Instructor Information

Instructor: Shelly Galliah
Office Location: Walker 332
E-mail: sagallia@mtu.edu
Office Hours: TBA

Course Identification

Course Number: HU3554 R01
Course Name: Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature
Course Location: Fisher Hall 231
Class Times: MTWR 11:05am - 12:20 pm

Course Description/Overview

A FEW DEFINITIONS TO PROVIDE CONTEXT:

Speculative fiction, a term first used by Robert A. Heinlein (of Stranger in a Strange Land) in 1947, encompasses various genres that “speculate” about imagined worlds, such as fantasy, science fiction, magic realism, horror fiction, and supernatural fiction. The branch of speculative fiction that is our focus is science fiction. Though not formally identified as a genre until the 1940s, science fiction may include one or more of the following elements:

- Future setting, alternative time line, or an historical past that contradicts the facts
- Location in another world or outer space
- Political systems/social structures that are often frightening extensions of current ones
- Situations in which technology is running amuck and/or taking over
- Visions of apocalypse or of post-apocalyptic worlds, with either society’s collapse or its new organization, whether better or worse than what was replaced
- Use of new scientific technology or futuristic pseudo-technology
- Scientific principles that are new or that contradict known laws of nature, such as time travel, wormholes, or faster-than-light travel.
- Characters who cross boundaries, such as aliens, mutants, androids, animal-human hybrids, or humanoid robots.
- Characters with paranormal abilities, such as mind control, telepathy, telekinesis, and teleportation.
- Characters who are mad scientists and/or evil geniuses
As well, sci-fi itself can be divided into sub-genres, such as time travel, alternate history, apocalyptic, space opera, space western, and military sci-fi, just to name a few. And sci-fi, in general, can also be labeled as “hard” or “soft.” Hard sci-fi, which is/was often written by working scientists such as Asimov, Clark, and Sagan, can be very thorough and detailed in its treatment of scientific principles, such as astronomy, chemistry, and physics. Soft sci-fi, often far more playful in its use of science, is also more concerned with biology and the social sciences, such as economics, political science, sociology, and anthropology. The situation becomes even more complicated when we see that many of the more respected sci-fi texts were written by authors (Bradbury, Huxley, Atwood) who were experimenting in the genre.

As you can see, deciding what science fiction texts to cover and identifying science fiction as a genre AT ALL are extremely difficult tasks; in fact, I could teach this course for four straight years and still feel that I haven’t scratched the surface of this wondrous world of literature.

For the most part, American soft sci-fi, and sci-fi that crosses genres, will be our main focus. Furthermore, we will be concentrate on a few main issues and themes, such as the depiction of dystopian worlds, artificial intelligence, technology’s effects on our humanity and the environment, and the possibility of technological singularity. Science fiction texts often take risks, so we will also focus on their messages or how certain texts critically comment on our world. Instead of respecting chronology, we will read older and newer texts that focus on selected problems and themes.

To get a sense of sci-fi’s breadth, we will study a number of classic stories along with the introduction to a dystopian novel, an early version of a famous novella, a surreal sci-fi novel, a young-adult novel, a popular techno-thriller, a comic sci-fi movie, and a techno-thriller film.

**Course Learning Objectives**

- Reading a number of texts that offer a sampling of science fiction
- Viewing and analyzing a few related sci-fi films
- Understanding and applying some terminology relevant to literary analysis
- Exploring a few strategies for reading and writing about these texts and films
- Analyzing the cultural, social, and political commentary of various science fiction texts
- Debating what these texts say about the possibilities and limitations of science
- Composing various kinds of writing assignments
- Paying attention to content, structure, clarity, grammar, and mechanics in all informal and formal writing assignments

**Course Website & Other Resources**

- Sign in to Canvas at [http://mtu.instructure.com](http://mtu.instructure.com) Next, choose HU 3554 from your list of courses. Here, you will find the following:
  - The Syllabus
  - Copies of assignments (when they are created)
  - Links to various texts (under modules) and other materials.

- I check my email daily **Sunday night through Thursday**. If you have questions, you can reach me through the course website OR at sagallia@mtu.edu

- **Other Resources**
  - MTU Library: [http://www.mtu.edu/library/](http://www.mtu.edu/library/)
  - Purdue Owl Website: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/)
Required Course Texts to Purchase: Please Buy These Exact Editions


Dick, Philip K. *Selected Stories of Philip K. Dick*. Kindle edition. ($7.69)
http://www.amazon.com/Selected-Stories-Philip-K-Dick
(A few stories from this text will be discussed in class; you may also be reading through these texts for the first major assignment: the comparative essay.)

Other Required Reading

Other required texts will be distributed as handouts or provided as links (electronic texts to be read [or listened to if that is your preference] online.)

Required In and Out of Class Viewing

*Blade Runner*. Dir. Ridley Scott. Perf. Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, and Sean Young. Warner Brothers, 1982. Film. (You will view and analyze this film at home, on your own time. You can find it on Netflix or watch it on Amazon.com, for a minor charge.)

