

Colloquium: Science Fiction and the History of Science and Technology

Instructors: Dr. David Ferro and Dr. Eric Swedin
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Office Hours: 12:30-5:30 on Thursday at my Davis campus office (Swedin).
TBA (Ferro).
Other office hours are available by appointment.

Texts: Mark L. Brake and Neil Hook, *Different Engines: How Science Drives Fiction and Fiction Drives Science* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) ISBN-13: 978-0230019805

Hal Hellman, *Great Feuds in Science: Ten of the Liveliest Disputes Ever* (Wiley, 1999) ISBN-13: 978-0471350668

Orson Scott Card, editor, *Masterpieces: The Best Science Fiction of the 20th Century* (Ace Trade, 2004) ISBN-13: 978-0441011339

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

Class Description: This colloquium will examine current and historical writings of science fiction in the context of the history of scientific and technological developments.

Class participation and discussion is expected.

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

Quizzes	40%
Book Presentation	20%
Term Paper	30%
Class Participation	10%

Grades: A: 90 - 100% B: 80 - 89% C: 70 - 79% D: 60 - 69% E: 0 - 59%

Quizzes: There will a short quiz every day at the beginning of class. Each quiz will be based on the readings that you were given for that day. You may miss one quiz; if you take that extra quiz, it will count as extra credit.

Term Paper: A ten page paper on any topic covered in the course is required. You may turn in an early draft for the instructors to critique and we will return the critiqued draft two weeks later. The final draft is due on the final day of class. You must use at least six sources, only half of which may come from the Internet, and you must cite all quotations. The following web sites are useful:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Style.html>

Cheating Policy: Cheating and deceit are not accepted at Weber State University. Cheating on an quiz or assignment, or turning in someone else's work as your own, will result in an E for the class. You may work together on your assignments and papers, but you must turn in your own work. If you quote from a book, article, or web site, you must properly quote and cite your work. Avoid even the appearance of cheating or plagiarism.

Book Presentation:

Each student must select a science fiction novel to read. On an assigned date, the student will give a 15-20 minute in-class presentation on their novel. Describe the content of the novel and explain how it fits within the history and philosophy of science. The purpose of this exercise is to introduce the class to a broader variety of science fiction literature and the context of these novels in the history and philosophy of science.

Cell Phones, Texting, and Laptops:

Put your cell phones on vibrate. Try to avoid leaving class to take a call, but an occasional emergency is understandable. There will be NO texting in this class. Laptops or other personal digital tools may be used to take notes or look up material relevant to class discussions. No other uses of laptops will be tolerated.

Students with Disabilities:

Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in Room 181 of the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats if necessary.

Campus Closure:

In the event of an extended campus closure, please look at your Weber State email in order for instructions on how we will continue the class via email and the Blackboard online course system.

Schedule:

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
August 24	<p>Introduction to class (no quiz) <i>Introduction to History</i></p> <p><i>They're Made out of Meat</i> short film</p>	<p><i>Introduction to Science Fiction</i> Readings: Silverberg text, Ray Bradbury, "Mars is Heaven!" Card text, Terry Bisson, "Bears Discover Fire" Handout: Introduction & Chapter One, "Technology's Other Storytellers" by Thomas Haigh, from <i>Canticle for the Machine</i>, by Ferro & Swedin</p>
August 31	<p><i>Science and Discovery</i> Readings: Hellman, chapter 3; Card text, Harry Turtledove, "The Road Not Taken"</p>	<p><i>Science and the Age of Discovery</i> Readings: Brake & Hook, chapter 1; Silverberg text, Murray Leinster, "First Contact"</p>
September 7	<p><i>Science and Scientific Credit</i> Readings: Hellman, chapter 7; Card text, George R. R. Martin, "Sandkings" Handout: "Junior Achievement," by William Lee, in <i>Tomorrow's Children</i>, pg 167.</p>	<p><i>Science and the Mechanical Age</i> Readings: Brake & Hook, chapter 2; Online version, first seven chapters of H. G. Wells, <i>War of the Worlds</i> (available at http://www.fourmilab.ch/etexts/www/warworlds/warw.html) Online version, first two chapters of Jules Verne's <i>From the Earth to the Moon</i> (available at http://www.online-literature.com/verne/earth_to_moon/)</p>
September 14	<p><i>Science and Biology</i> Readings: Hellman, chapter 4; Silverberg text, Theodore Sturgeon, "Microcosmic God"</p>	<p><i>Science and Evolution</i> Readings: Hellman, chapter 5; Card text, Edmond Hamilton, "Devolution"</p>
September 21	<p><i>Science and the Age of the Earth</i> Readings: Hellman, chapter 6; Silverberg text, James Blish, "Surface Tension"</p>	<p><i>Science and Geology</i> Readings: Hellman, chapter 8; Card text, Larry Niven, "Inconstant Moon"</p>

