

Spring 2025

CORE 1929-101: METHODS OF INQUIRY

Thematic Title: Science Fiction and the Human

two weekly lectures: MW 11:00 AM – 11:50 AM in Marquette Hall 100

weekly discussion sections: Thursdays and Friday (various times and locations)

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<https://fantastical.app/gerrycanavan/30-minute-meeting>

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CORE 1929: “Methods of Inquiry” is the bridge that connects the Foundation Tier courses in Philosophy, Theology, and Rhetoric with the multi-disciplinary examination of a theme within the Discovery Tier. Each MOI examines a single topic or question from the vantage point of three distinct disciplines. This approach prepares students for the Discovery Tier, which provides a deeper dive into multi-disciplinary examinations of themes related to our basic needs and assumptions.

In addition to making explicit our own methodological commitments, not to mention asking students to think about their own (in light of your majors and interests), the instructors will point out how the various authors we will examine draw from their specific training and methodological leanings in exploring the question of race.

This section of CORE 1929 invites students to explore the foundational questions inherent to the Marquette Core Curriculum through the lens of science fiction, especially the work of acclaimed African American author Octavia E. Butler and the film and television series *Star Trek*. In considering how both Butler and *Trek* have used fictional scenarios to probe the intersections of science, ethics, art, philosophy, and politics, students will articulate their own perspectives on some of the world's most important interdisciplinary questions.

MARQUETTE CORE CURRICULUM: FOUNDATIONS LEARNING OUTCOMES

Responsible and Ethical Communicators

Marquette students can responsibly and ethically use written, spoken, and visual communication to express ideas, create meaning, build relationships, foster understanding, and advocate for a better tomorrow.

1. After completing the foundations level courses and experiences, students will be able to consider a variety of modes and techniques to choose a form of communication best suited to a particular situation and explain their choice.

Moral and Ethical Actors

Marquette students can articulate appropriate professional and personal judgments that are rooted in an ethical and moral foundation that is informed by Catholic, Jesuit thought. They seek to use these foundations to make decisions that promote stronger communities and a just society.

1. After completing the foundations level courses and experiences, students will be able to recognize the ways in which the Catholic, Jesuit tradition, as well as other religious and ethical traditions, can contribute to ethical deliberation, in both the private and public spheres, especially as regards matters of social justice.

Citizens with Purpose

Marquette students will come away with a sense of purpose, personally and professionally, as global citizens who demonstrate critically reflective discernment processes that are rooted in one's sense of theological, intellectual, and personal commitments.

1. After completing the foundations level courses and experiences, students will be able to recognize and articulate their own values and personal commitments.

Collaborators Promoting Equity and Justice across Cultural Contexts

Marquette students will develop skills to understand how power, positionality, and privilege shape their own lives and those of others, locally and globally. They will be

able to describe how racism, colonialism, classism, sexism, other forms of prejudice, and other oppressive forces have impacted and continue to impact the well-being of marginalized groups and to identify historical and structural barriers to equity and inclusiveness. They will also be able to recognize the innate human dignity shared across diverse groups and to apply skills learned in class to work within and across cultures to promote justice and equity.

1. After completing the foundations level courses and experiences, students will be able to recognize and articulate issues relating to power and prejudice, and to describe some avenues toward social justice.

Global Problem Solvers

Marquette students are well-practiced in cooperative and cross-disciplinary problem-solving skills and can present innovative solutions that draw from theological, philosophical, qualitative and quantitative perspectives to address the increasingly blurred lines between local and global challenges.

1. After completing the foundations level courses and experiences, students will be able to analyze a problem from multiple perspectives and ask questions that reflect different viewpoints/methodologies.

Leaders in Discovery

Marquette students will advance understanding of the world by identifying significant questions and searching for answers based on a systematic process of discovery that is rooted in intellectual inquiry and the Jesuit liberal arts tradition.

1. After completing the foundations level courses and experiences, students will be able to formulate solutions to a problem that can be approached from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

CORE 1929: METHODS OF INQUIRY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will have:

1. demonstrated an understanding of the different disciplinary methods of inquiry approached the selected course theme, and of the similarities and differences between them;
2. articulated what specifically appealed or did not appeal to them about any of these particular approaches;
3. reflected on what this tells them about themselves: their individual strengths and weaknesses, intellectual tendencies, curiosities, etc;
4. read and interpreted major works of science fictional speculation of the postwar United States and discussed the relationship of these texts to major

contemporary debates and practices around race, gender, class, sexual orientation, disability, labor, justice, technology, and the environment.

