

**LMC 3214: SCIENCE FICTION**  
**Full Summer Session 2014**  
**LMC 3214 LS (Campus) | MW 12:00PM-1:45PM**  
**LMC 3214 QUP (Off-Campus/SOUP) | Asynchronous**

**Instructor**

Dr. Jason W. Ellis | Office: 009 Stephen C. Hall Building | Office Hours: M 2:00-3:00PM|  
Email: [jason.ellis@lmc.gatech.edu](mailto:jason.ellis@lmc.gatech.edu) | Twitter: [@dynamicsubspace](https://twitter.com/dynamicsubspace) | Web: [dynamicsubspace.net](http://dynamicsubspace.net)

**Prerequisites**

Undergraduate Semester level ENGL 1102 Minimum Grade of D

**Course Attributes**

This course satisfies 3 credit hours in Core Area C: Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics.

**Course Description**

We will explore the historical development of Science Fiction (SF) as a global phenomenon while formulating and testing definitions of the genre against examples in print, television, movies, and video games. In addition to charting SF's origins, we will investigate one example of its global emergence in the country of Taiwan.

**Learning Outcomes**

- Science and Technology Knowledge Construction: Students will understand that scientific and technological innovation occurs in a social context, and they will be able to recognize how society influences science and technical discourses.
- Textual/Visual Analysis: Students will learn to read, analyze, and interpret cultural projects such as film, literature, art, and new media.
- Interpretive Frameworks: Students will become familiar with a variety of social, political, and philosophical theories and be able to apply those theories to creative texts, as well as to their own cultural observations.
- Communication Skills: Students will be able to gather, organize, and express information clearly and accurately by using traditional media and by tapping the potential of new digital media
- Historical Analysis: Students will examine science fiction texts from the last 200 years to show how they reflect ambiguous reactions to change.
- Ethical Analysis: Science fiction can be a powerful metaphor for examining and, perhaps, revealing, our own cultural biases, expectations, and potential. This literature extrapolates, from any number of starting points, possible futures, alternate histories, and alternate pasts. Through use of unlimited literary tools and styles, it provides students

with real and imagined cultures and technological vectors to use as a springboard for thought about identity and choice.

### **Required Texts**

Evans, Arthur B. et. al., eds. *The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 2010. Print.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. 1831 edition. Available online here:  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/42324>.

T-Square: Other excerpts and readings will be made available for download as PDFs.

Off-campus Students: Video streaming service of your choice (e.g., Netflix, Blockbuster, Hulu, Amazon, etc.) to watch assigned TV episodes and videos. Some videos are available in the public domain on Archive.org. Others can be seen on YouTube.

### **Assignments and Grading**

I expect students to keep up with all assigned readings, viewings, and assignments.

The major assignments in the class include: three 900-word discussion essays, one 1,250-word final paper, and on-going Twitter use throughout the semester.

Each 900-word discussion essay covers approximately 3-4 weeks worth of material from readings and lecture. Exemplary discussion essays demonstrate knowledge of the readings/viewings, illustrate an understanding of course concepts, incorporate the use of course terminology/language, exercise accuracy with all names, dates, and titles, and correctly follow MLA formatting (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/1/>). These discussion essays are given in lieu of exams, which means that they should discuss in an extended essay all of the lecture materials and readings. I want students to incorporate my lectures into their essays, but any material quoted from other sources—books, TV shows, films, etc.—should be properly cited parenthetically and listed on a Works Cited page.

The 1,250-word final paper should analyze a single work or series of SF of the student's choosing (not already discussed in class) against definitions of SF. For example, your paper might respond to the question: "Is *Star Wars* an example of SF?" To answer this question, you will need to discuss competing definitions of SF, assert your own definition based on that discussion, and test *Star Wars* against your definition using specific, cited examples from the film. Another example would be, "Is *Firefly* space opera, hard SF, or feminist SF?" In this case, you would use a spectrum of SF definitions to test your selected SF text against definitions of space opera, hard SF, and feminist SF. An exemplary essay will consider historical and cultural contexts of the selected work and definitions, and elaborate on connections with other works of SF. As with the shorter discussion essays, the final paper will follow MLA formatting (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/1/>). For more information about writing literary/film/new media research papers based on arguments and evidence, review your WOVENtext (ENGL1101/1102) online textbook or visit the Purdue OWL website (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/4/17/>).

Any quoted material on weekly discussion essays and the final paper must be properly cited parenthetically and supported by a works cited page. Follow MLA style for all assignments except on your tweets discussed below (find an example posted on T-Square and refer to Purdue OWL website: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>). Long citations do not contribute to your assignment's word count. All of your work must be submitted in Word DOCX format (RTF, ODT, PDF, etc. formats will not be accepted).

