

Spring 2019  
**ENGLISH 6700-101**  
**STUDIES IN TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE**  
Thematic Title: *Classics of Science Fiction*  
TTh 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM  
Cudahy Hall 143

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Office Hours: T/Th 8:45 AM – 9:15 AM, Th 12:30 PM – 2:00 PM, or by appointment

This course engages the subfield of science fiction studies by looking at widely recognized classics in the genre from the postwar period in the United States, running roughly from 1945-1991. Some of these texts exist within the hybrid genre sometimes called “slipstream,” variously read by different audiences as both genre fiction and “serious literature”; others fall much more squarely within the oft-derided category of “pop culture.” We will study these texts alongside scholarship that theorizes both genre classification in general and science fiction in particular, and devote particular attention to how to teach and write about works that may not fit comfortably within the prestige economy of traditional literary studies. Limiting our focus to this historical era will also us to explore how periodization and canonization operate in literary studies, as well as explore how texts intended for consumption by mass-market audiences can help us index the hopes, anxieties, and social transformations of a given cultural moment.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Study and critically analyze major works of twentieth-century science fiction;
- Demonstrate understanding of the cultural, historical, and political contexts in which various works of science fiction have been produced;
- Investigate major concepts, methods, and theoretical movements that have shaped the practices of contemporary literary studies;
- Explore the relationship between science fiction and interrelated ideas of history, futurity, ecology, disability, gender, race, utopia, and the nation;
- Use literary study to develop skills for careful reading and clear writing;
- Produce cogent academic writing in a variety of modes and media forms;

**REQUIRED TEXTS** (available at the BookMarq on 16<sup>th</sup> Street)

Jack Finney, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*

Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*

Octavia E. Butler, *Kindred*

William Gibson, *Neuromancer*

Octavia E. Butler, *Bloodchild and Other Stories*

Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Lucky Strike*

Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, *Watchmen*

Any edition is fine.

Please note that an earlier version of this syllabus included *Woman on the Edge of Time*, which is no longer required, and omitted *Bloodchild and Other Stories*, which now is.

Selected additional texts will also be made available through D2L, as well as during class.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Attendance and Participation	20%
Discussion Leader	15%
D2L	10%
Lesson Plan Assignments	10%
Sample Syllabus	10%
Presentation	15%
Seminar Paper	20%

*Class Participation:* You are expected to attend every class having read the material and ready to discuss it, and to participate actively in our conversation. Please let me know in advance of our meeting if you find you will need to miss a session.

*Discussion Leader:* Beginning with Week 3, each member of the class will have two days in which they are expected to inaugurate our discussion based on the readings for that day. The requirements for this are necessarily very loose, as each day of the course will have a very different type of text to be discussed; in general, however, the discussion inaugurator will be asked to (1) succinctly describe the project of the text; (2) articulate a brief critical response to the material; and (3) direct our collective attention to one or two problems in, questions about, or particularly important moments in the text. I expect this introductory role to take approximately five to ten minutes. A signup sheet for this role will be distributed in class next week.

*D2L Forums:* This course will make extensive use of the forums on D2L, where you can express your response to the material before class begins and where we can continue our discussions after class is over. You are asked to contribute a short 500-1000-word response to the material at least five times over the course of the semester. I encourage you to think of these comments as possible “seeds” for the final paper; feel free to begin to develop your thoughts there. You are also highly encouraged to kill two birds with one stone by posting a forum comment on the days you are scheduled to be the discussion inaugurator. These comments should ideally be completed either by 10 PM before one of the class discussions devoted to that text or by 10 PM the night before the following class. Roughly half of the posts should be completed before Spring Break.

*Lesson Plans:* On four days during the semester the class will be divided into sections that will each individually prepare short lesson plans to teach one or both of the short stories assigned that day to a class of undergraduates. Discussing these lesson plans will form the spine of our discussion on those days. I will leave the specifics of the pedagogical situation to your imagination.

*Syllabus (Group Project):* In groups of two or three, you will develop a syllabus for a proposed college-level course in literary studies, having *something* to do with the study of twentieth-century American literature extremely broadly conceived. (Your group will choose details like the academic level, the historical period or subdiscipline, and the theme.) These syllabi will be brought to class on the last day of class to be presented to and workshopped by the group.

*Final Paper:* Your final paper will be on a topic chosen and developed by you with some connection (however tenuous) to the material discussed in this class. The project will move through several stages:

Abstract: You will submit an abstract for the paper you plan to me by Thursday, March 28, alongside a call for papers, a journal special issue, a conference announcement, etc. that you might theoretically write the paper towards. You should get in the habit of watching the CFP clearinghouse for English studies at [call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu](http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu) in order to find a CFP that is a good fit.

