

Instructor:

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Office hours: Available by appointment made via email.

Texts:

Leigh Ronald Grossman, *Sense of Wonder: A Century of Science Fiction* (Wildside Press, 2011). ISBN-13: 978-1434430793.

I strongly advise you to buy the ebook version of this text.

Selected readings will also be available on the Canvas online learning system.

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

Weekly Papers	50%
Book Presentation	20%
Term Paper	30%

Grade range: A: 90 - 100% B: 80 - 89% C: 70 - 79% D: 60 - 69% E: 0 - 59%
(Plus grades will be in the upper two percent of the range and minus grades will be in the lower two percent of the range)

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 has the scope of the genre changed over time, and what are the boundaries of the genre. The class is participation-oriented and considerable readings are required.

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 and referral to the MENG Program Director.

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.”

Learning Outcomes:

LO 1: Gather, analyze, and communicate information and insights creatively and critically.

LO 2: Cultivate skills in close reading, critical thinking, creative expression, and persuasive writing.

LO 3: Understand and apply various theoretical perspectives and discipline-specific terminology to interpretations of texts and /or analysis of data.

LO 4: Acknowledge and articulate the significance of key text(s) in specific genres, periods, cultures, styles, or theoretical perspectives.

LO 5: Demonstrate knowledge of current scholarship and practices.

LO 6: Employ discipline-specific conventions and protocols for written or multimodal presentations.

The MENG Program is dedicated to helping students master the following learning outcomes. This class focuses specifically on LO 2, LO 3, LO 4, and LO 6.

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 the Grossman text, unless another source is listed in parentheses. 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).

Weekly Papers: Every Monday, starting the second week of class, you are expected to turn in a two page paper (500 words) that reflects on what we studied during the previous week of class. What are your reactions to the readings and our class discussions? (LO 1, 2, 5)

Term Paper: On the last day of class, a 12-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? (LO 1, 2, 4, 5) While this paper will be very personal, it is also a research paper and must include at least eight sources.

Grading Criteria Used for MENG Essays:

A: An essay or paper in this category:

- is well developed and well organized
- clearly illustrates and develops key ideas
- displays a high degree of inventiveness & originality
- displays a sophisticated and superior use of language
- demonstrates syntactic variety
- is virtually free from errors in mechanics, usage, sentence structure, and diction

B: An essay or paper in this category:

- is well organized and developed, though it may have small flaws in organization or paragraphing
- illustrates and develops some key ideas
- displays good control of language and a consistent tone
- demonstrates some syntactic variety
- is generally free from errors in mechanics, usage, sentence structure, and diction

C: An essay or paper in this category: (NOTE: ONLY Grades of B- or Higher Count Toward Degree Requirements)

- is adequately well developed and organized
- illustrates and develops one or two key ideas
- displays capable and accurate use of language
- may display occasional errors in mechanics, usage, sentence structure, and diction, but not a consistent pattern of such errors

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 field of science fiction. 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 of science fiction. Each novel must be approved by the instructor. You might want to look at <http://www.npr.org/2011/08/11/139085843/your-picks-top-100-science-fiction-fantasy-books> for ideas of which of novel you want to read.

Cell Phones, Texting, Tablets, 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, tablets, or other personal digital tools may be used to take notes or look up material relevant to class discussions. No other uses of electronic tools 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 Canvas online course system.

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.”

Absence Policy: You are permitted to miss one class, if you contact me via email beforehand. You are still responsible for turning in the paper due that day.

Secondary Sources:

John Clute and Peter Nicholls, *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (1995).

John Clute, *Science Fiction: The Illustrated Encyclopedia* (1995).

John Clute and John Grant, *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (1997).

James Gunn, Matthew Candelaria, Brian Aldiss and Judith Berman,
Speculations on Speculation: Theories of Science Fiction (2005).

Thomas J. Roberts, *An Aesthetics of Junk Fiction* (1990).

Brian Aldiss, *Billion Year Spree: A History of Science Fiction* (1986).

