New York City College of Technology (CUNY)
300 Jay Street
Brooklyn, New York 11201

SYLLABUS
Science Fiction
ENG 2420/HD53
Mon 10:00-11:15 and Online (Asynchronous)
Namm N420B

Professor Aaron Barlow
Office: 503 Namm
Office Hours: T/W/T 10:30-11:30. And by appointment.
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Course Description:

Study of science fiction literature and film, with attention to cultural implications of the genre. Explores the questions science and technology raise about past, present, and future societies. Projects, presentations, and exams based on readings.

Course Learning Outcomes:

- Students gather, read, and assess information from different points of view for a series of assignments relating to views of the future and what it might be, finding their material in fiction, in film, and in commentary.
- Students learn to assess various visions of the future, asking if they are simply fantasies, attempts to come to terms with contemporary situations through extrapolation into the future, or actual attempts to predict the future..
- Students write throughout the semester, presenting their own views on the effectiveness of the literature and films under consideration. Do they raise or answer questions? How? Are they effective as entertainment? Why or why not?
- Much of science fiction centers on the individual placed within a cultural or technological situation gone wild. Central to the course is examination of the tensions between the individual and society as presented in science fiction.
- The ethical choices faced by an individual in unknown situations is also a topic central to science fiction. Students discuss how an individual can maintain a personal ethical standard in a milieu where all standards easily erode.
- What has science fiction told us about the future as both have unfolded over the last century? Students examine the value of the genre against actual history and consider whether or not the individual can have an impact on the forces of change.

Course Policies:

- Students will behave in a mature, respectful manner. Be alert and engaged. Electronic devices may be used in class, but must be non-intrusive. If you need to eat, please don't bring an entire meal—but a snack and a drink would be fine. Treat all members of the class politely. Behaving counter to these guidelines could result in your being asked to leave the classroom and your grade will be affected.
- You will write and post your writing every week, will participate in a group project, and will complete a personal project.
- You will always have your book (or its electronic equivalent) with you in class.

Required Text:

The Science Fiction Handbook, Author: Hubble, Nick and Aris Mousoutzanis, Publisher: Bloomsbury, Edition: 1st, Year Published: 2013, Price: 29.95 USD

Grading:

Grades depend on attendance, participation, the midterm, the final, the blog, and the project:

- *Consistent attendance*, on time and focused on the day's activity, is necessary for passing. One absence without prior arrangement will lower your grade; two can lead to failure. Two latenesses will count as one absence.
- *Blog Posts* assigned to be written over the term will count for 30% of your grade. You must post weekly, in response to readings, films, or class a minimum of 200 words each post and you will be expected to comment on at least three other posts each week. Sometimes comment topics will be specified through assignments posted on the blog.
- *Participation* includes working well in groups and responding to presentations. It will count for 20% of your final grade.
- *Projects* must be completed by assigned presentation dates or grades will suffer. The main group project will count for 20% of your grade.
- *Midterm* and *Final* will count for 15% of your grade each and will cover the topics in the text and the lectures in class.

You will be expected to work together on each of the four books and four movies you select from the lists presented on the blog. If you cannot find at least two others interested in the same book or movie, you cannot select that one. You will post on the blog concerning each book and movie and will be expected to respond with at least one comment to the post of each other person who has selected "your" book or movie. The project will include research and a presentation to the class concerning one of your books or movies together with the

others in your group. The presentation must be accompanied by a research paper of at least 1500 words.

New York City College of Technology Policy on Academic Integrity

> Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week One:
    Class One (9/8):   Introduction: Explore! Select book #1 and movie #1 in class.
Week Two:
    Class Two (9/15):   What Is a Genre?
Week Three:
    Class Three (9/22)   Science Fiction Over the Years
Week Four:
    Class Four (9/29):   Who Are the Major Authors of Science Fiction, and Why? Select book/movie #2 in class.
Week Five:
    Class Five (10/6):   What Have Been the Most Influential Science-Fiction Films?
Week Six:
    Class Six (10/20):   What Are the Major Topics of Science-Fiction Literature?
Week Seven:
    Class Seven (10/27):
Week Eight:
    Class Eight (11/3):   What Are the Major Topics of Science-Fiction Films?
Week Nine:
    Class Nine (11/10):   Select book/movie # 3 online.
Week Ten:
    Class Ten (11/17):   What Are the Thematic Differences Between SF Films and Literature?
Week Eleven:
    Class Eleven (11/24):   How do Scholars Approach Science Fiction?
Week Twelve:
    Class Twelve (12/1):   What Can We Expect of Science Fiction in the Future? Select book/movie #4 online.
Week Thirteen:
    Class Thirteen (12/8):   Presentations
Week Fourteen:
    Class Fourteen (12/15):   Presentations
Week Fifteen:
    Class Fifteen (12/22):   **Final**