

University of California Santa Cruz

Porter College

Writing the Future: PRTR 151F-01

Room: Soc Sci 2: Room 363

Summer Session 1 – 2018

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Course Description:

Science fiction and speculative fiction (SF) record the persistent desire for a different way of being and living. Resisting the view that history is over and the future is merely (and can only be) an extension of the realist present—albeit one with more sophisticated technology, SF gives rein to hope. In addition, it is a genre that questions many binary divides—that between art and science, between “entertainment” and “art” and between “low-brow” and “high-brow” and between the social and the material. In addition to its challenges of different “content,” SF demands different reading strategies—the recognition of difference between the world of the fiction and the world of the reader.

Indeed, SF is the genre that pushes toward “alien” social relations and knowledges and the invention of radical otherness and difference. It is a site for democratized, and potentially politically efficacious, discussions and projections about the future that transcend the limitations of present social and institutional relations—both negatively, by removing injustice and exploitation—and positively—by fueling new horizons of expectation.

Whether utopic or dystopic, SF embeds a critique of the present by inspiring and cautioning readers to imagine alternative possibilities and ways of living. This course reads and analyzes the history of the force of this utopian impulse—from Thomas More’s *Utopia* of 1516 to the present. Beginning with the fiction, a novel whose title—the name of the creature’s maker, Victor Frankenstein—has become synonymous with scientific monstrosity, this course will ask what connection there is between dystopic fictions and the utopian impetus to imagine radically-different *and* better (or worse) worlds—to think *beyond* the practices, solidarities, and discourses that are inextricably (and always) already shot through the present.

Examining contemporary anxieties about the relation of existential experience to historical time, science fiction projects differences and contradictions that inhere in alienation, the search for community, the destructiveness of war, health and embodiment, viruses, genetic engineering, the role of machines and robots, surveillance, and environmental degradation. It

explores some of the contradictions that overlay our present—such as siloed isolation and 24/7 digital connectivity facilitating relations of love, work, and affinity. SF considers possible social relations, the quality of agency, and the status of the nation—in respect to the intricate webs of science and technology that both emerge from and motor the present, and in so doing, write alternative futures in their many local, regional, and global variants.

This course will examine how SF can help us imagine (and demand) better futures that include more social justice as well as different forms of affect, work, and social organization—and how we might go beyond mere techno-optimism of better AI, robots, and self-driving cars or the vision of business-as-usual, global capitalist brutal realism of offshored labor, job elimination, and lionization of the “free” market, and the teloi of ever-increasing consumption and profit.

The novels this course reads presume alternate worlds that are peopled by monsters, cyborgs (and slaves), and robots—enacting virtuality, unconventional relations among people, machines, and animals, and/or apocalypse. A central question this course asks is how science fiction’s utopic and/or dystopic projections give us insights about equality, justice, and difference. How do people’s connections (or disconnections) to technology contribute to contemporary discussions about the promises, fears, and challenges of technologies that are being used, developed, contested, or opposed by people and groups today? How have technologies shaped our ideas of what we do and who we are—and can be—as human beings—individually and socially?

Central to this course is the question of how literary fictions create searching interrogations of what passes for knowledge, motors change, complicates identity, challenges received categories of identity and action, ambiguates ethical standing, or constitutes resistance to binary alternatives—casting suspicion on what the status of the past is, what knowledge is, and for whom, how it can be taken for granted, and how we know what events have happened. This course examines how novels imagine constructions of oppression, identity, and freedom—from the level of the “free” individual to the nation and the transnational.

Finally, this course will investigate the relation of fiction to science/technology, asking how it has shaped popular receptions of science and even stimulated research projects. We will consider how fictions shape knowledge, adjudicate subjectivities, contest power, and lastly, we will look at the variety of literary strategies these fictions use—including realist, diaristic, fantasy, and epistolary literary conventions.

Required Reading/Books*:

All required books are available either online (See “Files” tab on Canvas) or at The Literary Guillotine (our best bookstore), downtown on Locust Street (open 10-6). Remember, Summer Session is only five weeks long, so it’s super-speeded up and compressed. Keep up.

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* [1818] – any edition [PDF on Canvas]

H. G. Wells, *When the Sleeper Wakes* [1899] [eBook on Canvas]

Walter M. Miller, *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (Bantam Books, 1959) [eBook on Canvas]

Samuel Delaney, *The Trouble on Triton* (Bantam, 1976)

Don DeLillo, *Zero K* (Scribner, 2016)

Required Reading – Articles/Chapters:

Most of these texts are available in the course *Reader*, which must be purchased from The Literary Guillotine on Locust Street downtown (open 10-6). A few of them, which are excerpts from entire books, are available online (Canvas/Files). The *Reader* will be available on Monday, June 25th.

