

**Instructor:**

Eric G. Swedin, PhD      <http://www.swedin.org/>      [eswedin@weber.edu](mailto:eswedin@weber.edu)  
 Office on Davis campus: D2-137L; Office on Ogden campus: SS250  
 Telephone: 801-395-3553 (w); 801-479-3735 (h)  
 Office hours: Monday, 4:30-5:30 in SS250  
                   Tuesday, 4:30-5:30 in SS250  
                   Wednesday, 3:30-5:30 in SS250  
                   Thursday, 4:30-5:30 in SS250  
 Other office hours are available by appointment via email

**Texts:**

Robert Silverberg, editor, *The Science Fiction Hall of Fame, Volume One, 1929-1964* (Orb Books, 2005) ISBN-13: 978-0765305374

H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (Reprint, Dover Thrift Editions)  
 ISBN-13: 978-0486284729

H. G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (Reprint, Dover Thrift Editions)  
 ISBN-13: 978-0486290270

David Brin, *The River of Time* (Reprint, Createspace, 2014)  
 ISBN-13: 978-1480234253

**Course Description:** This course examines the genre of science fiction (as well as other genres that are often grouped together under the term speculative fiction). Science fiction is much more broad than spaceships and time travel or dragons and unicorns. Science fiction is different from other genres in its emphasis on ideas and examining what it means to be human within the context of the scientific worldview. We will study key texts and key ideas, striving to understand the larger questions of how to define science fiction, how the scope of the genre has changed over time, and what are the boundaries of the genre. The class is participation-oriented and considerable readings are required.

**Grading Policies:** Grades will be determined on the following basis:

Quizzes	60%
Term Paper	30%
Class Participation	10%

Grades:    A: 90 - 100%    B: 80 - 89%    C: 70 - 79%    D: 60 - 69%    E: 0 - 59%  
 (Grades at the high or low ends of these ranges will earn plus and minus grades.)

**Readings:** This class is discussion oriented. Each student will be expected to have completed the readings listed in the schedule for that day. We will discuss the readings and every student is expected to pose a pertinent question or make a statement about the readings as a spur to our class conversation. In the schedule, each reading entry is from one of our texts, unless another source is listed. The other sources are either found at a web address, through a purchase on Amazon, or found in our course on Canvas. (Canvas is the online course system for Weber State).

**Quizzes:** There will be a quiz every day at the beginning of class. Each quiz will be based on the readings that you were given for that day, or will be given on the content of the previous class's discussions.

**Class participation:** Please come to class on time and prepared to discuss assigned reading and your writing. Active participation improves your final grade; lack of participation lowers your final grade. Please turn your cell phones off and put them away once class begins. **Texting in class will lower your grade.** If you have an emergency that requires you to keep an eye on your phone during class time, please let me know before class.

**Term Paper:** On the last day of class, a 10-page, double-spaced term paper is due that reflects autobiographically about your personal relationship with the field of science fiction. You can also consider the other genres of speculative fiction (fantasy, horror, and similar flavors of young adult and middle grade fare). When did you become aware of science fiction or related genres and began to interact with it both as a written form and in media? How have you intellectually interacted with science fiction? How have your views changed over time? Instead of this paper, you can write a science fiction short story.

**Academic Dishonesty:** As specified in PPM 6-22 IV D, cheating and plagiarism violate the Student Code. Plagiarism is "the unacknowledged (uncited) use of any other person's or group's ideas or work." Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism are subject to failure of a specific assignment, or, in more serious cases, failure of the entire course.

**Core Beliefs:** According to PPM 6-22 IV, students are to "[d]etermine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with a student's core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class. A student who finds this solution impracticable may request a resolution from the instructor. This policy does not oblige the instructor to grant the request, except in those cases when a denial would be arbitrary and capricious or illegal. This request must be made to the instructor in writing and the student must deliver a copy of the request to the office of the department head. The student's request must articulate the burden the requirement would place on the student's beliefs."

**Disability Accommodation:** PPM 3-34 notes: “When students seek accommodation in a regularly scheduled course, they have the responsibility to make such requests at the Center for Students with Disabilities before the beginning of the quarter [semester] in which the accommodation is being requested. When a student fails to make such arrangements, interim accommodations can be made by the instructor, pending the determination of the request for a permanent accommodation.”

**Emergency Campus Closure:** In the event of an extended campus closure, check your WSU Wildcat email account for further instructions about how to keep up with class. It will be your responsibility to check in frequently with your WSU email account in order to complete the class.

**Schedule:**

Date (Weds)	Readings and Class Activities
January 13	Introduction to class
January 20	Watch in class: "They're Made Out of Meat"  Gale E. Christianson, "Kepler's Somnium: Science Fiction and the Renaissance Scientist," available online at < <a href="http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/8/christianson8art.htm">http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/8/christianson8art.htm</a> >  Read chapter from Thomas J. Roberts, <i>An Aesthetics of Junk Fiction</i> (1990), available on Canvas.
January 27	Read - Read first three chapters of Jules Verne's <i>From the Earth to the Moon</i> - available online at <a href="http://www.online-literature.com/verne/earth_to_moon/">http://www.online-literature.com/verne/earth_to_moon/</a>  Read <i>Science Fiction Hall of Fame</i> , Isaac Asimov, "Nightfall" (1941)
February 3	Watch in class: <i>War of the Worlds</i> (1953)
February 10	Read H. G. Wells, <i>The Time Machine</i> (1895) and <i>The Island of Dr. Moreau</i> (1896)
February 17	Read <i>Science Fiction Hall of Fame</i> , Frederic Brown, "Arena" (1944)  Read Murray Leinster, "A Logic Named Joe" (1946) [ <a href="http://www.baen.com/chapters/W200506/0743499107___2.htm">Available online at http://www.baen.com/chapters/W200506/0743499107___2.htm</a> .]
February 24	Read <i>Science Fiction Hall of Fame</i> , James Blish, "Surface Tension" (1952)  Read <i>Science Fiction Hall of Fame</i> , Arthur C. Clarke, "The Nine Million Names of God" (1953)
March 2	Read <i>Science Fiction Hall of Fame</i> , Daniel Keyes, "Flowers for Algernon" ( <i>The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction</i> , 1959)  Read Orson Scott Card, "Ender's Game" ( <i>Analog</i> , 1977) - the original short story, available at < <a href="http://www.hatrack.com/osc/stories/enders-game.shtml">http://www.hatrack.com/osc/stories/enders-game.shtml</a> >
March 9	Spring Break
March 16	Watch in class: <i>Knowing</i> (2009)
March 23	Read "The Crystal Spheres," "Senses Three and Six," "The River of Time" from David Brin, <i>River of Time</i> (reprint 2014)

March 30	Read Eric James Stone, "That Leviathan, Whom Thou Hast Made" (2010) [Obtain on Amazon Kindle.]  Connie Willis, "Fire Watch" (1982), available at < <a href="http://www.infinityplus.co.uk/stories/firewatch.htm">http://www.infinityplus.co.uk/stories/firewatch.htm</a> >
April 6	Read excerpt from Eric G. Swedin, <i>When Angels Wept</i> (2010), available on Canvas
April 13	Watch in class: <i>Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind</i> (2004)
April 20	Spare day
April 27	No class; no final exam