THIS COURSE AND LIFE AFTER MARQUETTE

Marquette identifies seven key career preparation skills that its courses teach across disciplines, which it calls the Professional Formation Competencies:

- **Problem Solve with Curiosity:** You solve problems with conscience and curiosity, using critical thinking.
- **Develop Career Management Skills:** You approach career management with attention to self-awareness, intentional effort to grow knowledge related to profession, quiet reflection, and action toward fulfilling your unique purpose.
- **Collaborate for Solidarity:** You collaborate for solidarity, prioritizing working for the good of the group and acting as a person for and with others.
- **Communicate Responsibly and Ethically:** You approach ethical communication with the intent of identifying reliable sources, taking responsibility for what and how you communicate, and reaching shared understanding.
- **Lead for the Common Good:** You demonstrate leadership through self-initiative and the empowerment of others to advance solutions for the greater good of all.
- **Commit to Justice, Equity, and Belonging:** You understand biases and advocate for an environment that fosters belonging of diverse people, appreciation of differing perspectives, and action toward justice, equity, and belonging.
- **Adapt in Discipline and Technology:** You adapt in your discipline and relevant technologies, knowing the tools available to you and participating in advancements in your profession.

Our collective study of science fiction, including our discussions of its meaning and messages and your self-guided development of two major projects, will intersect with many of these professional formation competencies, and could even ultimately form one example of the sorts of skills and values you developed during your time in college at a future job interview.

LOGISTICS (PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!)

This course is a well-thought-out pedagogical experiment. Every Monday and Wednesday, between 11:00am and 11:50am, *all* students registered for this course will meet in Marquette Hall 100.

On Thursdays and Fridays, you will meet in nine small discussion sections of approximately 25 students each. You are registered for a specific one that meets at a specific time and place with a designated graduate instructor. You cannot switch or attend a different discussion meeting. Attendance for all three meetings will be monitored and is mandatory. Your attendance and participation grade will be negatively impacted by missing class or discussion. You will also underperform when it comes to quizzes and reflection papers. Please refer to CheckMarq for specifics on where you should go.

Mondays	Wednesdays	Thursdays and Fridays
Large Lecture 215 STUDENTS	Large Lecture 215 STUDENTS	Discussion Sections 9 SECTIONS OF APPROXIMATELY 25 STUDENTS EACH
11:00 AM – 11:50 AM	11:00 AM – 11:50 AM	VARIOUS TIMES Refer to your CheckMarq for specific time/location.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND PERSONAL EMERGENCIES

Everyone at Marquette recognizes that this remains an extremely difficult time which may continue to be filled with different sorts of uncertainty. Your safety, health, and well-being are our primary concern and we want to be able to support you in any way that we can.

The university also understands that you may be facing personal obstacles that may make it difficult to meet your typical academic goals. Please refer to the Student Resources page on the Marquette COVID-19 Response webpage for information and resources on basic needs such as housing, food, financial aid, and medical and mental health; the webpage also offers information on official University communications, access to technology, and student services. Faculty and staff are also here for you.

If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your situation outside of class, please don't hesitate to talk with us. We want to be a resource for you. You are not alone.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the BookMarq on 16th Street)

Octavia E. Butler, *Bloodchild*

Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Sower*

Any edition of these texts will do. For *Parable of the Sower*, students may choose between the prose novel (originally published in 1993) or Damian Duffy and John Jennings' comic adaptation (published in 2020).

Additional course material will occasionally be distributed during class or via D2L.

ASSIGNMENTS (200 Points Total)

1. Attendance and Participation (30 points)

This grade is based on your attendance and participation in discussion sections. Show-up having read the material and ready to talk and you'll do fine.

2. Quizzes (10 points each, 30 points total)

These will be announced and completed via D2L.

3. Reflections / Reactions (5 points each, lowest two dropped = 50 Points)

These will be submitted online in response to each week's lecture and content. They are intended to keep students accountable for listening to the lectures and engaging with the ideas regularly. The specific reflection requested each week can vary but may include:

1. a summary of what you read.
2. a question about the readings.
3. your answer to a question or debate raised during class.