Symposium: The last two weeks of our class will be a mini-conference with panels constructed from the abstracts you submit to me. You will all present a conference version of your paper in a conference-style presentation, with each participant having twenty minutes to speak, followed by audience Q&A. Ideally this discussion will help you develop your final paper for submission in the following week.

Final Paper: The final 12-to-25-page paper is due to me by 5 PM on Friday, May 10, via D2L's Digital Dropbox. The final paper should endeavor to be an original scholarly intervention in a contemporary debate about literary studies, with an eye towards conference presentation and eventual publication. This means your final paper should demonstrate both its originality and participation in an existing scholarly conversation through appropriate citation of existing work (both primary and secondary sources). Such sources might include: other fictional or nonfictional works by the author(s) under consideration; secondary criticism of those or other literary texts; relevant cultural or literary theory and criticism; historical research and documents; scholarship from other academic disciplines on related issues and themes; popular criticism; research into patterns in the critical and popular reception of a text; and fan scholarship.

To produce an "A" essay, you must construct an essay that does more than simply summarize or comment on the work of others; you must forward, counter, or transform what they have to say. An A essay advances an original argument that builds toward a climax and makes a persuasive case for its own significance. A essays are clearly written, and often eloquent.

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*Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.*

—Kenneth Burke, “The Philosophy of Literary Form”

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### **FORMAT OF WRITTEN WORK**

Your final paper should be typed in twelve-point font, double-spaced with one-inch margins, saved in a format Microsoft Word can open. Your filename should contain *your name* in it, for example, yourlastname-finalpaper.docx.

I expect you to *edit* and *proofread* all written work, even forum comments.

Given the usual conventions of our discipline, I suggest either MLA bibliography or Chicago footnote style for citation.

### **DOUBLE SUBMISSION OF PAPERS**

I do not object to double submission of papers if that works for your course plan. However, you must ask for permission in advance from both professors and your proposal must satisfy the requirements of both assignments. Your paper should be approximately twice as long as a single-submitted paper to reflect its dual purpose.

### **INCOMPLETES**

Please talk to me, as soon as possible, if you feel as though you will not be able to meet the deadline for the final paper. Of course things happen, but I strongly advise against trying to use incompletes as a task-management strategy in graduate school.

### **PAPER SUBMISSION**

The final paper should be submitted via D2L's Dropbox by class time on the due date, Friday, May 10, by 5 PM.

Your other written work will be posted either in D2L Dropbox or in the D2L forums. Many of these assignments will have flexible due dates driven by your own interests and responses. **It is thus your responsibility to make sure you are properly keeping up with your work in this course in a timely fashion.**

Except in very unusual circumstances, work will not be accepted by email.

## TECHNOLOGY IS TERRIBLE: PLAN AHEAD!

The Internet goes down. Files become corrupted. Computers crash. These are predictable facts of twenty-first century life, not emergencies. For this course, for all your courses, for the rest of your career and your life in this world you need to develop work habits and strategies that take into account the basic, inescapable unreliability of computers. Start your assignments well in advance of the due date; save them often; save backup copies of essential documents, including copies off-site using a service like Carbonite, Dropbox, or Google Drive.

## ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class discussion is an essential component of this seminar; class discussion, not lecture, will be the primary means by which we will investigate these texts together. It is crucial that you come to class every day having read the required material and prepared to discuss it.

**Consequently, attendance in this class is mandatory.** You should plan on attending every class. Please talk to me (in advance if possible) if you ever find you will need to miss a class meeting.

The course adheres to Marquette University's attendance policy, which can be found on the Internet at <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#attendance>.

You are allowed **three unexcused absences** over the course of the fall semester. **After that, your class participation will drop by half a letter grade for each additional unexcused absence.** Upon the seventh unexcused absence, you may receive a WA (Withdrawn—Excessive Absences) for the semester.

**Merely being present in class is insufficient for an “A” in class participation.** Each student is expected to *participate in* and *contribute to* our discussions. Just being in the room is not enough.

## EMAIL

Students in this class are required to check their official Marquette email account—whatever account D2L sends its emails to—at least once a day, in case there are any last-minute announcements or disruptions.

I endeavor to respond to all emails within 24 hours, usually much less—but please do not send me urgent emails regarding your assignments on the night before they are due and expect an immediate reply.

## LAPTOP POLICY

In-class use of laptops, Kindles, iPads, etc. is permitted for access to electronic versions of our texts and for notetaking. However, students *must* refrain from non-class-related computer use, including email, instant messaging, Facebook, Twitter, and the like. **Please do not abuse this privilege or distract your fellow students.** I reserve the right to ban individual technological devices if this becomes a problem. Except in unusual cases of personal emergency, cleared with me at the start of class, no use of cell phones will be permitted during class time; please turn off your ringers and put them out of sight.

