

Science Fiction in Print From Pulp to the Present

<http://sf16.blogs.rutgers.edu>

TF 3 (Tuesdays and Fridays, 11:30 a.m.–12:50 p.m.) in Scott 221

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Office hours: Tuesdays 2:30–4:30 in Murray 019

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Today, most people probably think of science fiction in terms of big-budget movies and TV series. But science fiction began in print, and it continues to flourish in novels and stories. This seminar is a study of science-fiction writing, with special attention to the changing status of the genre and the medium of print, from H.G. Wells to Nnedi Okorafor. SF has promised cheap thrills in inexpensive pulp magazines, and it has aspired to seriousness in between hard covers; it has been the literature of proudly distinctive, and sometimes politically radical, subcultures, yet it has also sought to break into the literary mainstream; and it has increasingly had to compete with visual media, unless it tries to collaborate in transmedia productions. In addition to print sources, we will make significant use of digitized archival materials. The course culminates with a research paper about science-fiction texts and topics of students' own choice.

LEARNING GOALS

1. Acquire a general understanding of the history of English-language science fiction literature since 1890.
2. Develop the ability to analyze individual or multiple science-fiction texts in terms of key concepts including genre, implied audience, plot construction, linguistic texture, authorial identity, publication context, and sociocultural context.
3. Enter a scholarly conversation about the definitions, evolution, and purpose of the science-fiction genre both as a formation in itself and in relation to other literary genres and modes.
4. Gain proficiency in making convincing scholarly arguments about literature by planning, drafting, and revising an original research paper on science fiction of substantial length.

This course also satisfies the WCr Core Curriculum goal: Respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision.

REQUIREMENTS

10% PARTICIPATION IN CLASS

Regular attendance and active, thoughtful participation in discussion are required. The purpose of a seminar is for us to learn by addressing difficult questions together. This requires every student to take the intellectual risk of offering observations, ideas, and arguments in class in response to one another and to me. You aren't supposed to know all the answers in advance—but you are required to make your best effort to figure things out as we go along, and to work with your classmates to help them do so as well. Lateness, lack of preparation, or disruptive behavior during seminar will affect the participation mark.

Two absences are allowed without penalty. If you fall ill or miss class for a family emergency, please contact me as soon as possible; you can make up for an excused absence. Students can do work to make up for unexcused absences only at my discretion. The *maximum* participation mark if you have three absences is 3.0 (B); if you have four, 2.0 (C). Missing more than four classes without excuse will normally result in a failing grade for the course (not just a 0 for participation).

10% REGULAR INFORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Students are required to contribute to a course blog eight times in the semester; the week's blog entries are part of the required reading for the whole class. Individual entries are graded on a credit/no credit basis; it is not possible to receive credit for a late blog entry. Not every student is required to blog every week; the details will be given on the first day of class. Grading scale: no more than one entry missing, 4.0; two entries missing, 3.0; three entries missing, 2.0; four or more entries missing, 0.

30% SHORT PAPER

A short paper at midterm (6–8 pp.) requires careful analysis of a single science-fiction text.

50% FINAL PAPER

The major assignment of the course is a 16–20 pp. research paper, due at the end of the semester. The paper is to be developed gradually, through a (required) topic proposal and substantial draft, commented but not separately graded. The paper must connect with the course themes and materials while drawing substantially on primary and secondary sources beyond the syllabus.

GRADING

The course grade is a weighted average of the grades given for the requirements listed above. However, excessive absences, or failure to complete either the short paper or the

final paper, will lead to a failing course grade regardless of the numerical score.

Grades will be given on the four-point scale as specified in the Undergraduate Catalog. In converting the final numerical score to a letter, the equivalents in the Catalog are taken as the *maxima* of intervals open on the left and closed on the right. Thus A corresponds to scores strictly greater than 3.5 and less than or equal to 4.0, B+ to scores greater than 3.0 and less than or equal to 3.5, B to scores greater than 2.5 and less than or equal to 3.0, and so on. There are no “minus” grades. The general standards for grades are as follows:

A range (3.5, 4.0]: Outstanding work, demonstrating thorough mastery of course materials and skills.

B range (2.5, 3.5]: Good work, demonstrating serious engagement with all aspects of the course but incomplete mastery of course materials and skills.

C range (1.5, 2.5]: Satisfactory work, meeting requirements but indicating significant problems mastering the course materials and skills.

D (0.5, 1.5]: Poor or minimally passing work, meeting the basic course requirements, but frequently unsatisfactory in several major areas.