3. Midterm Project (30 points)

Your midterm project will be a group presentation, asking you to articulate a personal vision of utopia. Most groups will want to choose one of three approaches: an imaginative short story or essay describing the utopia as it might someday exist; a blueprint for your utopia that describes how it works; or a political manifesto detailing what we must do in the present to bring your utopia into being.

4. Final Project (40 points)

The final project consists of a podcast, paper, or other project; this will be constructed over the course of the semester through scaffolded assignments; the final project itself will be due during the final presentation week.

The major components of the final project include:

- a question you seek to answer (5 points)
- thoughts on method and resources (5 points)
- an outline (10 points)
- a presentation (20 points)

A detailed assignment description and rubric, including deadlines for the various components of the assignment, will be provided on D2L.

5. Reflection Paper (20 points)

For the final assignment in the course, students will reflect on the course topic and disciplines to explain how each contributed to the students' professional formation. A detailed assignment description and rubric for the final reflection paper will be provided on D2L.

GRADING

This course is graded on the following scale:

93% and above = A

90–92% = A-

87–89% = B+

83–86% = B

80–82%=B-
77–79% = C+
73–76%= C
70–72% =C-
67–69%=D+
60–67% = D
59% and below = F

“Pass/P” or “Satisfactory/S” requires the equivalent of at least a “C” (73%).

Note: In the case of students falling somewhere in-between grades, say because of a half percentage point, we round up at the half point mark. Students who are on the cusp of a B-/B (say 82.67%) will be given the grade up.

For information about incompletes, voluntary and involuntary withdrawals, and other unusual situations, please consult the undergraduate student bulletin.

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

Attendance will be taken throughout the semester. Missing class will impact your overall attendance and participation grade; not showing up to class means GTAs have little to base your participation grade on. It will also cause you to do poorly on test/quizzes. Faculty will be creating questions out of what happens in-class. Thus, missing class will cause you to not do well. You can miss two of each class-style with no penalty: two large lectures and two discussion sections. That’s a week and a half of class. No notes or excuses are necessary (though you should at least let your GTA know). Beyond that, your *total* grade will drop 3% for every day missed. Students who sleep during class, chronically arrive late or leave early, or attend class without the requisite materials will be marked not-present (absent).

As long as you do so without disrupting the learning of the students around you, you are always welcome to briefly excuse yourself from class for a few minutes if needed, as well as to quietly use a fidget cube or similar device if doing so helps you concentrate.

The last day to withdraw and still receive a “W” is April 11, 2025; other important university dates can be found [here](#).

RECORDING DEVICES

Any student intending on recording class must ask for permission. In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well as Marquette academic privacy policies, any student recording their peers, GTAs, and/or the professors must let us know in advance. We reserve the right to deny your request. You cannot record without advance permission and consent.

COVID-19 POLICY

Everyone in this class will be expected to follow the current COVID-19 policies in effect on campus, including current guidance on masks.

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.

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

LAPTOP POLICY

As Marquette moves towards a paperless learning environment, in-class use of laptops, Kindles, iPads, etc. becomes ever more important 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.** GTAs will sit in the back of the room and if they notice you texting, checking social-media, shopping, or surfing the web they may ask you to refrain from doing so. If this becomes an issue you may be asked to leave class. We reserve the right to ban individual technological devices if this becomes a problem.

FLEXIBILITY

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

WRITING CENTER

Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the Writing Center, located in Raynor Library Room 240, at any stage of the writing process. Please visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.marquette.edu/english/writingcenter/> to find out how to schedule an appointment and to access the studio's online resources.

ACCOMMODATIONS

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

We are 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, we are limited in what we are able to do. Therefore, in order for us to help you most effectively, we 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.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are expected to abide by the academic honesty policy outlined in your undergraduate bulletin. We urge you all to examine this material and consult us 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.

Marquette students now sign an Honor Pledge, which states:

- *I recognize the importance of personal integrity in all aspects of life and work.*
- *I commit myself to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, by which I earn the respect of others.*
- *I support the development of good character, and commit myself to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity as an important aspect of personal integrity.*
- *My commitment obliges me to conduct myself according to the Marquette University Honor Code.*

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

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS ("AI")

You are expected to produce your own text in all submitted coursework for this class. The unmarked use of LLMs (such as ChatGPT) for any coursework violates academic integrity. Incorporating any part of an AI-generated response in any assignment for this course falls under the definition of plagiarism and will be treated accordingly.

