

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, including an in-class quiz: 20%

Core Texts:

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

Novels:

Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*

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

Gopal Baratham, “The Ultimate Commodity”

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
17 Aug	Introduction	Outline: Structure & Requirements
24 Aug	Making Men and Monsters	<i>Frankenstein</i>
31 Aug	The Evolution of Science Fiction I	<i>Frankenstein</i>
7 Sep	The Evolution of Science Fiction II	<i>The Time Machine</i>
14 Sept	Dystopia: Projecting Human Growth	<i>The Time Machine</i>
21 Sept	A.I.	“Super-Toys Last All Summer Long”
28 Sept	Time Travel	“The City on the Edge of Forever”
5 Oct	<i>Recess</i>	
12 Oct	Extending the Boundaries of Science Fiction: Genre Experiments	<i>Never Let Me Go</i> ; “The Ultimate Commodity”
19 Oct	Presentations	
26 Oct	Presentations	
2 Nov	Extending the Boundaries of Science Fiction: Parody	<i>Galaxy Quest</i>
9 Nov	Revision: In-Class Quiz	