*District 9*. Dir. Neill Blomkamp. Perf. Sharlto Copley, David James, and Jason Hope. TriStar Pictures, 2009. (We will watch at least some of this techno-thriller film in the last week of class after *Jurassic Park*.)

*Idiocracy*. Dir. Mike Judge. Perf. Owen Wilson, Maya Rudolph, Dax Shephard. Twentieth-Century Fox, 2006. Film. (We will watch this film in class and compare some of its themes and dangerous trends to those in *Feed*.)

Other filmic adaptation of Philip Dick story OR of a sci-fi novel.

Grading Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade points/credit</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% &amp; above</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>86% - 92.9%</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Very, very good to Superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80% - 85.9%</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Good to Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>74% - 79.9%</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>69% - 73.9%</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>64% - 68.9%</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>56% - 63.9%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>55% and below</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Failing Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete; given only when a student is unable to complete a segment of the course because of circumstances beyond the student’s control.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HU3554, Summer 2014, Track A, S. Galliah
Weighting of Course Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME &amp; TYPE OF ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #1: Three Blog Responses Accompanying Select Online Classes</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Various—Check Syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #2: Comparative Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>June 2, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #3: Persuasive Essay with Some Research (Optional Draft &amp; Final Copy)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>June 12, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>June 20, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #4: Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>June 27, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #5: Class Mark Components: Attendance, Class Participation, Pre-Class Activities (Check Canvas for Any Activities)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Policies

IN THIS CLASS, YOU ARE EXPECTED TO

- understand that this course, though it is a summer one, is still fairly rigorous; that is, you read and write a lot.
- put your phones away; texting is distracting not only to me but also to your classmates.
- attend most or all of the classes, arrive on time, and bring the relevant texts to class. If you must leave early, be as unobtrusive as possible. Attendance counts for 30% of your class mark.
- participate and be engaged. Meaningful contributions and any pre-class or in-class work count for 70% of your class grade.
- read deeply, take notes, and make connections between the texts. If I suspect you aren’t reading, I may have to institute pre-class work or in-class quizzes, so READ. Trust me, this stuff is fun -- this course has dinosaurs, robots, talking dogs, and Mars!
- complete the online/blended component of this course.
- watch a few short and long films outside of class time.
- sign in to Canvas and gmail a few times a week to check for any announcements, assignments, changes, and relevant links.
- leave your computer at home, unless we are doing online readings or activities. As a person who grew up with the evolution of computers and the internet (yes, I am THAT ancient), I know how distracting technology can be. Also, taking notes by hand actually helps you focus, enhances the learning of concepts, and strengthens your memory.
- contact me via email if you have questions; I check my email Sunday night through Thursday.
WHEN IT COMES TO FORMAL AND INFORMAL ASSIGNMENTS, YOU ARE EXPECTED TO

• read and think deeply, analyze texts and films, and conduct limited research.*
• write grammatically, spell correctly, use mechanics properly, and proofread thoroughly.
• use MLA format for all of your assignments.
• carefully cite all paraphrases, summaries, and quotes according to the standards and the editorial format of this course, which may differ from what you are used to.
• take advantage of any optional outlines and drafts that are due.
• follow instructions carefully and know that due dates vary (sometimes there are windows and/or assignments are due outside of class hours).
• realize that late assignments are penalized by 10% per calendar day, which includes weekends. If you cannot submit quality work, at least submit something for grading; a low grade is always better than NO grade.
• submit your own entirely new and original work and understand that plagiarism and cheating have serious academic consequences. The most common penalty for plagiarism is a 0 on the assignment. I will answer ALL questions about citing at ANY time.
• know that assignments submitted on time will usually be returned to you within one to two weeks.* Late assignments and revisions, however, may be returned later.

University Policies

Michigan Tech has standard policies on academic misconduct and complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For more information about reasonable accommodation for or equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office, at (906) 487-2212 or go to the following link:
http://www.mtu.edu/provost/faculty-resources/syllabus-policies/

Course Schedule: List of Readings and Assignments

IMPORTANT NOTE AND DISCLAIMER:

• Major assignments are on the outline; any in-class activities are not.
• This list of readings presents an ideal scenario. Although I will endeavor to stick to the outline as much as possible, I may add, remove, or substitute readings. I may bring short readings to class, and, depending on whether we are behind or ahead, I may even revise the outline if the pacing isn’t optimal.
• If you miss a class, please ask a classmate to retrieve any materials. Alternatively, check the course for any links or PDFs, which you can then print off yourself.
• You are encouraged to mark up your texts; however, if you are a LIGHT reader, and you want to return any short stories so that I can use them next year, please do so, for I am sure we’d all like to kill fewer trees.