Mark Bould, “SF Now, Introduction.” *Paradoxa*. 2015 [Reader]

Gregory Claeys, “The Origins of Dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell,” *The Cambridge Guide to Utopian Literature*. Ed. Gregory Claeys. Cambridge University Press, pp. 107-131 [Reader]

Neil Easterbrook, “State, Heterotopia: The Political Imagination in Heinlein, LeGuin, and Delany.” *Political Science Fiction*. Ed. Donald Hassler and Clyde Wilcox. [Reader]

Peter Fitting, “Utopia, Dystopia, and Science Fiction.” *The Cambridge Guide to Utopian Literature*. Ed. Gregory Claeys. Cambridge University Press, chapter 6, 135-153 [Reader]

Carol Franko, “The I-We Dilemma and the ‘Utopian Consciousness’ in Wells’ *When the Sleeper Wakes* and LeGuin’s *The Lathe of Heaven*.” Ed. Donald M. Hassler and Clyde Wilcox. *Political Science Fiction*. University of South Carolina Press, 1997, pp. 78-98 [Reader]

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. “Mary Shelley’s Monstrous Eve.” *Norton Anthology*, ed. J. Paul Hunter. [Reader]

James E. Gunn, *Paratexts: Introduction to Science Fiction and Fantasy*. “Walter M. Miller” Scarecrow Press, Plymouth, UK, 2013 [Reader]

Ruth Levitas, *Utopia As Method*, chapter 1 [text of entire book is **on Canvas**]

Dunja Mohr, "The Classical Vision: Utopia, Dystopia, and Science Fiction." *Worlds Apart: Dualism and Transgression in Contemporary Female Dystopias*. London: McFarland, 2005, pp. 11-48. [Reader]

_____, "Demanding the Possible: The Artificiality of Boundaries." *Worlds Apart: Dualism and Transgression in Contemporary Female Dystopias*. London: McFarland, 2005, pp. 49-68. [Reader]

Adam Roberts, "Chronology," *The History of Science Fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 346-350. [Reader]

_____, "Definitions," *The History of Science Fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 1-20. [Reader]

Fatima Viera, "The Concept of Utopia," *The Cambridge Guide to Utopian Literature*, ed. Gregory Claeys. Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-27 [Reader]

Sherryl Vint, "Introduction to 'The Futures Industry issue,' *Paradoxa*, vol. 27 (2016) [Reader]

Learning Outcomes:

- Developing strategies for critical reading, understanding, and analyzing challenging science fiction and speculative fiction texts
- Increased ability to think independently, understand and analyze the arguments of others, and argue persuasively in an academic classroom community
- Familiarity with important political, philosophical, and cultural theories and their claims about their relationship to history and economics
- Understanding the historical context of science and technology production and reception in the U.S. including its ties to military weapons development
- Attunement to every text's rhetorical situation, purpose, audience, context, and genre
- Ability to craft well-supported arguments in discussion and writing by using examples from source texts
- Broad familiarity with the diversity of genres, styles, and subject matters of U.S. and British science fiction from Mary Shelley (1818) to the present

- Ability to model and provide helpful feedback to peers in class discussion and response to student reports and presentations

Reading/Writing Schedule:

Week 1:

Tuesday, June 26

- Introductions: course/syllabus

In class:

Student Presentations (3-4 people each):

- Students will sign up to present
- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* [eBook on Canvas]

Thursday, June 28

Reading due:

- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* [eBook on Canvas]
- Adam Roberts, “Definitions,” *The History of Science Fiction* [Reader]
- Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. “Mary Shelley’s Monstrous Eve.” [Reader]

In class:

- Reading Response Freewrite: What is science fiction?
- Student Presentations (3-4 people each):
 - Summarize Roberts’ argument
 - Summarize and discuss Gilbert and Gubar’s argument

Week 2: Wells

Tuesday, July 3

Writing due:

- Name one thing you noticed about Wells that (according to Roberts’ “Definitions”) engages either your cognitive estrangement or your reading strategy of noting some differences between the world your assigned novel portrays and your world. (one page typed)

Reading due:

- H. G. Wells, *When the Sleeper Wakes* [1895] [eBook on Canvas]
- Carol Franko, “The I-We Dilemma and the ‘Utopian Consciousness’ in Wells’ *When the Sleeper Wakes* and LeGuin’s *The Lathe of Heaven*. Sherryl Vint, “Introduction to ‘The Futures Industry’” [Reader]

