

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
Winter 2012
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ENGL 2107 B
SCIENCE FICTION

Location: Loeb Building A720
Mondays 18:00 - 21:00 (6:00 - 9:00 pm)

Instructor: Miles Tittle
Office: **DT 1903**
Email: **mctittle@connect.carleton.ca**
Office hours: by appointment

Course description:

This course explores the rise of science fiction as a genre from the Victorian thirst for progress and exploration that inspired H.G. Wells, Jules Verne, and Arthur Conan Doyle, to the American pulp heroes of the early 20th century, the Golden Age of Science Fiction of the 1930s-50s, the New Wave of the 60s and 70s, the rise of cyberpunk in the 1980s, and the current focus on environmental disaster.

Required Texts:

We will be using the following novels in our class, and they are available at the Carleton University Bookstore. If you own other editions, or find used copies, you'll have to juggle page numbers but it shouldn't be a great inconvenience otherwise.

1. Robert A. Heinlein, *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961)
2. Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979)
3. William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (1984)
4. Frank Miller, *Ronin* (graphic novel 1987)
5. Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (2003)

Secondary Material:

Several other works will be referred to and discussed in class. Some will be made available on-line or through hand-outs, and others will be shown in class. Lectures may touch on historical contexts and cultural phenomena such as *Dr. Who*, *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *Blade Runner*, *The Matrix*, manga & comics, UFO sightings, technoculture, genetic manipulation, apocalyptic anxiety, and postmodern philosophy.

Class structure:

The class will be a combination of lecture, discussion and group work, divided as necessary for the day's topics. Lectures will cover assigned readings, further works not found in the textbooks, biographical information, and cultural and historical context.

Evaluation:

1.	Assignment 1: Short Analysis	15%	Jan 30
2.	Assignment 2: In-Class Midterm <i>1 hour</i>	15%	Feb 13
3.	Assignment 3: Major Essay	30%	Mar 26
4.	Final Exam: <i>3 hours</i>	30%	TBA
5.	Attendance & Participation	10%	<i>throughout</i>

**** Please note:** *Students must complete all assignments in order to be eligible to write the final exam, and students must write the final exam in order to pass the course. There can be no exceptions to these requirements.*

Assignment due dates:

Assignments done out of class must be handed in to the instructor at the beginning of class on the scheduled due date. Marks will be deducted at a rate of **5% per day**, including weekends and holidays, for any late assignment submitted without a medical certificate or equivalent official excuse. After one week, the instructor is under no obligation to accept late assignments. All assignments must be submitted before the final exam date, or the student will not be allowed to write the final exam, or pass the course.

Late assignments must be delivered directly to the instructor. The English Department office does not accept late assignments on behalf of teachers, and the instructor does not accept late assignments under his office door. Late submissions by email **may** be accepted in unusual circumstances at the instructor's discretion, but a hard copy must also be submitted as soon as possible. Carleton requires that students use their MyCarleton (connect.carleton.ca) email address for University correspondence.

Reading

Reading some of the texts, especially longer works like *Stranger in a Strange Land* or *Oryx & Crake*, before classes begin is a very good strategy. If you have time, buy your books early, settle in and read them at a comfortable pace in the evenings, the way they were meant to be experienced.

Attendance policy:

Regular class attendance is essential. Active, thoughtful participation in lectures and workshops helps ensure success in the course. Please note that in-class tasks cannot be made up outside of class except in case of an absence covered by a medical certificate or equivalent official excuse. Some of the questions on tests could come from topics explained in lectures but not found in the texts.

Academic fraud (plagiarism):

Students are strongly urged to familiarize themselves with the rules concerning academic fraud.

The Carleton Academic Integrity Policy is available on campus and also on the Web at:

http://www1.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/ccms/wp-content/ccms-files/academic_integrity_policy.pdf

It is always the student's responsibility to practice academic diligence and to properly cite all sources.

The consequences of academic fraud are extremely serious, and could jeopardize your academic future.

