

LMC 3214 SS2, SCIENCE FICTION



Dr. Jason W. Ellis
Office: 009 Hall
Office Phone: 404.894.4967
Office Hours: MTWR by appointment

Email: jason.ellis@lmc.gatech.edu
URL: <http://dynamicssubspace.net/>
Course Times: MTWR 9:20am-11:20am
Course Location: 368 Skiles

Course Overview

Science fiction (SF) is a genre of fiction rooted in the wondrous capabilities of the human brain. Darko Suvin defines SF as the literature of “cognitive estrangement” that turns on the new idea or “novum.” We can see in this definition the operation of cognition and rationality as well as estrangement and feeling or emotion. There is also the imaginative “novum” created by the writer but experienced by the reader via the suspension of disbelief, theory of mind, and other cognitive operations that we each deploy to enjoy a good story. We will use this idea to tether our trek into the realms of SF.

In this class, we will explore the historical development of SF while formulating and testing definitions of the genre against numerous examples in print, television, movies, and video games. We will also discuss how SF differs around the world by specifically focusing on the SF of Taiwan.

Required Texts at the Georgia Tech Bookstore

Evans, Arthur B. et. al., eds. *The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 2010. Print.
Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2003. Print.

Required Texts Online

Please see the tentative schedule below for information about other readings. PDFs will be available on our course’s T-Square site. Other readings are available online at the given URLs.

Recommended Resources

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>
Georgia Tech Science Fiction Collection, <http://www.library.gatech.edu/scifi/>
Routledge Companion to Science Fiction, <https://portal.library.gatech.edu/vufind/Record/895296>

Assignments and Grading

You will take three in-class exams and write one 5-6-page paper for this class. Due dates are provided for these assignments on the tentative schedule. Instructions for these assignments will be given to you with plenty of time to discuss them with me or your peers before they are due. Should you have any questions, concerns, or issues about an assignment, you **MUST** speak with me **BEFORE** an assignment is due, because **ALL GRADES FOR THIS COURSE ARE FINAL**. This means that I will not entertain student arguments for grade changes after an assignment is completed. Also, failure to complete any major assignment in the course may result in the failure of the course as a whole. Should you find yourself having trouble, you **MUST** speak with me **BEFORE** an assignment is due. I will not listen to any arguments after an assignment is completed.

Your grade is divided and weighted according to these categories:

- Exam 1 20%
- Exam 2 20%
- Exam 3 10%
- Final Paper 40%
- Participation 10%

The grade scale for this course is as follows:

- A: 93-100
- B: 85-92
- C: 77-84
- D: 70-76
- F: 0-69

Participation

First, earning your participation grade requires you to be in class and on time. In fact, I expect you to be in class for each of our meetings and to arrive on time. Put another way, you should treat our class as a job—one that rewards you with knowledge and experience in exchange for your time and hard work. However, I understand that circumstances can occasionally prevent you from attending class. With this in mind, I will allow you two free (unexcused) absences. Use these wisely. For each absence beyond these two allowed, your final grade will be reduced by 5 points. *If you miss more than four classes, I reserve the right to fail you in the course as a whole.* Furthermore, you should arrive to class on time. For each two late arrivals, I will count as an absence. It is your responsibility to make sure that you have signed the attendance sheet. If you have a personal or family emergency that prevents you from attending class or completing an assignment, you must contact me by email and contact the Dean of Students (www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu) as soon as possible. If you miss class, you are responsible for asking your peers for any notes that you might have missed and you are responsible for keeping up with the class readings as indicated on the tentative schedule. You may not make-up missed work unless your absence is approved by the Registrar or is due to an extreme emergency acknowledged by the Dean of Students. If there is a general lack of participation, please expect unannounced quizzes.

Teaching Philosophy

I understand the value of a Georgia Tech education and I know the challenge involved in achieving it, because I graduated from Georgia Tech with a B.S. in Science, Technology, and Culture (STAC). My experiences as a Tech student inform, in part, 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. I have a tremendous amount of hard-won knowledge that I enjoy giving to my students. Also, I extensively draw on my research interests in American literature, postcolonial literature, neuroscientific discourses, digital literacy, and computer history in the implementation of my courses.

