

FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ENGLISH 393-02

FALL 2013

COURSE TITLE: Speculative Fiction I: Science Fiction

Instructor: Dr. S. Forlini

Office: SS1002

Phone: 403-220-5483

E-mail: sforlini@ucalgary.ca

Office hours: T/Th 14:00-15:00

Course description: In this course, we will examine selected works of science fiction (novels, short stories, and films) that have impacted profoundly our cultural conceptions of scientific and technological change. If, as Eric Rabkin has suggested, science fiction is “quite naturally the most influential cultural system in a time like ours, in which dominant technological change constantly provokes hope, fear, guilt, and glory,” it is important to examine what is at stake in science fiction’s shaping of the cultural imaginary. In exploring how science fiction might function as a “cultural system,” we will study how such works creatively borrow from scientific discourses, and we will analyze the possible effects of their speculative experiments. As many of the works we will study are “classic” examples of science fiction, we will also consider various definitions of “science fiction” and try to understand why some speculative visions have more profound and long-lasting effects than others. There are no pre-requisites for this course.

Texts and readings:

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein* (1818)

Wells, H.G. *The Time Machine* (1895)

Lang, Fritz. *Metropolis* (1927)

Dick, Phillip K. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968)

Scott, Ridley. *Blade Runner* (1982)

Gibson, William. *Neuromancer* (1984)

Stephenson, Neal. *The Diamond Age* (1995)

Custom Courseware, containing short stories by James Tiptree Jr. (Alice B. Sheldon), and Octavia Butler

Assignments and Evaluation:

Close Reading Assignment 25% (750-word analysis of a specific passage)

First Midterm 25% (short-answer questions and one essay question on readings and lecture material)

Early Science Fiction Research Assignment 15% (500 words)

Registrar-scheduled Final Exam 35% (short-answer and essay questions)

Early Science Fiction Research Assignment: Because popular magazines and their many “minor” authors (including many women writers) played a key role in the development of science fiction as a genre, students will be asked to research one “minor” author (of many) who published in Victorian periodicals from our library’s Gibson collection of Speculative Fiction. Students will write a brief essay showcasing information they discover about one “unknown” author. Each student will be assigned a different author. The author’s work will be available online through the library’s recently digitized sampling of the Gibson anthologies. Essays should be no longer than 500 words and must include a list of works cited that adheres to MLA style guidelines.

Please make every effort to take assignments directly to the instructor. If it is not possible to do so, take your assignment to SS 1152 and put it in the dropbox. Your assignment will be date-stamped and placed in the instructor's mailbox. **It is your responsibility to keep a copy of all assignments in case of loss by any cause. Assignments cannot be returned by staff in the Department office.**

→ Note that **there is a Registrar-scheduled final exam** (closed book) for this course. The final exam period for this term runs from December 9th to 19th (see Calendar, Academic Schedule at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html>). Students must be available for examinations up to the last day of the examination period.

Class Policies:

- 1-Students are expected to come to lectures having done all required readings and to be prepared to participate actively in class discussion.
- 2-The assignment must be submitted at the beginning of class on the date that it is due. Assignments submitted after the deadline will be subject to a late penalty of 5% per day (including weekends). Electronic submissions will not be accepted.
- 3- The assignment must adhere to MLA style guidelines (7th edition). It is the student's responsibility to learn these guidelines, as this will not be covered in class. Please refer to *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th edition), especially sections 4.1-4.4, and/or the online outline of MLA format at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>
- 4- In order to receive a passing grade in this course, students must complete all components of this course listed under the "Assignments and Evaluation" section of this course outline.
- 5-There will be no extra-credit assignments. In the event that a student misses a midterm, appropriate documentation explaining his/her absence must be made available to the instructor as soon as possible. Based on the documentation, the instructor will decide whether or not a make-up midterm will be allowed.

Grading system:

Student assignments and tests will receive a letter grade and a specific percentage from within the range of the assigned letter grade as per the following scale:

90 + %	A+	4.0
85 – 89 %	A	4.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7
67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
64 – 66 %	C	2.0
60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
50 – 54 %	D	1.0
0 – 49 %	F	0

Please note that, according to the University Calendar (F.1), instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades.

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the 4-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

Plagiarism:

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>

Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:

The Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club (SMRWC) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. We strive to enhance the academic and social experience of undergraduate students by promoting academic excellence and interaction between students, faculty, and the community, through social, cultural, and academic events.

<http://english.ucalgary.ca/scribe-and-muse-english-club>

Our email address is smec@ucalgary.ca.

English Department Website:

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <http://english.ucalgary.ca>. Please note that the course outlines posted on the English Department website constitute the official course outline for purposes of appeals. Students should verify any hard copies against this posted version. For courses which employ numerical grades, the official departmental percentage to letter grade conversion scale is also posted on the department website.

Writing support:

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:



Academic regulations and schedules:

Consult the Calendar for course information, university and faculty regulations, dates, deadlines and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the University Calendar is

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/index.htm>

Guidelines on e-mail Etiquette:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/it/help/articles/email/etiquette>

Grade appeals:

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. Please note that “mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision.”

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Deferral of term work and final examinations:

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an Application of Deferment of Term Work form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>,

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>.

Academic Accommodation:

It is the students' responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodations and have not registered with Student Accessibility Services, please contact them at 403-220-6019. Students who have not registered with Student Accessibility Services are not eligible for formal academic accommodations. More information about academic accommodations can be found at www.ucalgary.ca/access.

Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>;

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/>

“Safewalk” Program:

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS110, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at

<http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.

For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them in their new space on the 3rd Floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

Contact for Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts:

arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca

Contact for Students Ombudsman's Office: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- (a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
- (b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- (c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- (d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

According to the University Calendar, (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/j.html>) "The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, ..., to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community". The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a "positive and productive learning and working environment." This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that "seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff". Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.