, 1998 (White Wolf)

A Short Guide to Writing About Literature (Canadian edition)      Sylvan Barnet

Dictionary of Literary Terms      Abrams

Fit to Print: The Canadian Student's Guide to Essay Writing (seventh edition)      Buckley

## ASSIGNMENTS

There are weekly assignments for your dialogic journal – a journal in which you will write your thoughts, questions, analysis and comments about texts we are reading along with specific

questions that I will be asking. Your journals are to be handed in electronically each week... yes, I said each week... and this work is worth 40% of your final mark in the course.

In addition to the weekly journal, there is one term assignment where you will have an option between writing an academic essay or doing something creative.

### **ATTENDANCE / PARTICIPATION**

You are expected to attend every class and to actively participate in the discussions. Participation includes: bringing the text to class, having read the assigned pages, and contributing to the discussion either by offering ideas or comments, or by listening attentively.

### **FINAL EXAMINATION**

There is a final examination for this course. It will comprise two sections: multiple choice / short answer, and an essay. The material on the exam will be drawn from the lecture material, readings, and class discussions.

### **METHOD OF EVALUATION**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Dialogic Journal	A weekly journal comprising your thoughts, responses, comments etc about the texts or class material that we encounter	Varies	40%	To be handed in electronically each week
Random Quizzes	Up to 10 quizzes, given weekly in class. Your best 9 results only will be counted.	10 quizzes	10%	Weekly, almost.
Mid Term Test	Multiple Choice / short answer covering lecture material to this point.	In class	10%	Oct 15
Term Assignment	Option (A) Essay – an original analysis and argument of some aspect of an assigned text. OR Option (B) Creative Project - a short story revealing substantial understanding of the science fiction genre.	(A) 1500 words (B) 2500 words	15%	Nov 24
Final Exam*	Covers all material from the course. In two parts: (1) Multiple choice / short answer; (2) Essay.	3 hrs.	25%	TBA

Further instructions regarding the dialogic journal, quizzes and term assignment will be provided in class.

**\*The final exam and airplane ticket bookings:** The mid-term exam period is from December 10 – 21, 2014. Since the Registrar’s Office does not set exam dates until well into the term, you must plan to be available throughout the entire examination periods. Do not purchase plane

tickets or plan vacations with departure dates prior to the end of each exam period. Exams will not be rescheduled for students who take on other commitments during the exam period.

## **COURSE PROCEDURES, GRADES, AND GRADING**

**Basic Preparation:** As a matter of course you are expected to: (1) attend all lectures, (2) complete the scheduled readings beforehand, (3) arrive prepared to discuss what you have read, (4) bring the relevant text(s) to class and (5) bring your journals with you, either to add notes as we go along or to use to contribute to the conversation.

**Handing In Assignments:** Weekly dialogic journals are to be handed in electronically to me via CULearn each week. Dates and times to be discussed in class. Any journal that is not submitted by the due date/time will be considered late. It is the students' responsibility to become familiar with any dates/regulations which may take precedence over any course outline.

**Late Assignments / Extensions:** Do not ask for extensions without a medical certificate. If your work is handed in late, so be it. As such, you already have an automatic extension with consequences. For the *weekly journal*, I will note the lateness and this will factor in to your mark for this part of the course. For each day that your *term assignment* is late – including weekends – I will automatically deduct 2% .

**Grading Criteria:** Grades for term work will be based on insightfulness, originality, focus, organization of ideas, clarity of expression, scholarly rigor, correct use of MLA style, spelling, and grammar.

### **Grade Scale:**

<b>Letter</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>GPA</b>
A+	90-100	12
A	85-89	11
A-	80-84	10
B+	77-79	9
B	73-76	8
B-	70-72	7
C+	67-69	6
C	63-66	5
C-	60-62	4
D+	57-59	3
D	53-56	2
D-	50-52	1
F	0-49	0

### **Plagiarism:**

The University Senate defines **plagiarism** as **presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or the work of others as one's own.**

This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else
- using ideas, quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts or ideas without appropriate acknowledgement in an essay or assignment
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works, and/or failing to use quotation marks
- handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, suspension from a program, suspension from the university, or even expulsion from the university. See the Section on Academic Integrity in the Student Conduct Portion of the Undergraduate Calendar.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide

[http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student\\_guide.htm](http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student_guide.htm)

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide

[http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student\\_guide.htm](http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student_guide.htm)

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting

accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable). [http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student\\_guide.htm](http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student_guide.htm)

## ENGL 2107A DRAFT Weekly Breakdown

The following outlines the general chronology of the course to give you an idea of how we will cover the material. Depending on class discussion and other factors, there may be a minor discrepancy in relation to the weeks.