In class:

- Student Presentations (3-4 people each):
- on Wells
- on Franko

Thursday, July 5

Writing due:

- Discuss how Graham deals with the contradictory impulse toward social justice, on the one hand, and his embrace of a masterful role. (one page)

Reading due:

- Gregory Claeys, “The Origins of Dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell,” *The Cambridge Guide to Utopian Literature*. Ed. Gregory Claeys. Cambridge University Press, pp. 107-131 [Reader]

In class:

- Student Presentations (3-4 people each):
- on Wells
- on Claeys

Week 3: Miller

Tuesday, July 10

Writing due:

- Discuss one feature of *Canticle* that is radically different from our world in the first two sections.
- Discuss the conflict and/or alliance between religion and science that *Canticle* foregrounds.

Reading due:

- Walter M. Miller, *A Canticle for Leibowitz* [1959] [eBook on Canvas]

- James E. Gunn, “Walter Miller.” [*Reader*] [two pages]
- Dunja Mohr, “The Classical Vision: Utopia, Dystopia, and Science Fiction.” [*Reader*]

Writing due: Midterm Essay (three pages)

- Enlarge and deepen, by rereading and reflection, one of your one-page reading responses into three pages. You may use one of your one-page response papers as a basis for this essay.

In class:

- Student Presentations (3-4 people each):

Thursday, July 12 – NO CLASS – Instructor away – Catch-up Day

Reading due: none

Week 4: Delaney

Tuesday, July 17

Writing due:

- Discuss what Delaney means by “heterotopia” along with some of the upsides of the society that Delaney describes. Their downsides? Consider the status of the body? Pleasure? Sacrifice? (one page)

Reading due:

- Samuel Delaney, *The Trouble on Triton* [1976] [eBook on Canvas]

In class:

- Student Presentations (3-4 people each):
 - on Delaney

Thursday, July 19

Writing due:

- In your assigned book, how does catastrophe or apocalypse work to fulfill utopic aspirations, or do you think it is anti-Utopian? (one page)

Reading due:

- Fatima Viera, “The Concept of Utopia” [*Reader*]
- Neil Easterbrook, “State, Heterotopia: The Political Imagination in Heinlein, LeGuin, and Delany.” [*Reader*]

In class:

- **Go-around on student paper topics**
- **Student Presentations**
 - on Viera
 - on Easterbrook

Writing due: Final Paper abstract (one paragraph)

- Choose a theme or topic, a historical or theoretical problem that the course raises for you and explore it in depth.

Week 5: DeLillo

Tuesday, July 24

Writing due:

- How different is our world from DeLillo’s fictional one? How is humanness tied to one’s biography and historical period?

Reading due:

Don DeLillo, *Zero K* (2016)

In class:

- **Student Presentations**
 - DeLillo

Thursday, July 26

Reading due:

- Dunja Mohr, “Demanding the Possible: The Artificiality of Boundaries.” [*Reader*]

Writing due: Final paper

- Choose an issue or question that interests you in relation to at least two books on our Syllabus.

In class:

- **Student Presentations**

- on DeLillo
- on Mohr
- What was your favorite book and why?
- Conclusions/summaries

Course Requirements with grade weight:

- Regular attendance and punctuality (priceless)
 - If you are absent, you must write a two-page review of the novel and criticism assignment that you missed. Due one week after absence.

Regular attendance is critical. Especially in summer session, if you miss a class, it is impossible to make it up.

 - Three or more absences jeopardize your ability to pass the course.

- Class participation* in discussion, Go-arounds, and other activities **priceless**

- Three short (3-5-minute) critical reports with in-class oral presentation **60%**

- In-class Midterm Essay **10%**

- Final Paper (6-8 pages) (25%) **30%**

Your Final Paper should—

 - ✓ use in-text citation (author’s name and page number in parentheses)
 - ✓ have page numbers
 - ✓ have a compelling title
 - ✓ have your name and section number on the first page

*Class participation. Optimal engagement means being present, prepared, and intellectually alert at each class meeting. Come prepared to discuss. Be collegial, listen, and engage viewpoints with which you disagree. *You cannot earn the grade of “A” unless you are a regular participant in class discussion.*

- Regular reading is critical for success in this course. Pace yourself. Read each text carefully and completely.

- At least *one* consultation with me about your academic progress, etc. during Office Hours before Week 4. Please make an appointment. Be responsible; keep a calendar and refer to it. No no-shows.