September 28	<p><i>Age of Biology</i> Readings: Brake & Hook, chapter 7; Card Text, "Rat" by James Patrick Kelly</p> <p>Handout: Chapter Seventeen, "Nanotechnology Tomorrows," by Richard McKinney, from <i>Canticle for the Machine</i>, by Ferro & Swedin</p>	No class today.
October 5	<p>Media day (no quiz, but credit for attendance will be given) Firefly, episode 1, and discussion</p>	<p>Media day (no quiz, but credit for attendance will be given) Firefly, episode 2, and discussion</p>
October 12	<p><i>Science and Anthropology</i> Readings: Hellman, chapter 9; Silverberg text, Isaac Asimov, ANightfall@; Card text: Robert Silverberg, "Passengers"</p> <p>Student 1 book report</p>	<p><i>Science and Psychology</i> Readings: Hellman, chapter 10; Silverberg text, Lewis Padgett, "Mimsy Were the Borogoves"</p> <p>Student 2 book report</p>
October 19	<p><i>The New Age</i> Readings: Brake & Hook, chapter 5; Card Text, Brian Aldiss, "Who Can Replace a Man" Handout: Afterward to "Riders of the Purple Wage" by Philip Jose Farmer in <i>Dangerous Visions</i> , pg 95.</p> <p>Student 3 book report</p>	<p><i>What does it mean to be human?</i> Readings: Silverberg text, Daniel Keyes, "Flowers for Algernon"; Card text, John Crowley, "Snow" Card text, Jerome Bixby, "It's a Good Life" Handout: "Segregationist," by Isaac Asimov, Nightfall and Other Stories, pg 344.</p> <p>Student 4 book report</p>
October 26	<p><i>Pulp Fiction</i> Readings: Brake & Hook, chapter 3; Silverberg text, Fredric Brown, "Arena"</p> <p>Student 5 book report</p>	<p><i>The Atomic Age</i> Readings: Brake & Hook, chapter 4; Silverberg text, Clifford D. Simak, "The Huddling Place" Silverberg text, Tom Godwin, "The Cold Equations"</p> <p>Student 6 book report</p>

November 2	<p><i>The Computer Age</i> Readings: Brake & Hook, chapter 6; Card text, Isaac Asimov, "Robot Dreams"; Card text, William Gibson and Michael Swanwick, "Dogfight"</p> <p>Student 7 book report</p>	<p><i>Extrapolation</i> Readings: Silverberg text, Robert A. Heinlein, "The Roads Must Roll"; Card text, Poul Anderson, "Call Me Joe"</p> <p>Student 8 book report</p>
November 9	<p><i>Imagination</i> Readings: Card text, Robert A. Heinlein, "All You Zombies—"; Card text, Lloyd Biggle, Jr., "Tunesmith"</p> <p>Student 9 book report</p>	<p><i>SF and the Big Questions: Religion</i> Readings: Hellman, chapter 1; Card text, Arthur C. Clarke, "The Nine Billion Names of God" Handout: "Reason" in Isaac Asimov, <i>I, Robot</i>, pg 56.</p> <p>Student 10 book report</p>
November 16	<p>Media day (no quiz, but credit for attendance will be given) TBA' Student 11 book report</p>	<p>Media day (no quiz, but credit for attendance will be given) TBA Student 12 book report</p>
November 23	<p><i>Science Fiction and Politics</i> Readings: Hellman, chapter 2; Card text, Harlan Ellison, "Repent, Harlequin! Said the Ticktockman"; Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" Handout: Richard Hill, "Moth Race," <i>Again, Dangerous Visions vol.2</i>, pg 130.</p>	<p>Thanksgiving</p>
November 30	<p>Spare day</p>	<p>Spare day</p>
December 7	<p>NO Final Exam</p>	