



Science Fiction

ENG 2420, D567

MW 2:30PM-3:45PM

N521

Dr. Jason W. Ellis

Office/Hours: N520, MT 4:00-5:00PM

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<http://dynamicsubspace.net>

Course Description

We will endeavor to locate the emergence of the Science Fiction (SF) genre and unravel how SF came to be the preeminent literature of the 20th and 21st centuries. To accomplish this, we will read and watch significant examples of SF from its long history beginning with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. To demonstrate what you have learned, you will have brief, daily writing assignments, three non-cumulative exams, and a research essay. In addition to the readings, viewings, and lectures, students are strongly encouraged to add their SF knowledge to our discussions. Please note that this is a writing intensive course, and it is a reading intensive course. If you give this course the time and attention that it deserves, you will find that it pays tremendous dividends in your life and professionalism. *The catalog course description, objectives, and prerequisites are attached.*

Required Texts

Evans, Arthur B. et. al., eds. *The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 2010. Print.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. 1831 edition. Available online here:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/42324>. Also available from Penguin Classics.

Required Resources

Computer access, word processing software, and a means of saving your work securely.

Access to your City Tech email.

Access and account at openlab.citytech.cuny.edu.

Grading

| Assignment | Description | Percentage of Final Grade |
|-------------|---|---------------------------|
| First Exam | This essay and short response exam covers the material discussed during weeks one to six. | 20% |
| Second Exam | This essay and short response exam covers the material discussed during weeks seven to twelve. | 20% |
| Final Exam | This essay and short response exam covers the material discussed during weeks twelve to the last. | 20% |

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| Essay Project | Introduced early in the semester and due on the last day of class, students analyze a cultural work through a science fictional lens using SF definitions and terminology. | 20% |
| After Class Summaries | After each class, students write at least 250-words summarizing that day's reading, lecture, and discussion. A week's worth of summaries is due on OpenLab before the beginning of the next week. | 20% |

Attendance and Lateness Policy

The expectation for successful and respectful college students is to arrive on time and attend all classes. The college permits students to miss 10% of a class (three absences) for whatever reason. In our class, each additional absence will reduce your final grade by 10 points (equivalent of a full letter grade). An absence does not excuse you from any assignments or exams. Use your absences wisely. Arriving late or leaving early will, depending on the specific situation, count as a full or partial absence.

Required Format for Papers

While there will be exceptions that we will discuss in class, all writing submitted online or on printed paper should follow MLA professional style. In particular, your writing should always include a "name block," a title, and your writing. If you quote or cite writing by others, it should be properly cited and included as an entry on a concluding "Works Cited" list. Search Google for "Purdue OWL MLA" for guidelines and sample papers.

Policy for Late Papers

Assignments submitted late or exams taken late will incur a 10-point reduction for each day that they are late. However, no assignments will be accepted after the last day of class. If a student knows that work cannot be completed on time, he or she should contact me or visit my office hours to discuss.

College Policy on Academic Integrity

Students who work with information, ideas, and texts 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 CUNY 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 | Day | Date | Activities and Due Dates |
|------|-----|--------|--|
| 1 | M | Feb 1 | Introduce class, policies, and assignments. |
| | W | Feb 3 | Discussion: What is Science Fiction? |
| 2 | M | Feb 8 | <i>Frankenstein</i> Introduction, Preface, and Volume I (Opening Letters and Chapters 1-8) |
| | W | Feb 10 | <i>Frankenstein</i> Volume II (Chapters 9-17) |

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| 3 | M | Feb 15 | No class. College is closed. |
| | W | Feb 17 | <i>Frankenstein</i> Volume III (Chapters 18-24) |
| 4 | M | Feb 22 | Wells, "The Star" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 39-49) |
| | W | Feb 24 | Forster, "The Machine Stops" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 50-78) |
| 5 | M | Feb 29 | Moore, "Shambleau" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 110-135) |
| | W | Mar 2 | Video: <i>Flash Gordon</i> (1936) |
| 6 | M | Mar 7 | First Exam |
| | W | Mar 9 | Asimov, "Reason" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 160-176) |
| 7 | M | Mar 14 | Bradbury, "There Will Come Soft Rains" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 234-240) |
| | W | Mar 16 | Heinlein, "--All You Zombies--" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 324-336) |
| 8 | M | Mar 21 | Godwin, "The Cold Equations" (<i>PDF</i>) |
| | W | Mar 23 | No class. College follows a Friday schedule. |
| 9 | M | Mar 28 | Video: <i>Forbidden Planet</i> (1956) |
| | W | Mar 30 | Video: <i>Forbidden Planet</i> (1956) |
| 10 | M | Apr 4 | Ellison, "Repent, Harlequin! Said the Ticktockman" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 367-378) |
| | W | Apr 6 | Dick, "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 385-404) |
| 11 | M | Apr 11 | Delany, "Aye, and Gomorrah. . ." (<i>Wesleyan</i> 405-414) |
| | W | Apr 13 | Video: <i>Star Trek TOS</i> : "City on the Edge of Forever" |
| 12 | M | Apr 18 | Second Exam |
| | W | Apr 20 | Zoline, "The Heat Death of the Universe" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 415-429) |
| | M | Apr 25 | No class. Spring Break. |
| | W | Apr 27 | No class. Spring Break. |
| 13 | M | May 2 | Russ, "When It Changed" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 507-515) |
| | W | May 4 | Tiptree, Jr., "The Women Men Don't See" (<i>PDF</i>) |
| 14 | M | May 9 | Le Guin, "Nine Lives" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 452-476) |
| | W | May 11 | Butler, "Speech Sounds" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 566-579) |
| 15 | M | May 16 | Gibson, "Burning Chrome" (<i>Wesleyan</i> 547-565) |
| | W | May 18 | Video: <i>The X-Files</i> : "Kill Switch" |
| 16 | M | May 23 | Discussion: What's the present and future of SF, or what SF should you be reading, seeing, hearing, and playing? |
| | W | May 25 | Final Exam SF Analysis Essay Due Last day of class. |