

English 3372: Science Fiction

FutureNow

Prof. Jared Gardner

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We think about science fictions as speculations about the future—what everyday life, political life, and our relationship to technology will look like 100, 1,000, or 10,000 years from now. But science fiction is also always thinking about the present and the decisions we are making now as individuals and a society. In this class we will be focusing on a broad subgenre of scifi sometimes called "social science fiction"—speculative fictions about how future society will be organized that always have one eye on the patterns and consequences of social behavior in the present.

This course fulfills a GEC requirement in Literature. As with all courses fulfilling this requirement, students in this class will evaluate significant texts in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; and critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing. Expected Learning Outcomes include: 1) analysis, interpretation, and critique of significant literary works and 2) through reading, discussing, and writing about literature, students will learn to appraise and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and other cultures.

SCHEDULE

Week 1

Tues 1/ 8 Introductions

Thurs 1/10 Octavia Butler, Parable of the Sower

Week 2

Tues 1/15 Parable of the Sower (continued)

Thurs 1/17 Parable of the Sower (continued)

Week 3

Tues 1/22 Robert Silverberg, "Sailing to Byzantium" (BB2)

Thurs 1/24 Neal Stephenson, Diamond Age

QUIZ 1

Week 4

Tues 1/29 Diamond Age (continued)

Thurs 1/31 Diamond Age (continued)

Week 5

Tues 2/5 Diamond Age (concluded); Paolo Bacigalupi, Windup Girl

Thurs 2/7 Windup Girl (continued)

Week 6

Tues 2/12 Windup Girl (continued)

Thurs 2/14 Windup Girl (continued)

QUIZ 2

Week 7

Tues 2/19 John Scalzi, et al., Metatropolis

Thurs 2/21 Metatropolis (continued)

Fri 2/22 PAPER 1

Week 8

Tues 2/26 James Patrick Kelly, "Mr. Boy" (BB2)

Thurs 2/28 NO CLASS

Week 9

Tues 3/5 David Marusek, Counting Heads

Thurs 3/7 Counting Heads (continued)

Week 10

Tues 3/19 Counting Heads (continued)

Thurs 3/21 Nancy Kress, "Beggars in Spain" (BB2)

QUIZ 3

Week 11

Tues 3/26 Corey Doctorow, Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom

Thurs 3/28 Down and Out (continued)

Friday 3/29 PAPER 2

Week 12

Tues 4/2 Down and Out (continued)

Thurs 4/4 Charles Stross, Rule 34

Week 13

Tues 4/9 Rule 34 (continued)

Thurs 4/11 Rule 34 (continued)

Week 14

Tues 4/16 Hugh Howey, Wool 1

Thurs 4/18 Wool and the future of scifi at the end of print; Conclusions

QUIZ 4

Mon 4/29 FINAL PAPER DUE

Required texts

1. Octavia Butler, Parable of the Sower (1993) 0446675504
2. Neal Stephenson, Diamond Age (1995) 0553380966
3. Cory Doctorow, Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom (2003) 076530953X (also available for free download)
4. David Marusek, Counting Heads (2005) 0765317540
5. Scalzi, et al, Metatropolis (2008) 0765327104 (originally released as an audiobook anthology; available in bargain hardcover edition at amazon.com)
6. Paolo Bacigalupi, Windup Girl (2009) 1597801585
7. Charles Stross, Rule 34 (2011) 1937007669
8. Hugh Howey, Wool (2011-12) 1469984202 (released originally in kindle format)
9. The Best of the Best, Volume 2: 20 Years of the Best Short Science Fiction Novels 0312363427 [BB2 in schedule]

Course Requirements:

- Quizzes. To make sure that we are all on the same page in terms of lectures and discussions and that we are keeping up with the reading, there will be five (5) quizzes, which will be taken on Carmen. The cumulative average will constitute 25% of your grade.
- Regular and engaged attendance. If you miss more than 3 classes, your grade will be lowered one full grade for each class missed. There is no need to submit excuses for absences, as the same policy applies regardless of the reason for missing class. You should bring your text and writing materials/laptop to every class, and you should also come prepared with notes and questions on the readings. Participation in course discussion is encouraged, and for those who are more reticent

- about public conversation, there will be a discussion board on Carmen to facilitate our conversation. Both in-class and Carmen participation will constitute 10% of your grade.
- Short papers. There will be two (2) short (500-750 word; 2-3 pages) essays. The first of these short papers will be due on Friday, February 22. The second will be due on (or before) Friday, March 29. Each will be worth 20% of your grade. More specific guidelines will be posted on Carmen.
 - Final Paper. Your final assignment will be a longer project, which will be due on Monday, April 29, and will be worth 25% of your grade.
 - All course assignments must be completed to earn credit for this course.

Academic misconduct and plagiarism

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the [Code of Student Conduct](#)

Accessibility

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the [Office for Disability Services](#) will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901.

Laptop/Tablet/E-reader/Cellphones

You are allowed to use laptops, tablets and electronic readers (kindles, nooks) in class so long as you are using them to take notes or look at class material. Please have respect for your education and your colleagues and do not use your devices for any non-course related purposes during class time. And kindly turn off the ringers on your phones.