

ENGL 4652: SEMINAR IN AMERICAN SCIENCE FICTION

UNG Banner Code: H2 (Hybrid class, online with contact-point meetings in person)

Fall 2020 M/W/F 11:00-11:50 in Dunlap 313 (only during contact-point weeks) or by Zoom

Instructor: Dr. Ian Afflerbach

Email: ian.afflerbach@ung.edu

Office Hours: MW 3-5:00 via Zoom (or by appointment)

WHAT THE “H2 – HYBRID” CODE MEANS FOR THIS CLASS

This course has been given an “H2” code by the University of North Georgia, which means that “technology will be used to deliver more than 75% of class sessions” and “segments of the class” will meet on a “regular rotation with social distancing” during our contact weeks.

Nearly all of our course will take place online, using D2L. Each week, we will usually have a reading assigned for Mon, Wed, and Friday. For each day's reading, I will post several discussion questions on the “Discussion” section of D2L. You must answer one question, and reply to one other student's answer, for each set of questions. That's a total of two posts per class day. To make life easier, I am not going to grade these discussion responses daily, but rather weekly. That means you have until Sunday night at 11:55pm to post your answers and replies for that week's questions. This will allow everyone to work at their own pace, providing flexibility for anyone who might have complications or problems come up in these difficult times. On each day, during our normally scheduled class time, we will have optional online discussions through Zoom. These are strictly optional; there will be no attendance taken. But because you all signed up for this class hoping to discuss Science Fiction, I want to give you the opportunity to do so. I will record the audio from each discussion and post it to D2L afterwards; this will allow anyone who has to miss a discussion to catch up (but no one has to worry about their personal appearance or background being recorded).

In addition to our online work, we will have four “contact point weeks” when we meet face-to-face this semester: Weeks 4, 7, 11, and 14. These will serve as workshops for our three major projects and our final portfolio (where you will collect and revise those three projects). All these meetings will happen in Dunlap 313, but you will be split into two groups. Because of social distancing guidelines, you cannot switch days or arrive on another day without an email first to confirm that it's okay. However, I will have a very flexible attendance policy for these days. If you are sick or for any other good reason unable to attend, you will not be penalized for missing these review sessions.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this class, we will explore one of the longest lasting and most versatile genres in American culture: science fiction. Since it solidified as a distinct form in American pulp magazines of the early twentieth century, SF has continually toggled between hope and fear about humanity's future, sometimes celebrating heroic innovation, sometimes expressing deep social anxieties. This class will follow sf forward through several eras: its first pulpy years, its “Golden Age,” the arrival of a “New Wave,” Hollywood's adaptation of sf stories, and the speculative futurists of our present moment. As we do so, we will consider some basic question about interpreting popular culture: how do encounters with alien creatures or androids model anxieties about humanity, race, and gender? How do representations of technology reflect evolving views about science and militarism? How can speculative fiction show us the constraints of our present, and help us to imagine alternate futures? How have the people doing the speculating changed over the last century?

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Arthur Evans, Ed. *The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction* ISBN: 9780819569554
Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) ISBN: 9780345404473
Cixin Liu, *The Three Body Problem* (2015) ISBN: 9780765382030
Films: *Blade Runner*, *Total Recall*, *Arrival* [to be viewed independently]

ASSIGNMENTS

Project 1: Trope Study (15%)

Project 2: Creation/Critique (15%)

Project 3: Research Proposal (15%)

Final Portfolio (25%) You will revise all three projects, following my feedback, and write short reflections statements about what you have learned in the process of completing them.

Discussion Questions (30%) For each reading, you have to post a 250-500 word "response" to one of my questions, and a 100-200 word "comment" on another student's response. Take these seriously. They are supposed to equal the 50 minutes of class time we would be having under normal circumstances. I expect you to think through your posts, quote from your texts regularly as evidence, and use correct grammar. That said, however, I will be grading your discussion posts chiefly for completion and a good faith effort. If I can tell that you are keeping up with the readings, and taking the discussion seriously, you should get full credit.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Literary History: You will gain familiarity with major works, topics, and problems in American science fiction, and the social movements, political anxieties, and formal changes that inspired them.