F [0, 0.5]: Failure due to unmet course requirements or consistently unsatisfactory work.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students and instructors have a duty to each other and to our community to abide by norms of academic honesty and responsibility. To present something as your own original writing when it is not is plagiarism. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are serious violations of trust. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will have severe consequences, in accordance with the University Policy on Academic Integrity and the Code of Student Conduct. For details about the University’s academic integrity policies, please see academicintegrity.rutgers.edu.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All reasonable accommodation will be given to students with disabilities. Students who may require accommodation should speak with the professor at the start of the semester. You may also contact the Office of Disability Services (disabilityservices.rutgers.edu; 848-445-6800).

SCHEDULE

When blog entries are due, they are to be posted by 5 p.m. on *Monday* for credit; extra writing is always welcome any time you are inspired or find something you want to share with the class.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6. INTRODUCTION.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9. SCIENTIFIC ROMANCE.

Wells, *The Time Machine*, complete.

Blogging prompt on *The Time Machine* and its publication media given in class.

(MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12). BLOG ENTRY DUE: GROUPS 1 AND 2.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13. DEFINING OUR TERMS.

Read all your classmates' blog entries.

Wells, *The Time Machine*, continued.

Suvin, "On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre."

Rieder, "On Defining SF, or Not."

Eliot and Nash, "Mass Markets: Literature," 416–29.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16. UTOPIA.

Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, "Sultana's Dream."

Begin reading Zamyatin, *We* for next week.

(MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19.) BLOG ENTRY DUE: GROUP 1.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20. DYSTOPIA.

Zamyatin, *We*, Records 1–15.

Le Guin, "The Stalin in the Soul."

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23. UTOPIA/DYSTOPIA.

Zamyatin, *We*, complete.

Parrinder, "Imagining the Future."

First short paper assignment distributed.

(MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26.) BLOG ENTRY DUE: GROUP 2.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27. SF INSTITUTIONS: EARLY PULPS.

Amazing Stories and *Wonder Stories*. Guided exploration of digitizations from the Pulp Magazines Project (pulpmags.org). Readings include:
Poe, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar."
Wertebaker, "The Man From the Atom."
Gernsback, "Fiction versus Facts."
Stone, "The Conquest of Gola."

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30. SERIOUSLY WEIRD.

Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu." Focus particularly on this story.
Lovecraft, "The Colour Out of Space."
Wilson, "Tales of the Marvellous and the Ridiculous."
Miéville, introduction to *At the Mountains of Madness*.

(MONDAY, OCTOBER 3.) BLOG ENTRY DUE: GROUP 1.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4. SERIOUSLY TECHNICAL.

Asimov, *Foundation*, parts 1–3.
Astounding Science-Fiction 21, no. 6 (guided exploration).

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7. ENGINEERING SOCIETY.

Asimov, *Foundation*, complete.
Luckhurst, *Science Fiction*, 66–75.

(MONDAY, OCTOBER 10.) BLOG ENTRY DUE: GROUP 2.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11. SF AND MODE.

Leiber, "The Big Time," pt. 1. Pay attention to the periodical context. Use the bibliographic information below to locate this story in the Internet Archive's digitized run of *Galaxy*.
Optional: Pohl, "The Snowmen."

(THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13.) SHORT PAPER DUE.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14. SF CONSECRATION.

Leiber, "The Big Time," pt. 2.
Selected material on the Hugo awards, conventions, and organizations.
The Big Time in the *Library of America*: read Neil Gaiman's note on the novel in sci-encefiction.loa.org/appreciation/gaiman.php; the remaining material, including

the other Leiber Change War stories and radio adaptations, is fascinating but optional.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18. GENRE REFORM.

Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, chaps. 1–7.
Le Guin, “American SF and the Other.”

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21.

Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, chaps. 1–14.
Ellison, introduction to *Dangerous Visions*.

(MONDAY, OCTOBER 24.) BLOG ENTRY DUE: GROUP 1.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25. SECOND THOUGHTS.

Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, complete.
Le Guin, “Is Gender Necessary?”

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28.

Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*.
Jameson, “World Reduction in Le Guin.”
Final paper assignment distributed.

(MONDAY, OCTOBER 31.) BLOG ENTRY DUE: GROUP 2.

Last day to withdraw from the course with a “W.”

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1. SF AND SUSPICIOUS READING.

Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, chaps. 1–12.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4.

Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, complete.

(MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7.) BLOG ENTRY DUE: GROUP 1.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8. ADAPTATION.

Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, continued.
Scott, *Blade Runner*. Watch the whole film.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11. WHAT GOOD IS ALL THIS . . . ?

Butler, "Bloodchild."

Butler, "Positive Obsession."

(MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14.) BLOG ENTRY DUE: GROUP 2.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15. UTOPIA/DYSTOPIA AGAIN.

Butler, "Speech Sounds."

Butler, "The Book of Martha."

(FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18. CLASS CANCELLED.)

(MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21.) FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE.

No required blogging.

(TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22. THURSDAY SCHEDULE: NO CLASS.)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23. (FRIDAY SCHEDULE.) A NEW BRAND.

Gibson, *Neuromancer*, complete.

(THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24. THANKSGIVING RECESS.)

(MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28.) BLOG ENTRY DUE: GROUP 1.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29.

Gibson, *Neuromancer*.

Gibson, "Time Machine Cuba."

Gibson, "Will We Plug Computers into our Brains?"

Optional: Gibson, "The Art of Fiction no. 211."

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2. SF AND THE GLOBE.

Okorafor, *Lagoon*, Act I (chaps. 1–25).

(MONDAY, DECEMBER 5.) TWO DRAFT PAGES DUE.

No required blogging.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6.

Okorafor, *Lagoon*, through Act II (chaps. 1–42).

Paper workshop.

(THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8.)

Final paper draft due. Comments will be returned to you by Monday.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9.

Okorafor, *Lagoon*, continued.
Blomkamp, *District 9*. Watch the whole film.

(MONDAY, DECEMBER 12.) BLOG ENTRY DUE: GROUP 2.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13. ECOLOGY, MEDIA ECOLOGY.

Okorafor, *Lagoon*, complete, including all paratexts.

(DECEMBER 16–23. EXAM PERIOD.)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22. FINAL PAPER DUE AT 11 A.M.

READINGS

ISBNs are included to help students ordering books online. For my general advice about buying course books, see andrewgoldstone.com/book-buying. All required texts are also on reserve at Alexander Library. We will discuss finding and using online sources in class, but I always welcome questions.