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.

Tentative Schedule

I believe that classes should be organic and adaptive for each group of students. Therefore, I reserve the right to alter the following tentative schedule depending on the needs of the class as a whole. This also means that you have to be involved and invested to reap the greatest reward from our class. If you have suggestions for supplemental readings or viewings, please share them with me. If you have questions about the course content, please speak with me.

Week	Date	Readings	Assignments
Week 1: Foundation	Monday, June 24	Syllabus	Syllabus Review and Discuss Definitions of SF
	Tuesday, June 25	<i>Frankenstein</i> Preface, Introduction, and Volume I	
	Wednesday, June 26	<i>Frankenstein</i> Volume II	
	Thursday, June 27	<i>Frankenstein</i> Volume III	
Week 2: Influences, Voyages Extraordinaires, Scientific Romances, and the Pulps	Monday, July 1	Wells, "The Star" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 39-49) Forster, "The Machine Stops" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 50-78)	Introduce Final Paper Assignment
	Tuesday, July 2	Lovecraft, "The Colour Out of Space" (<i>Online</i> :	

		http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0600031h.html#03 Moore, "Shambleau" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 110-135)	
	Wednesday, July 3		In-class viewing: <i>Flash Gordon</i>
	Thursday, July 4	HOLIDAY, NO CLASS!	
Week 3: The Golden Age and New Wave	Monday, July 8	Asimov, "Reason" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 160-176) Bradbury, "There Will Come Soft Rains" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 234-240)	Beginning of Class: Exam 1 (bring two Blue Books)
	Tuesday, July 9	Godwin, "The Cold Equations" (<i>Online:</i> http://www.lightspeedmagazine.com/fiction/the-cold-equations/) Heinlein, "--All You Zombies--" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 324-336)	
	Wednesday, July 10		In-class viewing: <i>Forbidden Planet</i>
	Thursday, July 11	Ballard, "The Cage of Sand" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 337-358) Ellison, "Repent, Harlequin! Said the Ticktockman" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 367-378) Delany, "Aye, and Gomorrah. . ." (<i>Wesleyan</i> 405-414)	
Week 4: The New Wave and Feminist SF	Monday, July 15		In-class viewing: <i>Star Trek TOS:</i> "City on the Edge of Forever"
	Tuesday, July 16	Zoline, "The Heat Death of the Universe" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 415-429) Russ, "When It Changed" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 507-515)	

		Tiptree, Jr., "The Women Men Don't See" (<i>PDF</i>)	
	Wednesday, July 17		In-class viewing: <i>Aliens</i>
	Thursday, July 18		In-class-viewing: <i>Aliens</i>
Week 5: Cyberpunk and Global Perspective: Taiwanese SF	Monday, July 22	Gibson, "Burning Chrome" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 547-565) Sterling, "Preface" to <i>Mirrorshades</i> (<i>PDF</i>)	Beginning of Class: Exam 2 (bring two Blue Books)
	Tuesday, July 23	Silberman, "William Gibson to Write X-Files Episodes" (http://www.wired.com/culture/ lifestyle/news/1998/01/9625)	In-class viewing: <i>The X-Files</i> : "Kill Switch" and selections from the <i>Animatrix</i>
	Wednesday, July 24	Uher, "Trends in the Development of Science Fiction Literature in Taiwan" (<i>PDF</i>) Huang, "How to Measure the Width of a Ditch" (trans. John Balcom) (<i>PDF</i>)	
	Thursday, July 25	Chang, "City of the Bronze Statue" (trans. K. G. Koziol and L. Yeh) (http://people.cs.pitt.edu/~chang/ fiction/statue.html) Chang, "Prologue" to <i>Five Jade Disks</i> from <i>The City Trilogy</i> (trans. John Balcom) (<i>PDF</i>)	End of Class: Exam 3 (bring two Blue Books)
Week 6 Finals	Tuesday, July 30		Final Paper Due on T-Square by the end of your class' exam period: Tuesday, July 30, 11:30am- 2:20pm. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.