

**Film 160: Film Genres**  
**Science Fiction**  
**Summer 2014, UCSC: Tuesdays & Thursdays 6.00pm-9.30pm**  
Social Science Building 1, Rm. 110

**(Optional) Sections: Tuesdays 4:30pm-5:30pm**  
Social Science Building 1, Rm. 145

Professor: Benjamín Schultz-Figueroa  
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Office Hours: Wednesday 3.00pm-4.00pm @ McHenry Café and by appt.

TA: Christina Corfield  
Email: ccorfiel@ucsc.edu  
Office Hours: by appointment

### **Course Description**

This course will examine the tropes, techniques, and preoccupations of science fiction. Space, cyborgs, aliens, and virtual reality will be among the weekly topics. Students will engage with a wide range of material, from blockbuster features to short stories, video games to silent films, philosophy to kitsch. Some of this material is fun, some is difficult, and much of it is both. The purpose is not that you should leave this class with a set of truths about the form of fiction we call science fiction. Rather, the goal is for you to leave with a broader sense of what science fiction could mean, how speculation can be useful in artistic and intellectual practice, and with a myriad of directions to pursue for further research.

### **Requirements**

Each week please come prepared with notes and questions from the assigned readings. I do not necessarily expect complete comprehension of the texts, but I do expect to see you grappling with the ideas and bringing in questions when you have them.

You do not need to purchase any texts for this class. Articles and handouts will be uploaded to the ecommons site, or will be linked to online. It is fine with me if you wish to read them in a digital format, but be sure that you are annotating somehow (either by taking notes in a notebook or using an application that allows for digital marginalia). Laptops and tablets are allowed in the class for note taking and referring to the readings. Please keep the Friendstering to a minimum.

### **Assignments and Grading**

There are three items upon which you will be graded: a final paper, your contribution to a class blog, and your attendance and participation.

### *Final Project (50%)*

Your final project can be a paper that consists of a close reading of a text paired with a textual analysis of a film. You should be shooting for 3,500 words (approximately eight pages). Your other option is to make a short film that write an artist statement, which connects the film to the texts in the class. **If you choose this option, you must speak to me by at least 7/17 about your project.** More details about this final assignment are in an assignment handout, which will soon be circulated.

### *Class Blog (25%)*

You are required to compose **two** full-length (three paragraphs or more) blog entries over the span of this course. Additionally, you must substantively (at least a full paragraph) engage with **two** of the other blog entries written by your peers. More details about this will also be distributed soon.

### *Attendance & Participation (25%)*

This should be pretty self-explanatory. If you *must* miss a class for some inescapable reason, please email both Christina and I. Two or more unexcused absences and your grade will begin to seriously drop. Take note that participation is a sizeable chunk of your grade. This means that you *must participate in class discussions if you want a good grade*. You do not need to memorize anything in this class, but you do need to participate in our discussions, and be prepared with thoughts, questions, insights, and critiques.

### **Academic Misconduct Policy:**

Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty.

**Acts of academic misconduct during the course, including plagiarism, will result in failure of the course. Your case will be reported to the College Provost as per the Academic Integrity guidelines found on the web at:**

[http://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic\\_integrity](http://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_integrity)

### **Summer Session Students with Disabilities**

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me as soon as possible, preferably within the first week of the Summer Session. Contact DRC by phone at [831-459-2089](tel:831-459-2089) or by email at [drc@ucsc.edu](mailto:drc@ucsc.edu) for more information.

**Note:** This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class.

## Schedule

### **Class 1 (6/24): Introductions**

**Screening:** *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927) 148 min.

### **Class 2 (6/26): Utopia and Dystopia**

**Screening:** *Born in Flames* (Lizzie Borden, 1983) 80 min.

**Reading:**

-Williams, Raymond "Utopia and Science Fiction"

(<http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/16/williams16art.htm>)

-Jackson, Lynne "Labor Relations: An Interview with Lizzie Borden"

### **Class 3 (7/1): Space**

**Screening:** *Voyage to the Moon* (Georges Melies, 1902) 18min. & *Space is the Place* (John Coney, 1974) 82 min.

**Reading:**

-Fawaz, Ramzi "Space, that Bottomless Pit: Planetary Exile and Metaphors of Belonging in American Afrofuturist Cinema"

-Younquist, Paul "The Space Machine: Baraka and Science Fiction"

-Syms, Martine "The Mundane Afrofuturist Manifesto"

([http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/dec/17/mundane-afrofuturist-manifesto/?ref=tags\\_afrofuturism\\_post\\_title](http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/dec/17/mundane-afrofuturist-manifesto/?ref=tags_afrofuturism_post_title))

**Listening:**

-*Dimension X* "Mars is Heaven" (<http://www.relicradio.com/otr/2009/03/sf42-mars-is-heaven-by-dimension-x/>)

### **Class 4 (7/3): Technological Advancement & Anxiety**

**Screening:** *Alphaville* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965) 99 min. & *Pumzi* (Wanuri Kahiu, 2009) 21 min.

**Reading:**

-Marinetti, F. T. *The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism*

-K. Le Guin, Ursula "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction"

### **Class 5 (7/8): Cyborgs**

**Screening:** *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982) 116 min.

**Reading:**

-Haraway, Donna "Cyborg Manifesto"

-Dick, Philip K. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

### **Class 6 (7/10): Robots**

**Screening:** *Mechanical Love* (Phie Ambo, 2007) 79 min.

**Reading:**

-Riskin, Jessica "18<sup>th</sup> Century Wetware"

**Class 7 (7/15): Alien as Nonhuman**

**Screening:** *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979) 117 min.

**Reading:**

-Butler, Octavia “Blood Child”

-Uexkull, Jakob von “Introduction,” from *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans: A Theory of Meaning*

-Vint, Sherryl “The Animals in That Country”

**Class 8 (7/17): Humanoid Aliens**

**Screening:** *Chariots of the Gods* (Harold Reinl, 1970) 92 min. & *Tribulation 99: Alien Anomalies under America* (Craig Baldwin, 1991) 48 min.

**Reading:**

-Zryd Michael “Found Footage Film as Discursive Metahistory: Craig Baldwin’s *Tribulation 99*”

**Class 9 (7/22): NextNature/Apocalypse**

**Screening:** *Stalker* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1979) 163 min.

**Reading:**

-“Next Nature Intro by Bruce Sterling” (<http://www.nextnature.net/2010/09/next-nature-intro-by-bruce-sterling/>)

Halter, Ed “On the Year in Sci-Fi Catastrophes (<http://artforum.com/slant/id=44552>)

**Class 10 (7/24): Virtual Reality/Simulation**

**Screening & Playing:** *The Third Body* (Peggy Ahwesh, 2007) 9 min. & The Oculus Rift

**Reading:**

-Baudrillard, Jean “The Precession of Simulacra” & “Simulacra and Science Fiction” from *Simulacra and Simulation*