## CONFERENCES

**All students are asked to meet with me in a short one-on-one conference at my office at least once during the semester to discuss the course and your work within it.** Please know I am very happy to meet with you individually to discuss work-in-progress in excess of this requirement, as many times as you like. Simply come to my weekly office hours, or see or email me to set up an appointment.

## MOVIE NIGHT!

We will be viewing a number of films this semester. My plan is to screen *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) immediately following class on Thursday, January 23; this film is only 80 minutes long, and so will fit nicely within the next class period if you have it free.

We will need to schedule evening or weekend screenings of *Blade Runner* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, depending on what works best for the group, and discuss how we want to approach *Star Trek: The Next Generation* as that date draws closer.

Students unable to attend the planned screening will need to make arrangements to view the film on their own.

## FLEXIBILITY

If it will benefit the class, changes may be made to the above.

## ACCOMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who believe they may require accommodations in this course should contact me early in the semester so your learning needs can be appropriately met.

I am of course more than happy to work with you to make sure you are successful in this course and to make this course most accessible for you. However, without documentation, I am limited in what I am able to do. Therefore, in order for me to help you most effectively, I need you to be proactive in contacting Marquette University's Office of Disability Services (located on the fifth floor of the 707 Building).

ODS can be reached by phone at (414) 288-1645 or by email at [ods@marquette.edu](mailto:ods@marquette.edu).

## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are expected to abide by the academic honesty policy outlined in your undergraduate bulletin. I urge you all to examine this material and consult me with any questions you may have about plagiarism or academic integrity *before* it becomes an issue.

Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. **Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course.** No exceptions or special dispensations will be made.

Full details of Marquette's academic integrity policy are available on the Internet at <http://www.marquette.edu/provost/academic-integrity.php>.

On a personal level, I (like everyone) hate being lied to. Please, do not feel you need to concoct elaborate stories. Simply be honest with me about whatever is going on and we will work it out.

## ACADEMIC FREEDOM

We all enter this classroom with preexisting political, ethical, philosophical, and intellectual commitments. You are all required to engage the material—but you are absolutely *not* required to agree either with any of the writers we will discuss, or with me, in whole or in part.

## RESPECT

This classroom is a community. It is crucial that we treat each other with the appropriate level of courtesy and respect. No one should be made to feel unwelcome here.

Failure to treat other students with the respect they deserve will **severely** negatively impact your class participation grade.

## KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN!

I want this class to be a meaningful and valuable experience for you, both in its own terms and in service of the development of your larger research agenda. If you have any ideas, suggestions, or concerns about the way things are going, my door is always open.

## PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

*Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class as they become necessary.*

Students should come to class prepared to discuss the listed texts or chapters.

DAY	DATE	ASSIGNMENT
T	Jan 14	<b>FIRST DAY OF CLASS</b>  <b>1948</b> Judith Merrill, “That Only a Mother” (in class)
Th	Jan 16	<b>1950</b> Isaac Asimov, <i>I, Robot</i> (excerpt) [D2L] Darko Suvin, “On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre” [D2L] <i>optional</i> : Gerry Canavan, “The Suvin Event” [D2L]
T	Jan 21	<b>1954</b> Jack Finney, <i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i> (first half)
Th	Jan 23	Jack Finney, <i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i> (second half)
T	Jan 28	<b>1956</b> <i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i> (dir. Don Siegel) and subsequent adaptations Susan Sontag, “The Imagination of Disaster” [D2L] Fredric Jameson, “Metacommentary” (excerpt) [D2L]
Th	Jan 30	<b>1959</b> Robert Heinlein, “—All You Zombies—” [D2L] <b>LESSON PLAN WORKSHOPS (GROUP A)</b>