MORE (OR LESS) HUMAN THAN HUMAN: ROBOTS, ANDROIDS, & AUTHOR STUDY (PKD)

(Note: If you have time to read a third story, read “Liar” (1941))
LIST OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS CONTINUED

**Wed, May 14:** Readings from Previous Day (if necessary) PLUS
Brian Aldiss, “Super-Toys Last All Summer Long” (1969)
http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/5.01/ffsupertoys_pr.html

**Thurs, May 15:** Intro to Philip K. Dick: A Few Selected Short Stories
“We Can Remember it For You Wholesale” PLUS
Other stories of your choosing
**ONLINE CLASS:** ASSIGNMENT 1A: FIRST BLOG DUE BY SATURDAY, MAY 17, NOON -- SEE CANVAS FOR MORE DETAILS

**Mon, May 19:** Philip K. Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? (read first 1/3 at least)

**Tues, May 20:** Philip K. Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

**Wed, May 21:** Philip K. Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

**Thurs, May 22:** Philip K. Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? (Finishing the novel and comparing the film to the text.)

**REQUIRED VIEWING:** Before Thurs, May 22, at home, students must watch most, if not all, of Blade Runner (1982).
Here’s one place to access BR: http://www.amazon.com/Blade-Runner-Final-Harrison-Ford/dp/B0012PDVQ2/ref=sr_1_1?s=movies-tv&ie=UTF8&qid=1394825654&sr=1-1&keywords=blade+runner

**Mon, May 26:** Memorial Day -- No Class
PS: I will still be checking my email on this day.

**MESSED-UP WORLDS: SOME CLASSIC DYSTOPIAS**

**Tues, May 27:** First chapters from Brave New World (1931) by Aldous Huxley (handout)
Also at www.idph.com.br/conteudos/ebooks/BraveNewWorld.pdf

**ASSIGNMENT 2A:** OPTIONAL OUTLINE OR VERY PARTIAL DRAFT OF COMPARE AND CONTRAST ESSAY DUE IN CLASS TODAY

**Wed, May 28:** Kurt Vonnegut, “Harrison Bergeron” (1961) (handout)
Harlan Ellison, “Repent, Said the Ticktockman, Repent” (1965)
(handout)

**Thurs, May 29:** Ray Bradbury, “The Fireman” (1951) OR other text
https://archive.org/details/galaxymagazine-1951-02

**ONLINE CLASS:** ASSIGNMENT 1B: SECOND BLOG DUE -- SEE CANVAS FOR MORE DETAILS

**IMPROVED (OR MESSED-UP) HUMANS: EVOLUTIONS & ARTIFICIAL (UN)INTELLIGENCE**

**Mon, June 2:** Ray Kurzweil, “Are We Headed for The Matrix” (2003)(handout)
Selected scenes from Transcendant Man

**ASSIGNMENT 2B:** FINAL COPY OF COMPARE AND CONTRAST ESSAY DUE TODAY
LIST OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS CONTINUED (I MAY BRING IN/ASSIGN SHORT TEXTS TO READ ALONG WITH FEED.)

Tues, June 3: MT Anderson, *Feed* (2003) (Read through the first section, at least.)

Wed, June 4: MT Anderson, *Feed*

NOTE: This is a VERY dense story. Have coffee ready.

**ONLINE CLASS: ASSIGNMENT 1C: THIRD BLOG DUE -- SEE CANVAS FOR MORE DETAILS**

Mon, June 9: MT Anderson, *Feed*

Tues, June 10: Finishing *Feed* (if necessary)  
Robert Silverberg “We Went to See the End of the World”(1972) (handout)  
Ray Bradbury, “There Will Come Soft Rains” (1950)(handout)


Thurs, June 12: Comparing the Dangerous Trends in *Feed* & *Idiocracy*  
**ASSIGNMENT 3A: DRAFT OF SECOND MAJOR ESSAY DUE TODAY**

**ON A (SOMewhat) LIGHTER NOTE: MAD SCIENTISTS, BIOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS, AND MICHAEL CRICHTON’S TECHNO-THRILLER (1990)**

Mon, June 16: excerpts from *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) (Read Moreau’s explanation of his work (Chapter 14) as well as the description of the beast people (Chapter 15). The link below is for Chapter 14 [http://www.bartleby.com/1001/14.html](http://www.bartleby.com/1001/14.html)  
PLUS Alfred Bester, “Adam and No Eve” (1941)(handout)

**POSSIBLE ONLINE CLASS:**  
**ASSIGNMENT 1D: (OPTIONAL) FOURTH BLOG DUE --- SEE CANVAS**

Tues, June 17: Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park* (1990)

Wed, June 18: Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park*

Thurs, June 19: Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park*  
**ASSIGNMENT:** *FINAL COPY OF SECOND ESSAY DUE NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 11:59 PM*

Mon, June 23: Finishing *Jurassic Park*

Tues, June 24: Story TBA; *District 9* (2009) or other film

Wed, June 25: Discussing *District 9* or other techno-thriller film

Thurs, June 26: Class Off to Get Ready for the Final Exam

**Fri, June 27:** *ASSIGNMENT 4: FINAL EXAM DURING FORMAL EXAM PERIOD SHORT ANSWERS & LONG ANSWERS (ESSAYS) COVERS ENTIRE COURSE*