Writing: Through our assignments, you can expect to work on (a) clear, concise expression of your ideas in prose, (b) detail-driven argument (c) readerly engagement, and (d) citation practices.

Speaking: During the semester, you can expect to work on (a) building comfort contributing to group conversation, (b) preparing formal/informal oral presentations (c) eliminating verbal fillers.

COURSE POLICIES

Active Reading and Participation: Because our course will be driven by online discussions, it is vital that you not only “keep up” with readings, but read actively. That means annotating or “marking up” a text so that you are taking notes, creating questions, noting themes or turns of phrase, or simply capturing the moments that interest or confuse you.

Professionalism: Hybrid courses demand the same forms of etiquette as you would bring to a workplace. Your discussion grade will decrease if I can tell that you are (a) not reading the texts, (b) not taking the questions seriously, or (c) disrespecting your peers or their ideas. You can disagree with anyone, but do so respectful and gracefully.

Plagiarism: Whether you intend to do so or not, passing off the words or ideas of others as your own is a serious academic offense. If you are the least bit unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me and/or check [this website](#). Please also consult UNG’s [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Late Work: If you anticipate a situation that will prevent you from submitting discussion posts or an exam on time, please e-mail me *before* it happens to explain the situation and discuss solutions.

FINDING SUPPORT

Instructor Contact: Email is the best way to reach me for any simple questions; I try hard to respond within 12 hours. Because of social distancing guidelines, my office hours will be conducted by Zoom this semester. To schedule an appointment just send an email with the time you'd like. Please try to make time for even a short (5-15 min) chat; it can help enormously.

Technology Needs: If you are new to hybrid or remoted learning and need some guidance, please use UNG's "[Learning Remotely as a Nighthawk](#)" page. If you find that you do not have the technology that you need to complete this course's requirements, please reach out to [Information Technology at UNG](#) to see if they can provide you with a laptop or other materials.

Language Aids: Students should have a basic understanding of English grammar and a familiarity with the rules of standard English. If you are concerned about your basic grammar and mechanics, or would simply like [additional support](#) for your writing, please contact the [Writing Center](#) or Gainesville's Academic Computing Tutoring and Testing Center ([ACITT Center](#)). I also wholeheartedly recommend the grammar, citation, and style guide offered by the [Owl at Purdue](#).

Disability Services: University of North Georgia is committed to equal access to its programs, services, and activities. Students who require accommodations must register with [Disability Services](#) (disability-dah@ung.edu) and submit supporting documentation. Disability Services provides memos for eligible students to give to their instructors. Students are responsible for making these arrangements, and must give reasonable prior notice of the need for accommodation

Feeling Overwhelmed: College can be a stressful time, and COVID-19 has made life profoundly complicated for everyone. Please don't hesitate to ask for help if you're feeling overly anxious, stressed, or depressed. UNG has two main ways to seek support: through the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) and through the counseling services offered by the [Student Center](#).

PLEASE REVIEW UNG's [COVID-19 FAQ PAGE](#) FOR REOPENING QUESTIONS

READING CALENDAR

NOTE: Contact Point Days Are Highlighted

Monday Group Meetings: (Fri Sep 11, Mon Sep 28, Mon Oct 26, Mon Nov 16)

Wednesday Group Meetings: (Wed Sep 9, Wed Sep 30, Wed Oct 30, Wed Nov 18)

Week 1	Aug 17	Introduce Course
	Aug 19	Adam Roberts "Defining Science Fiction" (2000) and Mary Shelley "Author's Introduction" to <i>Frankenstein</i> (1831)