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 us, in whole or in part.

RESPECT AND INCLUSIVITY

This classroom is a community. In order to learn, we must be open to the views of people different from ourselves. Please honor the uniqueness of your fellow classmates and appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from one another. Please respect each others' opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. No one should be made to feel unwelcome. Finally, remember to keep confidential all issues of a personal or professional nature that are discussed in class or discussion section. Failure to treat other students with the respect they deserve will *severely* impact your class participation grade.

KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN!

We 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 college experience. If you have any ideas, suggestions, or concerns about the way things are going, our doors are always open.

WEEK-BY-WEEK SCHEDULE

*Specific reading assignments, including links and PDFs, will be available on D2L.
Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class.*

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

WEEK 1: Introduction to the Course

M 1/13: First Day of Class

W 1/15: The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm

ThF 1/16–17: Discussion of Charles Stross, “Designing Society for Posterity” [Web]

WEEK 2: The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm and Vocation

M 1/20: NO CLASS

W 1/22: This MOI and Your Vocation

ThF 1/23–1/24: The Future of Work

WEEK 3: Professional Formation Competencies

M 1/27: What Are Professional Formation Competencies?

W 1/29: This MOI and PFCs

ThF 1/30–1/31: Discussion of PFCs

Note: The curriculum for weeks 1-3 are shared across all MOIs.

WEEK 4: Methods of Inquiry

M 2/3: Science Fiction from a Media Studies Perspective (“Bloodchild”)

W 2/5: Science Fiction from a Communications Perspective (“Bloodchild” continues)

ThF 2/6–2/7: Introduction of Utopias/Manifestos Assignment

WEEK 5: Science Fiction as a Genre

M 2/10: Andy Weir, “The Egg”

W 2/12: Ursula K. Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas”

ThF 2/13–2/14: Discussion of Ted Chiang, “What’s Expected of Us”

WEEK 6: SF and Metaphors about Society

M 2/17: *Star Trek* (TOS): “Let That Be Your Last Battlefield” (in-class viewing)

W 2/19: *Star Trek* (TOS): “Let That Be Your Last Battlefield” (discussion)

ThF 2/20–2/21: Utopias/Manifestos workshop

WEEK 7: Afrofuturism

M 2/22: Marvel Cinematic Universe: *Black Panther*

W 2/24: Derrick Bell, “The Space Traders”

ThF 2/25–2/26: Discussion of Janelle Monae’s “Dirty Computer”

WEEK 8: Utopias, Dystopias, and Manifestos

M 3/3: *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*: “Far Beyond the Stars” (in-class viewing)

W 3/5: *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*: “Far Beyond the Stars” (discussion)

ThF 3/6–3/7: UTOPIAS/MANIFESTOS PRESENTATIONS

M 3/10 – F 3/14: SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9: Octavia E. Butler and Afrofuturism

M 3/17: “Pumzi” (in-class viewing and discussion)

W 3/19: Octavia E. Butler, “The Evening and the Morning and the Night”

ThF 3/20–3/21: Octavia E. Butler, “The Book of Martha”

WEEKS 10-14: *Parable of the Sower*

M 3/24: *Parable of the Sower*, ch. 1-4

W 3/26: *Parable of the Sower*, ch. 5-7

F 3/27-3/28: Final Presentation Pitch

WEEK 11

M 3/31: *Parable of the Sower*, ch. 8-10

W 4/2: *Parable of the Sower*, ch. 11-13

ThF 4/3-4/4: Final Project Methods and Resources

WEEK 12

M 4/7: *Parable of the Sower*, ch. 14-16

W 4/9: *Parable of the Sower*, ch. 17-19

ThF 4/10-4/11: Final Presentation Outline

WEEK 13

M 4/14: *Parable of the Sower*, ch. 20-22

W 4/16: *Parable of the Sower*, whole book

ThF 4/17-4/18: EASTER BREAK—NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS

WEEK 14

M 4/21: EASTER MONDAY—NO CLASS

W 4/23: *Parable of the Talents* and unfinished sequels

ThF 4/24-4/25: PRESENTATIONS

WEEK 15: PRESENTATIONS

4/28, 4/30, 5/1-5/2: PRESENTATIONS

During week 15, you will present your second group projects in small groups.

FINALS WEEK

Your Final Reflection Paper is due Monday, May 5, by 3 PM.