### Fall Term

*Please note this is a draft outline and may be modified.*

Date	Topic
Sept. 8	Introduction to the course; review outline; discuss requirements of the weekly Dialogic Journal and on-line quizzes; Film (in-class): Star Trek "Where No Man Has Gone Before" 1967. The script may be found here <a href="http://www.chakoteya.net/startrek/2.htm">http://www.chakoteya.net/startrek/2.htm</a>
Sept. 10	Science Fiction Roots: Proto Science Fiction (pre 19 <sup>th</sup> C); Imaginary Landscapes. Utopias/Dystopias; Alien visitors/observers; Towards a Definition for Science Fiction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "The Literature of Change" <a href="http://www.ou.edu/worldlit/onlinemagazine/2010may/mckitterick.html">http://www.ou.edu/worldlit/onlinemagazine/2010may/mckitterick.html</a></li> <li>- Lucian of Samosata. From "A True Story" (AD 165) <a href="http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/luc/true/index.htm">http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/luc/true/index.htm</a></li> <li>- Excerpt from Margaret Cavendish from "A New World Called the Blazing World" (1666) WebCT</li> </ul>
Sept 15	Proto Science Fiction (pre 19 <sup>th</sup> C) continued; discussion of term assignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ludvig Holberg. From "The Journey of Neil Klims to the World Underground" (1741) <a href="http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/2/7/8/8/27884/27884-8.txt">http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/2/7/8/8/27884/27884-8.txt</a></li> <li>- Voltaire, "Micromegas: A Comic Romance" (1752) <a href="http://www.gutenberg.org/files/30123/30123-h/30123-h.htm">http://www.gutenberg.org/files/30123/30123-h/30123-h.htm</a></li> <li>- Voltaire, "Plato's Dream" (1756): <a href="http://wondersmith.com/scifi/plato.htm">http://wondersmith.com/scifi/plato.htm</a></li> </ul>
Sept 17	Early 19 <sup>th</sup> C Science Fiction. The Creature, the "resisting monster," the "Mad Scientist," arctic landscapes, doppelgangers, mesmerism, immortality and other themes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "The Mortal Immortal" Mary Shelley <a href="http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/mws/immortal/mortal.html">http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/mws/immortal/mortal.html</a></li> <li>- "Frankenstein" (1831 ed.) Mary Shelley read the Preface and ch 1 – 5 <a href="http://www.literature.org/authors/shelley-mary/frankenstein/index.html">http://www.literature.org/authors/shelley-mary/frankenstein/index.html</a></li> </ul>
Sept 22	Early 19 <sup>th</sup> C Science Fiction continued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Mesmeric Revelation" Edgar Allen Poe <a href="http://poestories.com/stories.php">http://poestories.com/stories.php</a></li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "From Man's Rights or How Would You Like It?" Annie Denton Cridge read Dreams 1, 2 and 5 <a href="http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/cridge/rights/rights.html">http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/cridge/rights/rights.html</a></li> </ul>
Sept 24	<p>19<sup>th</sup> C Science Fiction: Invention, science, "mad scientists," curiosity, underground worlds, magnetism, prehistoric survivors, time travel, earth's future, end of the world, entropy, defiance of mortality/aging, undersea worlds, misleading paradises, jungle landscapes, desert landscapes, futuristic visions, scientist as savior and other themes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Rappaccini's Daughter" Hawthorne in Wesleyan</li> <li>- excerpt from "Journey to the Centre of the Earth" Verne in Wesleyan</li> </ul>
Sept 29	<p>19<sup>th</sup> C Science Fiction continued; How to read Science Fiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "The Protocols of Science Fiction" <a href="http://www.sfcenter.ku.edu/protocol.htm">http://www.sfcenter.ku.edu/protocol.htm</a></li> <li>- "The Science Fiction Sentence" <a href="http://www.sfcenter.ku.edu/SF-Lit/SF-sentence.htm">http://www.sfcenter.ku.edu/SF-Lit/SF-sentence.htm</a></li> <li>- "The Book of Jonah" in CULearn (yes, THAT Jonah...)</li> <li>- "The Star" Wells in Wesleyan</li> </ul>
Oct 1	<p>1900-1929. Scientific Concepts and the Arts; more social criticism; the robot is born, space opera and other themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "The Ray of Displacement" Prescott <a href="http://gaslight.mtroyal.ca/raydispl.htm">http://gaslight.mtroyal.ca/raydispl.htm</a></li> <li>- "Sultana's Dream" Hossein <a href="http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/sultana/dream/dream.html">http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/sultana/dream/dream.html</a></li> <li>- excerpt from "The Princess of Mars" Burroughs Chaps. XIII, XIX, and XX <a href="http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~rgs/pmars-table.html">http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~rgs/pmars-table.html</a></li> </ul>