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| <p>Asimov, Isaac. <i>Foundation</i>. 1951. New York: Bantam, 1991. ISBN: 9780553293357. Other versions are fine. There are many prequels and sequels, not all by Asimov; we are only reading this first book together.</p> <p>Blomkamp, Neill, dir. <i>District 9</i>. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2009. Available as streaming video on Sakai.</p> <p>Butler, Octavia E. "Bloodchild." In <i>Bloodchild and Other Stories</i>, 1–30.</p> <p>———. <i>Bloodchild and Other Stories</i>. 2nd ed. New York: Seven Stories, 2005. ISBN: 9781583226988.</p> <p>———. "Positive Obsession." In <i>Bloodchild and Other Stories</i>, 123–35.</p> <p>———. "Speech Sounds." In <i>Bloodchild and Other Stories</i>, 87–108.</p> <p>———. "The Book of Martha." In <i>Bloodchild and Other Stories</i>, 189–214.</p> | <p>Campbell, John W., ed. <i>Astounding Science-Fiction</i> 21, no. 6 (August 1938). http://www.pulpmags.org/PDFs/AS_1938_08.pdf.</p> <p>Dick, Philip K. <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> 1968. New York: Del Rey, 1996. ISBN: 9780345404473. Alternative editions are fine. The identical text is also found as a movie tie-in under the title <i>Blade Runner</i>.</p> <p>Eliot, Simon, and Andrew Nash. "Mass Markets: Literature." Chap. 11 in <i>1830–1914</i>, vol. 6 of <i>The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain</i>, edited by David McKitterick. doi:10.1017/CHOL9780521866248.013.</p> <p>Ellison, Harlan. Introduction to <i>Dangerous Visions</i>. New York: Doubleday, 1967. Available on Sakai.</p> <p>Gernsback, Hugo, ed. <i>Amazing Stories</i> 1, no. 1 (April 1926). http://www.pulpmags.org/PDFs/Amazing%20Stories%20April%201926.pdf.</p> |
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- Gernsback, Hugo, ed. *Amazing Stories* 1, no. 2 (May 1926). <http://www.pulpmags.org/PDFs/Amazing%20Stories%20May%201926.pdf>.
- . “Fiction versus Facts.” *Amazing Stories* 1, no. 4 (July 1926): 291. Available on the Pulp Magazines Project.
- Gibson, William. *Neuromancer*. New York: Ace / Penguin, 1986. ISBN: 9780441569595. Other editions are fine.
- . “The Art of Fiction no. 211.” Interview by David Wallace-Wells. *Paris Review* 197 (Summer 2011). <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/6089/the-art-of-fiction-no-211-william-gibson>.
- . “Time Machine Cuba.” In *Distrust That Particular Flavor*, 201–9. New York: Putnam, 2012. Online on Sakai.
- . “Will We Plug Computers into our Brains?” *Time International* 155, no. 25 (June 19, 2000): 54. <https://login.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=3223357&site=ehost-live>. Online via RU library.
- Jameson, Fredric. “World Reduction in Le Guin.” In *Archaeologies of the Future*, 267–80. London: Verso, 2005. Available on Sakai.
- Le Guin, Ursula K. “American SF and the Other.” *Science Fiction Studies* 2, no. 3 (November 1975): 208–210. JSTOR: 4238969.
- . “Is Gender Necessary?” In *The Language of the Night*, 161–69. Available on Sakai.
- . *The Language of the Night*. Edited by Susan Wood. New York: Putnam, 1979. See assigned excerpts.
- . *The Left Hand of Darkness*. New York: Ace, 1969. ISBN: 9780441478125.
- . “The Stalin in the Soul.” In *The Language of the Night*, 211–221. Available on Sakai.
- Leiber, Fritz. “The Big Time.” Pt. 1. *Galaxy* 15, no. 5 (March 1958): 6–57. Available via the Internet Archive’s Magazine Rack: <https://archive.org/details/galaxymagazine>.
- . “The Big Time.” Pt. 2. *Galaxy* 15, no. 6 (April 1958): 98–144.
- Lovecraft, H. P. “The Call of Cthulhu.” In *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*, 139–69. Other collections of Lovecraft should be fine if they include the two stories we are reading. There is a very nice omnibus from the Library of America.
- . *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*. Edited by S. T. Joshi. New York: Penguin, 1999. ISBN: 9780141182346. Other collections of Lovecraft should be fine if they include the two stories we are reading. There is a very nice omnibus from the Library of America.
- . “The Colour Out of Space.” In *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*, 170–99. Other collections of Lovecraft should be fine if they include the two stories we are reading. There is a very nice omnibus from the Library of America.
- Luckhurst, Roger. *Science Fiction*. Cambridge: Polity, 2005. Recommended. On reserve at Alexander.
- Miéville, China. Introduction to *At the Mountains of Madness*, by H. P. Lovecraft. New York: Modern Library, 2005. Available on Sakai.
- Okorafor, Nnedi. *Lagoon*. New York: Saga, 2014. ISBN: 9781481440882.
- Parrinder, Patrick. “Imagining the Future: Zamyatin and Wells.” *Science Fiction Studies* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1973): 17–26. JSTOR: 4238838.
- Poe, Edgar Allan. “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar.” *Amazing Stories* 1, no. 1 (April 1926): 92–96. Available on the Pulp Magazines Project.
- Pohl, Frederik. “The Snowmen.” *Galaxy* 18, no. 2, 141–49. Optional. Available via the Internet Archive.
- Rieder, John. “On Defining SF, or Not: Genre Theory, SF, and History.” *Science Fiction Studies* 37, no. 2 (July 2010): 191–209. JSTOR: 25746406.

- Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain. "Sultana's Dream." <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/sultana/dream/dream.html>. Print alternative recommended.
- . "Sultana's Dream." In *"Sultana's Dream: A Feminist Utopia" and Selections from The Secluded Ones*. 1905. New York: Feminist Press, 1988. ISBN: 9780935312836. Online alternative available.
- Scott, Ridley, dir. *Blade Runner*. Director's cut. 1982. Warner Home Video, 2007. DVD available at the Douglass Media Center.
- Stone, Leslie F. "The Conquest of Gola." *Wonder Stories* 2, no. 11 (April 1931): 1278–87. Available on the Pulp Magazines Project.
- Suvin, Darko. "On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre." *College English* 34, no. 3 (December 1972): 372–82. JSTOR: 375141.
- Wells, H. G. *The Time Machine: An Invention*. New York: Henry Holt, 1895. Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/stream/timemachineinvenowell>. Print alternative recommended.
- . *The Time Machine*. 1895. New York: Dover, 1995. ISBN: 9780486284729. Online alternative available. Other print editions are fine. Penguin and Broadview have versions with notes and other supplements for students.
- Wertenbaker, G. Peyton. "The Man From the Atom." Pt. 1. *Amazing Stories* 1, no. 1 (April 1926): 62–66. Available on the Pulp Magazines Project. The sequel, in the subsequent *Amazing* issue, is optional.
- Wilson, Edmund. "Tales of the Marvellous and the Ridiculous." *New Yorker*, November 24, 1945. Available on Sakai.
- Zamyatin, Yevgeny. *We*. Translated by Clarence Brown. 1924. New York: Penguin, 1993. ISBN: 9780140185850. Required edition. Other translations will not work for this class.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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