With the exception of properly cited material, all writing in your assignments must be your own (refer to the Honor Code linked below). Plagiarism (i.e., passing the work of others as your own—while not limited to these things, it might include: asking others to write your essays, copy-and-pasting writing from online or other sources without proper citation, or revising/paraphrasing outside resources to make the ideas appear as your own) can lead to failure of an assignment and referral to the Office of Student Integrity for investigation. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please talk with me well in advance before an assignment is due, because I want to help all students to be ethical practitioners and obtain the maximum benefit from having done the cognitive work of the class themselves.

Each 900-word discussion essay is worth 20% of your final grade, the final paper is worth 30%, and participation is worth 10%. Assignments may not be submitted late without a conversation with the professor at least 24 hours before the assignment is due or made up without a conversation with the Dean of Students validating a documented excuse. Due dates are outlined on the schedule below. Assignments for students on and off campus must be submitted on time--no exceptions. Students should plan ahead and submit early. If you do not receive a time stamped receipt from T-Square after submitting an assignment, you should IMMEDIATELY try to submit again and failing that, email a copy of your work to me. Final grades are assigned according to this scale: A=100-90, B=89-80, C=79-70, D=69-60, and F=59-0.

### **Participation**

Student participation during class meetings or asynchronously in cyberspace leads to personal success in our class. I expect students to follow the schedule, keep up on readings/viewings, attend lectures on-campus or online as appropriate to your section, perform additional research on interesting or difficult topics, and submit assignments on time.

On-campus students should attend class to receive lectures and discuss course material. *Students may have two absences to use for any reason (illness, errands, etc.). For each absence beyond those two, I deduct 5 points from your final grade. I reserve the right to fail students who miss more than five classes.* Should you have any trouble meeting your obligation to be in class regularly and on time, I recommend that you speak with me immediately and meet with the Dean of Students.

Our class will be video recorded for the benefit of online students, which means that arriving late is even more disruptive and disrespectful than in a traditional class. Students should plan ahead to arrive to class before the time our class begins and be ready to leave when time ends to allow the next class to begin on time, too. *Due to the importance placed on being ready to begin class on time, each late arrival counts as half an absence.*

SOUP Program students are not required to meet during the on-campus meeting time, but they are expected to watch lecture recordings, make notes from the video lectures, and discuss material among themselves and with on-campus students via Twitter. While all on-campus and online students are required to use Twitter, the online students have a greater need in using Twitter as a means of discussing topics, asking questions, and responding to tweets of others.

We will use Twitter as a discussion medium for the class, so all students should sign up for an account, follow @dynamicsubspace, send me an introductory tweet about yourself (if you do not want to use your real name, send me an email with your pseudonym Twitter account name), tag your class-related tweets with #lmc3214, and setup a search for #lmc3214 to follow class discussion. I will retweet #lmc3214 tweets, respond to those tweets, and over time, watch for students to interact with one another using the #lmc3214 hashtag. Class-related tweets can be questions, answers, observations, insights, links to websites or videos, etc. Since we all might be occupying different time zones, please tweet at any time and patiently await responses from your classmates and me. At the end of the semester, students will collect their tweets and produce a PDF of all of their class-related Twitter activity. Each student—on-campus or online—has a minimum threshold to make at least 10 tweets per week—6 should be relevant observations, photos, videos, or links, 2 should be questions relating to the class or readings, and 2 should be responses to other class member's tweets. Tweeting more than required drives the discussion even better and assures a higher grade. In the beginning of the semester, I will try to help on-campus and online students connect with one another on Twitter, but as the semester moves forward, I will expect all students to use Twitter as a discussion medium without the necessity of my intervention.

### **Recommended Resources**

Georgia Tech Science Fiction Collection, <http://www.library.gatech.edu/scifi/>

The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, third edition, <http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com>

The Internet Speculative Fiction Database, <http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/index.cgi>

*Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, <https://portal.library.gatech.edu/vufind/Record/895296>

A Virtual Introduction to Science Fiction, <http://virtual-sf.com>

### **Teaching Philosophy**

I understand the value of a Tech education and I know the challenge involved in achieving it, because I am an alumnus of Georgia Tech. My experiences at Tech inform the way that I design and teach classes. This means that I choose intellectually interesting and exciting source material, I encourage students to engage and participate in discussion and in-class exercises, and I make myself available as a mentor to my students. Furthermore, I strive to make my classes absorbing, thought-provoking, and useful by drawing on my research interests in American literature, postcolonial literature, neuroscientific discourses, digital literacy, and computer history.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Student Accommodations**

If you have a disability (e.g. attention, health, hearing, learning, mobility, physical, psychiatric, or vision) that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. If you have not already done so, please register with the ADAPTS office (Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students - <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>) for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations. The Georgia Institute of Technology, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), will provide reasonable accommodations for eligible students with disabilities (e.g. attention, health, hearing, learning, mobility, physical, psychiatric, or vision). If you require special assistance, please see me privately and/or you may seek assistance directly from the ADAPTS office.