T	Feb 5	<b>1967</b> Pamela Zoline, “The Heat Death of the Universe” [D2L] <b>LESSON PLAN WORKSHOPS (GROUP B)</b>
Th	Feb 7	<b>1968</b> <i>2001: A Space Odyssey</i> (dir. Stanley Kubrick) Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, “Science Fiction and Empire”
T	Feb 12	<b>1968</b> Philip K. Dick, <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> (first half)
Th	Feb 14	Philip K. Dick, <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> (second half) Carl Freedman, “Towards a Theory of Paranoia: The Science Fiction of Philip K. Dick” [D2L] <i>Blade Runner</i> (dir. Ridley Scott)
T	Feb 19	<b>1974</b> Ursula K. Le Guin, <i>The Dispossessed</i> (first third)
Th	Feb 21	Ursula K. Le Guin, <i>The Dispossessed</i> (second third)
T	Feb 26	Ursula K. Le Guin, <i>The Dispossessed</i> (whole book) Samuel R. Delany, “To Read the Dispossessed” [D2L]
Th	Feb 28	<b>1976-1977</b> Alice Sheldon as James Tiptree, Jr. “Houston, Houston, Do You Read?” [D2L] Alice Sheldon as Raccoona Sheldon, “The Screwfly Solution” [D2L] <b>LESSON PLAN WORKSHOPS (GROUP A)</b>
T	Mar 5	<b>1979</b> Octavia E. Butler, <i>Kindred</i> (first half)
Th	Mar 7	Octavia E. Butler, <i>Kindred</i> (second half) Gerry Canavan, <i>Octavia E. Butler</i> (excerpt) [D2L]
T	Mar 12	<i>SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS</i>
Th	Mar 14	<i>SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS</i>
T	Mar 19	<b>1982-1984</b> <i>Blade Runner</i> revisited William Gibson, “The Gernsback Continuum” [D2L] William Gibson, <i>Neuromancer</i> (first third)
Th	Mar 21	William Gibson, <i>Neuromancer</i> (first second)
T	Mar 26	William Gibson, <i>Neuromancer</i> (whole book) Fredric Jameson, “A Global Neuromancer” [D2L]
Th	Mar 28	<b>CLASS *RESCHEDULED*</b> <b>PROSPECTUS DUE</b>

T	Apr 2	<b>1983-1986</b> Octavia E. Butler, “Speech Sounds” Octavia E. Butler, “Bloodchild” Octavia E. Butler, “The Evening and the Morning and the Night” Gerry Canavan, <i>Octavia E. Butler</i> (excerpt) [D2L] <b>LESSON PLAN WORKSHOPS (GROUP B)</b>
Th	Apr 4	<b>1984 (and 1989 and 1991)</b> Kim Stanley Robinson, “The Lucky Strike” Kim Stanley Robinson, “A Sensitive Dependence on Initial Conditions” Karen Joy Fowler, “Game Night at the Fox and Goose” [D2L]
T	Apr 9	<b>1986-1987</b> Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, <i>Watchmen</i> , issues 1-6
Th	Apr 11	Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, <i>Watchmen</i> , issues 7-12 <i>Watchmen</i> sequels and prequels Matthew Wolf-Meyer, “Utopias in the Superhero Comic, Subculture, and the Conservation of Difference” [D2L]
T	Apr 16	<b>1988-1994</b> <i>Star Trek: The Next Generation</i> (episode to be determined) Derrick Bell, “The Space Traders” [D2L]
Th	Apr 18	<b>EASTER BREAK—NO CLASS</b>
T	Apr 23	John Rieder, <i>Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System</i> (excerpt) [D2L] <b>GROUP PROJECT: SYLLABUS WORKSHOP</b>
Th	Apr 25	<b>CLASS SYMPOSIUM DAY ONE</b>
T	Apr 30	<b>CLASS SYMPOSIUM DAY TWO</b>
Th	May 2	<b>CLASS SYMPOSIUM DAY THREE</b> <b>LAST DAY OF CLASS</b>
F	May 10	<b>ENGL 6700 FINAL PAPER DUE BY D2L DROPBOX BY 11:59:59 PM</b>

**FOLLOW FAME: FRIENDS AND ALUMNI/AE OF MARQUETTE ENGLISH!**

*On Facebook (page):* [www.facebook.com/marquettefame](http://www.facebook.com/marquettefame)

*On Facebook (group):* [www.facebook.com/groups/496438583889194](http://www.facebook.com/groups/496438583889194)  
(search for “Undergraduate English at Marquette”)

*On Twitter:* @MarquetteFAME

I will also be inviting you to events in the pop culture and pizza series I run periodically during the fall and spring semesters. I hope you can attend!

### Further Reading

Students interesting in continuing their study of science fiction might be interested in some of the following critical texts:

Raymond Williams, "Utopia and Science Fiction"  
 Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*  
 Samuel Delany, "On Triton and Other Matters"  
 Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Language of the Night*  
 Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*  
 Tom Moylan, *Demand the Impossible* and *Scraps of the Untainted Sky*  
 Carl Freedman, *Critical Theory and Science Fiction*  
 Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini (eds.), *Dark Horizons*  
 Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism*  
 Margaret Atwood, *Learning from Other Worlds*  
 Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction*  
 Mark Bould and China Mieville (eds.), *Red Planets: Marxism and Science Fiction*  
 Gerry Canavan and Kim Stanley Robinson (eds.), *Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction*  
 Sherryl Vint, *Science Fiction: A Guide for the Perplexed*  
 Roger Luckhurst (ed.), *Science Fiction: A Literary History*  
 John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*  
 John Rieder, *Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System*  
 Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction*  
*The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*  
*The Cambridge Companion to American Science Fiction*  
*The Cambridge History of Science Fiction*  
*The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*  
*The Routledge Guide to Science Fiction*  
 and so on.

For fiction or journal recommendations, just ask!