Schedule:

	Monday	Wednesday
June 27	<p><i>Introduction to Science Fiction and Speculative Fiction</i></p> <p>Watch in class: "They're Made Out of Meat"</p>	<p><i>Early Science Fiction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Origins of Science Fiction, by Jennifer A. Rea- "Kepler's Somnium: Science Fiction and the Renaissance Scientist" - available online at http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/8/christianson&art.htm- Read chapter from <i>Junk Fiction</i> (Canvas)- Read first three chapters of Jules Verne's <i>From the Earth to the Moon</i> - available online at http://www.online-literature.com/verne/earth_to_moon/
July 4	No class	<p><i>Pulp Fiction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Edgar Rice Burroughs (1875-1950)- <i>A Princess of Mars</i>, by Edgar Rice Burroughs

<p>July 11</p>	<p><i>The "Golden Age"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - John W. Campbell and His Writers, by Zahra Jannessari Ladani - Space Opera, by David Steiling - Isaac Asimov - "Nightfall," by Isaac Asimov 	<p><i>Space Travel and Aliens</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Science Fiction and Hidden Histories of Science, by Katherine Pandora - "Arena," by Fredric Brown - Space Travel in Science Fiction, by Steven Mollmann - Aliens and Alien Worlds, by Ericka Hoagland - Orson Scott Card, "Ender's Game" (<i>Analog</i>, 1977) - the original short story, available at <http://www.hatrack.com/osc/stories/enders-game.shtml>
<p>July 18</p>	<p><i>Horror and other SF Genres</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H. P. Lovecraft - <i>At the Mountains of Madness</i>, by H. P. Lovecraft - The Lovecraft Circle, by Dennis H. Barbour - Arthur C. Clarke, "The Nine Million Names of God" (1953) (Canvas) 	<p><i>Media</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arthur C. Clarke - "The Sentinel," by Arthur C. Clarke Science Fiction Film: the Forbidden Genre, by Daniel M. Kimmel Brian Aldiss, "Supertoys Last All Summer Long" (available online at (http://brianaldiss.co.uk/writing/story-collections/collections-r-z/supertoys-last-all-summer-long/)) - Science Fiction on Television, by Jim Davis - Fan Fiction, by Karen Hellekson - Graphic Novels and Science Fiction, by Peter J. Ingraio

<p>July 25</p>	<p><i>SF and Computers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Murray Leinster, "A Logic Named Joe" (available online at http://www.baen.com/chapters/W200506/0743499107___2.htm) - Vernor Vinge - "Fast Times at Fairmont High," by Vernor Vinge <p>Ted Chaing, "The Lifecycle of Software Objects" (available online at http://subterraneanpress.com/magazine/fall_2010/fiction_the_lifecycle_of_software_objects_by_ted_chaing)</p>	<p><i>Immortality</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PJ Plauger, "Child of All Ages" (Canvas) - Clifford D. Simak - "Grotto of the Dancing Deer," by Clifford D. Simak - James Blish - "Surface Tension," by James Blish <p>Students #1 and #2 book presentations</p>
<p>August 1</p>	<p><i>SF and What it Means to be Human</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daniel Keyes, "Flowers for Algernon" (Canvas) - Octavia E. Butler - "Bloodchild," by Octavia E. Butler - Black Women Writing Speculative Fiction, by Ayana R. Abdallah - Gender Images in Science Fiction, by Twila Yates Papay and Paul D. Reich <p>Students #3 and #4 book presentations</p>	<p><i>Utopias and Dystopias</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H. G. Wells - <i>The Time Machine</i>, by H. G. Wells - Dark Futures and Dystopias, by Matthew Crom - Utopian Science Fiction, by Samuel Gerald Collins - Science Fiction and Environmentalism, by Lisa Swanstrom <p>Students #5 and #6 book presentations</p>

<p>August 8</p>	<p><i>Young Adult SF and Alternate History</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternate History, by Andrew M. Gordon - Eric G. Swedin, one chapter and the Conclusion from <i>When Angels Wept: A What-If History of the Cuban Missile Crisis</i> (Canvas) - After the End: Post-apocalyptic Science Fiction, by Irene Sywenky - Connie Willis, "Fire Watch" (1982), available at http://www.infinityplus.co.uk/stories/firewatch.htm <p>Students #7 and #8 book presentations</p>	<p><i>SF and Religion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Religion and Science Fiction, by James F. Mcgrath - Philip José Farmer - "Riverworld," by Philip José Farmer - Ted Chiang - "Hell Is the Absence of God," by Ted Chiang - Eric James Stone, "That Leviathan, Whom Thou Hast Made" (Amazon Kindle) <p>Students #9 and #10 book presentations</p>
<p>August 15</p>	<p><i>Hard SF</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard Science Fiction, by C. W. Johnson - Larry Niven - "Neutron Star," by Larry Niven - David Brin - "Senses Three and Six", by David Brin - Greg Bear - "Blood Music," by Greg Bear 	<p>No class</p>