### **Discrimination and Harassment**

Georgia Tech does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status in the administration of admissions policies, educational policies, employment policies, or any other Institute-governed programs and activities. This class adheres to those guidelines. Alternative viewpoints are welcome in this classroom. However, statements that are deemed racist, sexist, classist, or otherwise discriminatory toward others in the class will not be tolerated.

### **Honor Code, Academic Integrity, and Plagiarism**

You are responsible for knowing and abiding by Georgia Tech's policy for academic integrity. Consult the Honor Code online at <http://www.honor.gatech.edu>. The following text appears on the website:

II. 3. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. The immediate objective of an Academic Honor Code is to prevent any Students from gaining an unfair advantage over other Students through academic misconduct.

The following clarification of academic misconduct is taken from Section XIX Student Code of Conduct, of the Rules and Regulations section of the Georgia Institute of Technology General Catalog: Academic misconduct is any act that does or could improperly distort Student grades or other Student academic records. Such acts include but need not be limited to the following:

- Possessing, using or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in an academic course;
- Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a Student in the commission of academic requirements;
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or person, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism);
- False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the claimant;

- Alteration or insertion of any academic grade or rating so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Deliberate falsification of a written or verbal statement of fact to a member of the Faculty so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Forgery, alteration or misuse of any Institute document relating to the academic status of the Student.

While these acts constitute assured instances of academic misconduct, other acts of academic misconduct may be defined by the professor.

In this class, work that violates the Honor Code will receive zero credit and may result in failure of the entire course. I will also report any serious misconduct to the Dean of Students. For any questions involving these or any other Academic Honor Code issues, please consult me or [www.honor.gatech.edu](http://www.honor.gatech.edu).

### Tentative Schedule

I believe that classes should be adaptable for each group of students. Therefore, I reserve the right to adjust the following tentative schedule depending on the needs of the class as a whole. Also, I welcome student input regarding our course content and schedule. If you have ideas for the class' organization or alternative readings, please share them with me.

Week	Date	Readings	Assignments
Week 1: Foundations	Mon, May 12	Syllabus, Assignments, and Twitter	Discuss
	Wed, May 14	Chiang, "The Truth of Fact, the Truth of Feeling" <a href="http://goo.gl/PE4qv8">http://goo.gl/PE4qv8</a> (linked from T-Square > Resources)  Definitions of SF Handout (PDF, Linked from T-Square > Resources)	<b>Before class, send a tweet to @dynamicssubspace introducing yourself. Include #lmc3214 hashtag.</b>  <b>Begin tweeting this week and continue until the end of week 11.</b>
	Fri, May 16		
Week 2: Origin	Mon, May 19	<i>Frankenstein</i> Introduction, Preface, and Volume I (Opening Letters and Chapters 1-8)  <i>Frankenstein</i> Volume II (Chapters 9-17)	
	Wed, May 21	<i>Frankenstein</i> Volume III (Chapters 18-24)	<b>Last page of syllabus due on T-Square before class.</b>
	Fri, May 23		
Week 3:	Mon, May 26	<b>Official school holiday.</b>	

Influences, Voyages Extraordinaires, Scientific Romances, and the Pulp	Wed, May 28	Wells, "The Star" ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 39-49)  Forster, "The Machine Stops" ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 50-78)	
	Fri, May 30		
Week 4: Influences, Voyages Extraordinaires, Scientific Romances, and the Pulp	Mon, June 2	Lovecraft, "The Colour Out of Space" ( <i>Online</i> : <a href="http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0600031h.html#03">http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0600031h.html#03</a> )  Moore, "Shambleau" ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 110-135)	
	Wed, June 4	Video: <i>Flash Gordon: The Planet of Peril</i> (1936)	
	Fri, June 6		
	Sat, June 7		<b>Discussion Essay 1 due by 11:00PM EST on T-Square.</b>
Week 5: The Golden Age	Mon, June 9	Asimov, "Reason" ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 160-176)  Bradbury, "There Will Come Soft Rains" ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 234-240)	
	Wed, June 11	Heinlein, "--All You Zombies--" ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 324-336)	
	Fri, June 13	<b>Last day to drop class with a "W."</b>	<b>Have you been tweeting? Keep it up!</b>
Week 6: The Golden Age and The New Wave	Mon, June 16	Godwin, "The Cold Equations" ( <i>PDF</i> )	
	Wed, June 18	Video: <i>Forbidden Planet</i> (1956)	
	Fri, June 20		
Week 7: The New Wave	Mon, June 23	Ellison, "Repent, Harlequin! Said the Ticktockman" ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 367-378)  Dick, "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 385-404)	
	Wed, June 25	Video: <i>Star Trek TOS</i> : "City on the	

