**EN 444: EXAMINING GENRE
SCIENCE FICTION LITERATURE**

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**PARAMETERS**

The term “science fiction” denotes a genre of literature outside of realism. Originating recognizably in the 19th century, some argue that the impulse to science fiction occurred much earlier. Despite the dispute of dates, science fiction is often tied to the modern industrial age, humankind’s interaction with machines, space exploration, and potential of alien interaction. But beyond the superficial definition, science fiction is a genre that allows for immense flexibility in style, purpose, and tone.

In this course, we will venture into science fiction, studying a portion of what the genre has to offer. We will read short stories, novels, and graphic interpretations, as well as watch film and listen to radio drama. We will concentrate on three themes: Human and Machine, Government and Individual, and Gender and Reproduction. Because this is an upper level literature course, we will practice academic scholarship by reading criticism by scholarly experts, writing sensitively about literature, and placing science fiction in a cultural context. But because we are dealing with versions of “possibility,” we will also venture outside textual enterprises and craft projects that make use of non-alphabetic media.

**OBJECTIVES**

After this course, students will be able to

- Read closely and critically, interpreting literature in a way that is both intellectually rigorous and personally significant while presenting interpretations in class discussion and essays.
- Discuss interpretations of literature in a thoughtful manner using both personal experience and imagination, as well as listen to other’s interpretations respectfully and constructively.
- Identify prevailing dynamics of Science Fiction, including its prevalent themes and rhetorical purpose
- Compose a scholarly academic essay within the field of literature, using appropriate sources, theoretical perspectives, and MLA citation.
- Generate new images, concepts, possibilities and/or interpretations and connect apparently disparate ideas. (AU Higher Level Thinking ILO)
- Employ active listening techniques, including summarizing, paraphrasing, questioning and nonverbal response. (AU Communication ILO)
MATERIAL
I expect you to have all material in a form that you can annotate, note on, and/or highlight. For many of you, this means buying a hard copy. I have chosen budget-friendly editions for this purpose. If you have the material on e-reader, I want you to still be able to interact with it, that is, mark it up.

Brave New Worlds John Joseph Adams
The Left Hand of Darkness Ursula K. Le Guin
Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep Philip K Dick

Electronic Documents, found on our Canvas page. These also need to be accessible during class time, through laptop, ereader, or printout.

DISCLAIMER
In our readings, there are a variety of violent scenes, including those of murder, execution, war, and rape. Many of the readings can be difficult for those who have experienced past trauma. While I expect everyone to do all of the readings, please be warned before you begin that some of the material will be difficult and prepare yourself accordingly.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS
In this course, I expect you to be active learners. You need to read texts before coming to class and work to understand them. As part of your active learning, you will complete the course requirements in these 3 sections

20% Exposition: Weekly Writing on Course Texts
30% Engagement: Preparation, Presence, and Participation
50% Ventures: 5 projects distributed throughout the semester

Exposition: Weekly Writing
Each week there is one interpretation essay due. This should consist of thoughts and questions about the reading from that week, as well as connection to past readings. These reflective interpretations should contain engagement with the text to be discussed that week as well as connection to past readings. They should not merely be a summary of the reading. These essays show not only that you are familiar with the material for that week, but that you are processing and thinking about it. Each exposition consists of a short essay (about 300 words) and two open-ended interpretive questions. We will vote on whether to keep these private or make them public on Canvas. Occasionally these writings will respond to a class-wide prompt, but often they will be self-guided. There will be 12 opportunities for Weekly Writings and I will take the top 10 grades.
Engagement: Preparation, Presence, and Participation
This is primarily a discussion-based course, so attending class and engaging in the discussion is crucial. You must do the reading for each class period and bring the text with you to class. In addition to reading your texts, I expect you to mark in them, making notes and engaging actively with the text. There are three parts to Engagement: Preparation, Presence, and Participation

Preparation
Engagement in the course begins before you enter the classroom. Previous to class, you need to prepare. Often, this comes in the form of reading, watching, or listening to assigned material. But this should be more than a passive consumption of material. Before you come to class, I want you to be thinking about ideas, making connections, and have something ready to say about the text. This can be questions you have, events you’ve researched, or connections you’ve made. By all means, this can be related to your Exposition for the week.

Presence
To succeed in the course, you must be present. Students should attempt to come to all class meetings. If you cannot make class, check with a fellow student to find out what we covered that day. Expect that you missed something. Three absences will be tolerated before your grade is affected. Following three absences, 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted from your overall grade; each further absence increases the penalty by a further 1/3 of a letter grade. If there are extenuating circumstances, let me know early and we can possibly work on other arrangements. The only excused absences are verified illness and death in your family.

Participation
The final portion of Engagement is Participation. This takes diverse forms on different class days, but it can mean actively listening to a lecture, participating in discussion, taking part in group work, or another form. During our 150 minutes/week, I expect your attention and participation. I ask you to disregard cell phones, email, and other distractions to focus on what your fellow classmates and I have to say. Studies suggest that students learn more when they handwrite notes (even when there are no tests) and disconnect from phones and laptops. This is an upper level English class, so I expect you to be interested and devoted to material.

Ventures
There will be 5 Ventures in this course, corresponding to the 5 stages outlined in the schedule. Of the ventures, 2 will be traditional essays, 2 will be multimodal essays, and 1 will be your choice. Full details of each venture will be provided at the beginning of the Stage. We will discuss progress on each venture and do some workshoping in class. These ventures are designed to stimulate both critical and creative faculties of you mind.

Alpha: Adaptation with Reflection
Bravo: Rhetorical Purpose of Science Fiction Essay
Charlie: Mashup with Reflection
Delta: Feminist Reading of Science Fiction Essay
Echo: Open Project