SCHEDULE

# (Date)	Topics	Readings to be done <i>before</i> each class
<i>Roots of Science Fiction</i>		
1. Jan 9	Course introduction & syllabus Cyrano de Bergerac's <i>A Voyage to the Moon</i> (1656), Mary Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> (1818), H.G. Wells (1866-1946), Jules Verne (1828-1905).	
<i>American Pulp & the Golden Age</i>		
2. Jan 16	Victor Appleton's <i>Tom Swift</i> (1910), Edgar Rice Burroughs's <i>John Carter of Mars</i> (1912), Philip Nowlan's <i>Buck Rogers</i> (1928), Alex Raymond's <i>Flash Gordon</i> (1934).	
<i>The Big Three</i>		
3. Jan 23	Robert A. Heinlein (1907-88). <i>Stranger in a Strange Land</i> (1961). The Big Three: Asimov, Clarke, & Heinlein. The Other passes judgment.	
<i>Libertarianism & Preachers</i>		
4. Jan 30	Robert A. Heinlein (1907-88). <i>Stranger in a Strange Land</i> (1961). Heinlein vs. the New Wave. Individualism, Libertarianism, and Grokking. *Assignment 1: Short Analysis Due (15%)*	
<i>Space-Opera Parodies</i>		
5. Feb 6	Douglas Adams (1952-2001). <i>The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy</i> (1978). British Sci-Fi, <i>Dr. Who</i> (1963-), <i>Space: 1999</i> (1975-77)	
<i>The Other Big Three</i>		
6. Feb 13	*MIDTERM (60 min—15%)* The franchises: <i>Star Trek</i> (1966-), <i>Star Wars</i> (1977-), <i>Battlestar Galactica</i> (1978-).	
STUDY BREAK February 18-26. No classes, but a very good time to read ahead.		
<i>Cyberpunk</i>		
7. Feb 27	William Gibson (1948-). <i>Neuromancer</i> (1984). Cyberpunk, <i>Bladerunner</i> (1982) Virtual reality, digital identities.	
<i>Virtual Reality</i>		
8. March 5	William Gibson (1948-). <i>Neuromancer</i> (1984). <i>The Matrix</i> (1999).	
<i>Swords & A.I.</i>		
9. March 12	Frank Miller (1957-). <i>Ronin</i> (comic series 1983-84, graphic novel 1987. Artificial intelligence, manga, dystopias.	
<i>Superheroes Old & New</i>		
10. March 19	Frank Miller (1957-). <i>Ronin</i> (comic series 1983-84, graphic novel 1987). Comics and Science Fiction, <i>Gladiator</i> (1930), Superman (1938).	
<i>Playing God</i>		
11. March 26	Margaret Atwood (1939-). <i>Oryx and Crake</i> (2003) Speculative fiction, genetic engineering. Final Essay due (30%)	

12. April 2 Margaret Atwood (1939-). *Oryx and Crake* (2003). *The Year of the Flood* (2009).
The future of science fiction, new media, new technology.

Exam Period	•	Final exam	(30%)
		<i>Date to be announced (April 11-24)</i>	

Always remember to bring your books with you to class.

Classes will usually be split, with a 15-min break around 7:30 pm separating the lecture and discussion group components. During discussion we will introduce other secondary and critical works to give you a greater range of possible topics for your assignments. Any changes to the schedule will be announced ahead of time. The second half may sometimes be used for screening of a movie or television adaptation of relevant work.

Safety: This class goes till 9:00 Wednesday evenings. Please be alert walking home, and be aware that trouble can easily occur at 8:30pm on campus or off. Carleton Campus Safety is at 203 Robertson Hall. *Foot patrol:* Campus Safe-Walk/Escort Service: 613 520-2600 ext. 4066
You can also arrange for a team to meet you outside your class every week.
<http://carleton.ca/university-safety/>

Marking: Carleton University uses the following 12-point grading scale (*Percentage Grade/Letter Grade/Number Grade*):

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

Note that 50% is the pass mark, so an F is a failing grade. Essays are generally marked for Content (30%), Organization (30%), Language (30%), and Handling (10%).

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and 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.

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by Nov. 11, 2011 for the Fall term and March 7, 2012 for the Winter term.

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>.

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance.

