

HL311 / HL3011

Science Fiction: Origins to Parody

Tracing its origins from nineteenth-century writing on the possibilities and threats of technology and the newly established sciences to its genre reconstruction and intertextual revisiting over the centuries, the analysis of its most prominent as well as of recently rediscovered works aims to illustrate how science fiction has transformed literature and film. In this, it also seeks to map the genre's most defining topoi: travel through space, time, and parallel universes; experimental technology; alien life; testing the boundaries of the mind and manipulating the body (cloning). Science fiction has always been experimental in its technique as well as in its criticism of social, psychological, and scientific definitions of selfhood, and its study taps into encompassing explorations of epistemological as well as ontological anxieties.

This course specifically addresses genre formation. We shall be looking at a number of different texts, and students will need to read beyond the “core texts.”



Please note that this course is 100% CA (Continuous Assessment).

Group Presentation: 20%

Research paper: 50%

Participation in class: 10%

In-class writing tasks: 20%

Core Texts:

Please note that the presentations will be on texts outside the “core texts.”

Novels:

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine*

Short Stories:

Brian Aldiss, “Super-Toys Last All Summer Long”

http://archive.wired.com/wired/archive/5.01/ffsupertoys_pr.html

Films and Television Episodes (available in the Media Resource Library):

The Bride of Frankenstein

“The City on the Edge of Forever” (A *Star Trek: The Original Series* Episode)

Galaxy Quest

The Time Machine

Lecture Schedule

| Week No. | Topics | Readings |
|----------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 11 Aug | Introduction | Outline: Structure & Requirements |
| 18 Aug | Making Men and Monsters | <i>Frankenstein</i> |
| 25 Aug | Union Day | |
| 1 Sep | The Evolution of Science Fiction I | <i>Frankenstein</i> |
| 8 Sep | The Evolution of Science Fiction II | <i>The Time Machine</i> |
| 15 Sept | Dystopia: Projecting Human Growth | <i>The Time Machine</i> |
| 22 Sept | A.I. | “Super-Toys Last All Summer Long” |
| 29 Sept | <i>Recess</i> | |
| 6 Oct | Time Travel | “The City on the Edge of Forever” |
| 13 Oct | Presentations | |
| 20 Oct | Presentations | |
| 27 Oct | Extending the Boundaries of Science Fiction: Parody | <i>Galaxy Quest</i> |
| 3 Nov | Revision: Q&A | |