		Edge of Forever” <del>Delany, “Aye, and Gomorrah. . .”</del> ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 405-414)	
	Fri, June 27		
	Sat, June 28		<b>Discussion Essay 2 due by 11:00PM EST on T-Square.</b>
Week 8: Feminist SF	Mon, June 30	Zoline, “The Heat Death of the Universe” ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 415-429)  Russ, “When It Changed” ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 507-515)	
	Wed, July 2	Tiptree, Jr., “The Women Men Don’t See” ( <i>PDF</i> )  Ursula K. Le Guin, “Nine Lives” ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 452-476)	
	Fri, July 4	<b>Official school holiday.</b>	
Week 9: Feminist SF	Mon, July 7	<del>Video: Bryan Forbes’ <i>The Stepford Wives</i> (1975)</del>  Video: James Cameron’s <i>Aliens</i> (1986)	<b>Keep tweeting!</b>
	Wed, July 9	Video: James Cameron’s <i>Aliens</i> (1986)	
	Fri, July 11		
Week 10: Cyberpunk	Mon, July 14	Sterling, “Preface” to <i>Mirrorshades</i> ( <i>PDF</i> )  Gibson, “Burning Chrome” ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 547-565)  Pat Cadigan, “Pretty Boy Crossover” ( <i>Wesleyan</i> 587-597)	
	Wed, July 16	Silberman, “William Gibson to Write X-Files Episodes” ( <a href="http://www.wired.com/culture/lifestyle/news/1998/01/9625">http://www.wired.com/culture/lifestyle/news/1998/01/9625</a> or <i>PDF</i> )  Video: <i>The X-Files</i> : “Kill Switch”	
	Fri, July 18		
Week 11: Global Perspectives	Mon, July 21	Uher, “Trends in the Development of Science Fiction Literature in Taiwan” ( <i>PDF</i> )	

Unit on Taiwanese SF		<p>Huang, “How to Measure the Width of a Ditch” (trans. John Balcom) (<i>PDF</i>)</p> <p>Chang, “City of the Bronze Statue” (trans. K. G. Koziol and L. Yeh) (<a href="http://people.cs.pitt.edu/~chang/fiction/statue.html">http://people.cs.pitt.edu/~chang/fiction/statue.html</a>)</p> <p>Chang, “Prologue” to <i>Five Jade Disks</i> from <i>The City Trilogy</i> (trans. John Balcom) (<i>PDF</i>)</p>	
	Wed, July 23	<p>Lego/Haptics Exercise in class</p> <p><b>Course wrap-up: Last day of class.</b></p>	
	Fri, July 25		
	Sat, July 26		<p><b>Discussion Essay 3 due by 11:00PM EST on T-Square.</b></p>
Week 12: Final Exams Week	Mon, July 28- Fri, Aug 1	<p><b>Final exam week.</b></p>	<p><b>PDF of Class-Related Tweets due Thursday, July 31 by 11:00PM EST on T-Square.</b></p> <p><b>Final Paper due Thursday, July 31 by 11:00PM EST on T-Square.</b></p>

## Syllabus/Policy Acknowledgment and Permission Statement

**Please read the syllabus, print this page, fill it out, scan or photograph it, ensure it is legible, upload it to the appropriate T-Square assignment before Wednesday, May 21.**

I affirm that I have read the entire syllabus and policy sheet for Summer 2014 LMC 3214 and understand the information and the responsibilities specified.

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print name

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signature

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date

DIRECTIONS: Read carefully and check all that apply.

- I give my instructor, JASON W. ELLIS, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications.
- I do NOT give my instructor, JASON W. ELLIS, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, as examples in this and other courses, as examples in presentations, and in print and electronic publications.

Please indicate whether you want to be acknowledged if your work is used:

- Please use my name in association with my work.
- Please use my work, but do NOT acknowledge me.

If your instructor decides to use your work, he//she may wish to contact you. Please provide your contact information below:

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