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

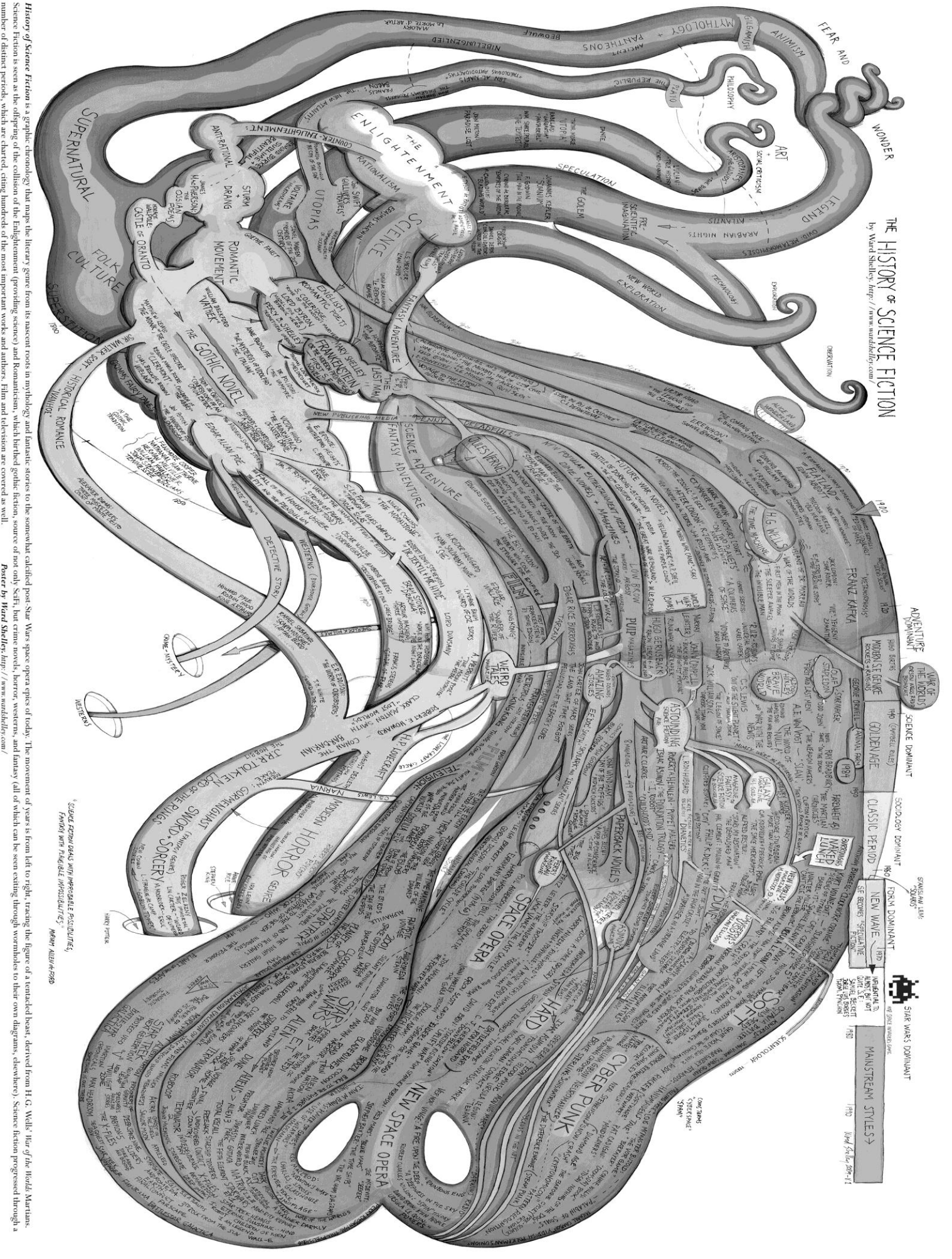
- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- 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 serious offence which 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 include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.



THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION

by Ward Shelley, <http://www.worldshelley.com/>



History of Science Fiction is a graphic chronology that maps the literary genre from its nascent roots in mythology, and fantastic stories to the somewhat calcified post-Star Wars space opera epics of today. The movement of years is from left to right, tracing the figure of a tentacle-like beast, derived from H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*. Science Fiction is seen as the offspring of the Enlightenment (providing science) and Romanticism, which birthed gothic fiction, source of not only Sci-Fi, but crime, westerns, horror, westerns, and fantasy (all of which can be seen existing through wormholes to their own diagrams, elsewhere). Science Fiction progressed through a number of distinct periods, which are charted, citing hundreds of the most important works and authors. Film and television are covered as well.

Poster by Ward Shelley, <http://www.worldshelley.com/>

*SCIENCE FICTION DEALS WITH IMPOSSIBLE PROBABILITIES,
FANTASY WITH PROBABLE IMPOSSIBILITIES*

MARVIN ALLEN/ARTSTOCK