Oct 6	<p>1900 – 1929 continued: technology out of control! Loss of humanity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "R. U. R." Capek <a href="http://preprints.readingroo.ms/RUR/rur.pdf">http://preprints.readingroo.ms/RUR/rur.pdf</a></li> <li>- "The Machine Stops" Forster in Wesleyan</li> </ul>
Oct 8	<p>1930s More End of the World! Robots running amok!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Helen O'Loy" del Ray in Silverberg</li> <li>- "Shambleau" Moore in Wesleyan</li> </ul>
<b>Oct 13</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday – no class</b>
Oct 15	<p>1930s continued; Satire in Science Fiction; addressing racism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Black No More</i> Schuyler</li> </ul> <p><b>Mid-term test. In class.</b></p>
Oct 20	<p>1930s continued; Satire in Science Fiction; addressing racism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Black No More</i> Schuyler</li> </ul>
Oct 22	<p>1940s. Golden Age; Robots, nuclear hazard, war, Earth's future, religion, longevity, curiosity, feminist sf, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Nightfall" Asimov in Silverberg</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "The Weapon Shop" Vogt in Silverberg</li> <li>- "Arena" Brown in Silverberg</li> </ul>
<b>Oct 27 – 31</b>	<p><b>Fall Break – no classes</b> Please use this time to read ahead as much as possible, and to work on your term assignment</p>
Nov 3	<p>1940s continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "That Only a Mother" Merrill in Silverberg</li> <li>- "Desertion" Simak in Wesleyan</li> </ul>
Nov 5	<p>1950s. Space exploration, alien worlds, colonization, alien invasion, "mad scientists," genetic engineering, androids, robots, psychodrama, cultural conflict, alternative energy sources, feminist science fiction, alien possession of human bodies, interplanetary communication, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "All Summer in a Day" Bradbury on CULearn;</li> <li>- "The Nine Billion Names of God" Clarke in Silverberg</li> </ul>
Nov 10	<p>1950s continued; Narcissist Personality Disorder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "It's a Good Life" Bixby in Silverberg</li> <li>- "Flowers for Algernon" Keyes in Silverberg</li> </ul>
Nov 12	<p>Science Fiction of the 1960s. Language, multiple species, apocalyptic science fiction, cold wars and hot wars, entropy, feminist science fiction, cultural conflict, gender benders, federated planets, exploration/colonization, near futures, far futures, intelligent apes, sentient planets, sentient ships, anti-intellectual humans, comic gods, robots, super smart children, androids, intergalactic communication, exploration/colonization, winter landscape and other themes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "The First Men" Howard Fast <a href="http://www.trussel.com/hf/firstmen.htm">http://www.trussel.com/hf/firstmen.htm</a></li> <li>- "Aye, and Gommorah..." Delany in Wesleyan</li> </ul>
Nov 17	<p>Science Fiction of the 1960s continued; Bakhtin's Carnavalesque</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" Ellison in Wesleyan</li> </ul>
Nov 19	<p>Science fiction of the 1970s. Feminist science fiction, hard SF, future worlds, class/cultural conflict, disease, healing, overpopulation, alien invasion, misleading paradises, androids, mutations, alternative families, technological warfare, and other themes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "When it Changed" Russ in Wesleyan</li> <li>- "And I Awoke and Found Me Here On the Cold Hill Side" Tiptree, Jr. in Wesleyan</li> </ul>
Nov 24	<p>Metafictional Science fiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Slaughterhouse Five</i> Vonnegut</li> </ul> <p><b>Term Assignment due</b></p>
Nov 26	<p>Metafictional Science fiction continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Slaughterhouse Five</i> Vonnegut</li> </ul>

Dec 1	<p>Science Fiction of the 1980s. Alien species (friendly and otherwise), earth's future, dystopias, disease, doppelgangers, androids, arctic landscapes, feminist SF, spatial anomalies, time anomalies, longevity, genetic engineering, cultural conflict, cyberpunk, gritty, violent worlds, technological warfare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Computer Friendly" Gunn in Wesleyan</li> </ul>
Dec 3	<p>Science Fiction of the 1990s; Cyborgs, android, time travel, time quakes, probability, megalopolis, the supercorporation, cyberpunk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Closer" Egan in Wesleyan</li> <li>- "Think Like a Dinosaur" Kelly in Wesleyan</li> </ul>
Dec 8	<p>Science Fiction of the twenty-first century. What's New? Where are we heading? Review for the exam.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Exhalation" in Wesleyan</li> </ul>