- Write and take notes as you read. Mark the text; highlight, underline, or circle important words, phrases, or sections. Use the margins of the text or write on a separate

piece of paper (or index cards, whatever). Find the method that works for you. Review your notes before class. This will refresh your memory.

- Come to class prepared to discuss the reading. Lectures will introduce key questions, considerations, and themes. We will discuss the language as well as issues raised by the texts and your reactions to them. Please participate actively in the discussion—exploring, questioning, and arguing with the text, each other, and me.
- Your classmates are your best resource—for study groups, discussion, and collaborative work. You constitute a unique, though temporary, community because you are reading and discussing the same texts for five weeks.
 - ✓ be spell-checked and grammar-proofed (no glaring mistakes)
 - ✓ use standard margins and fonts
 - ✓ be double-spaced
 - ✓ be stapled (no binders or paper clips)

A note about University policy: The University of California Systemwide Senate Regulation 760 specifies that 1 academic credit corresponds to 3 hours of work *per week per credit* in a 10-week quarter. These estimates are doubled in a 5-week summer session course. As a result, each five-credit course expects students to put in approximately 15 hours of work per week. That means that estimated student workload is doubled to *30 hours per week*. The following is provided as an approximate breakdown of time expectations for fitting these guidelines into the compressed framework of a summer session five-credit course.

- class time – 6 hours and 30 minutes per week (3 hours and 15 min/class times two classes/week)
- reading – 15 hours/week
- note-taking – 3 hours/week
- writing – 5 hours and 40 minutes/week

Course tips:

Good writers and thinkers are made, not born, and all academic success is a result of experience, training, and hard work. There is nothing mystical or pre-ordained about it. If you come from a family and/or background that did not have access to, or experience with, higher education and its culture, it is more difficult to succeed because you lack the models and the self-confidence that come from believing you are an heir to higher education.

Successful completion of this course includes thorough preparation and active participation. Being prepared includes, but is not limited to, actively reading the required texts and doing all

the writing assignments. Reading and commenting on your peers' presentations will help you generate ideas, dialogue with others, and make you more aware of your—and their—intellectual and aesthetic choices. You are each other's great resource.

Welcome to my class!

- A summer session course is an intensive experience and requires commitment, focus, and a great deal of work. Please plan your lives to accommodate the reading and writing demands of the course. I look forward to working with you.

Students with Disabilities:

I am committed to being open and supportive to all students, and I seek to accommodate different learning styles, so if you have an accommodation letter, please see me (in confidence, of course). I want you to succeed in this class, so if you have any learning issues, please see me so you can get whatever help you need to succeed.

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please get an Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC, 1476 Hahn Student Services Bldg.) and submit it to me in person before or after class or during office hours in the first two weeks of the quarter. For more information on the requirements and/or process, contact DRC at 459-2089 (voice), 459-4806 (TTY), or <http://drc.ucsc.edu>. They are helpful, friendly, and welcoming, and they offer *free printing* services at their office.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of using another person's ideas, writings, or materials without giving specific credit, known as a citation. In an academic environment, plagiarism is considered theft. If you plagiarize any materials, you may fail the assignment, fail the course, or face other penalties, up to and including expulsion. More information regarding plagiarism and disciplinary policies can be found on the University's Academic Integrity website at the page: http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity/index.html

You are responsible for your own intellectual behavior and conduct, and you must cite sources for all referenced materials in course writings. Accusations of plagiarism can be easily avoided by properly citing all resources and materials you use in your assignments. For additional information on how to cite your sources, please see: http://library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/citation_master.html

Excellent information regarding plagiarism, what it is and how it can be avoided, can be found at: Indiana University Writing Tutorial Services. I urge you to visit this site.

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml#plagiarized>

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Office Hours: Before or after class and other hours, but all by appointment

Sign-up Sheet – Sections with Morgan or Dion or Peers

These break-out sections are part of class, and they are scheduled for noon-12:30, the scheduled end of our class. Please sign up for and attend at least four.

Week 1: Thursday, June 28

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- 3. _____
- 4. _____

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- 1. _____
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Week 1: Thursday, June 28

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Week 2: Thursday, July 5

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Week 2: Thursday, July 5

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Week 2: Thursday, July 5

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Week 3: Tuesday, July 10

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Week 3: Tuesday, July 10

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Week 3: Tuesday, July 10

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Week 4: Thursday, July 19

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Week 4: Thursday, July 19

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Week 5: Tuesday, July 24

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