	Aug 21	Darko Suvin, “On the Poetics of the SF Genre” (1972) and Robert Heinlein “On the Writing of Speculative Fiction” (1947)
PULP FICTION		
Week 2	Aug 24	<i>Amazing Stories 1 (1926)</i> Hugo Gernsback “A New Kind of Magazine” and H.G. Wells “The New Accelerator”
	Aug 26	Edmond Hamilton “The Man Who Evolved” <i>Wonder Stories</i> [in WA]
	Aug 28	Stanley Weinbaum “A Martian Odyssey” <i>Wonder Stories</i> [in WA]
Week 3	Aug 31	<i>Astounding Science Fiction</i> 9.7 (1939) A.E. Vogt’s “Black Destroyer”
	Sep 2	C.L. Moore “Shambleau” <i>Weird Tales</i> [in WA]
	Sep 4	Isaac Asimov “Reason” <i>Astounding Science Fiction</i> [in WA]
Week 4	Sep 7	HOLIDAY
Contact	Sep 9	Robert Heinlein “All You Zombies” [in WA]
Point	Sep 11	Theodore Sturgeon “Thunder and Roses” <i>Astounding Science Fiction</i> [in WA] Project 1 Due on D2L by Sunday Sep 13th at 11:55pm
NEW WAVE, NEW VOICES		
Week 5	Sep 14	Judith Merril “That Only a Mother” (1948) [in WA] and Joanna Russ “The Image of Women in Science Fiction” (1970)
	Sep 16	Leslie Stone “The Conquest of Gola” (1931) [in WA] and Joanna Russ “When it Changed” (1972) [in WA]
	Sep 18	Pamela Zoline “The Heat Death of the Universe” (1967) [in WA]
Week 6	Sep 21	Ursula LeGuin “The Diary of the Rose” (1976) and “American SF and the Other” (1975)
	Sep 23	Ursula K. LeGuin “Nine Lives” (1969) [in WA]
	Sep 25	Ursula K. LeGuin “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” (1973)
Week 7	Sep 28	William Gibson “The Gernsback Continuum” (1981) and Bruce Sterling “Preface” to <i>Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology</i> (1986)
Contact	Sep 30	William Gibson “Burning Chrome” (1982) [in WA]

Point	Oct 2	Harlan Ellison, “Repent, Harlequin!” (1965) [in WA] Project 2 Due on D2L by Sunday Oct 4th at 11:55pm
ADAPTING TO THE SCREEN		
Week 8	Oct 5	Phillip K. Dick <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> (1968) (1-60)
	Oct 7	Dick, <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> (60-100)
	Oct 9	Dick, <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> (100-140)
Week 9	Oct 12	Dick, <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> (140-200)
	Oct 14	[Reading Catch-Up Day!]
	Oct 16	Dick, <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> (Finished)
Week 10	Oct 19	<i>Blade Runner</i> (1982)
	Oct 21	Philip K. Dick “The Android and the Human” (1972)
	Oct 23	Phillip K. Dick “We Can Remember it For You Wholesale” (1966) [in WA]
Week 11	Oct 26	<i>Total Recall</i> (1990)
Contact	Oct 28	Ted Chiang “Story of Your Life”
Point	Oct 30	<i>Arrival</i> (2016) Project 3 Due on D2L by Sunday Nov 1st at 11:55pm
WHOSE FUTURE?		
Week 12	Nov 2	Octavia Butler “Bloodchild” (1988) and Mark Dery “Black to the Future” (1994)
	Nov 4	Samuel Delany “Aye, and Gomorroah” (1967) [in WA] and “Racism in SF” (1998)
	Nov 6	N.K. Jemisin “The Ones Who Stay and Fight” (2018) and “ How Long Til Black Future Month? ” (2013)
Week 13	Nov 9	Cixin Liu, <i>The Three Body Problem</i> (1-100)
	Nov 11	Liu, <i>The Three Body Problem</i> (100-150)
	Nov 13	Liu, <i>The Three Body Problem</i> (150-200)
Week 14	Nov 16	[Reading Catch-Up Day!]
Contact	Nov 18	Liu, <i>The Three Body Problem</i> (300-350)
Point	Nov 20	Liu, <i>Three Body Problem</i> (350-End)
15	Nov 23	Portfolio Prep

	Nov 25	FALL BREAK
	Nov 27	FALL BREAK

FINAL PORTFOLIO Due on D2L
Tuesday Dec. 1st at 1:00pm