

## University of California Santa Cruz

### Crown College

CRWN 80F-01 Science Fictions      T/Th      9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.      Summer 2019

Lecturer: Dion N. Farquhar, Ph.D. [dnfarquh@ucsc.edu](mailto:dnfarquh@ucsc.edu)      Physical Sciences Room 130  
Teaching Assistant: Joe Lehnert [jlehnert@ucsc.edu](mailto:jlehnert@ucsc.edu)

### **Course Description:**

Science fiction and speculative fiction (SF) record people's desires for a different way of life because they resist the view that history is over and the future is merely (and *can only be*) an extension of the present. SF's imagined technologies are about the difference they create—either as hope for a better world or as a warning about a worse world. SF raises the important question about the independence of the technological from the social and the political realm. Are the worlds that SF depicts essentially different from the racialized, gendered, and classed societies of our present world?

This course will ask how SF has shaped popular receptions of science and even stimulated science research projects at the same time that we will consider how SF shapes knowledge and criticizes the present. Indeed, SF is a genre that explores hopes and fears based on technological projections about the future that can transcend the limits of present social and institutional relations. Whether utopic or dystopic, SF criticizes the present by imagining alternative scenarios for social relations and ways of living. This course reads and analyzes the force of this utopian impulse from mid-twentieth century to the present.

SF implodes many binary divides—between art/science, body/mind, organic/artificial, M/F, human/animal, and entertainment/art (low-brow/high-brow). Because SF asks readers to imagine the (technologically) *impossible*, it demands different reading strategies. We must reject the assumption that the future is merely an extension of the present and embrace “what-if” narratives. Indeed, we must accommodate ourselves to time travel, intergalactic space travel, androids and robots, alien worlds, cyberspace, and virtual technologies that presume radically-different social relations and institutional worlds. Or, as Darko Suvin, a leading theorist of SF, notes—readers must be open to “cognitive estrangement,” to alternatives to the empirical present.

SF takes up the search for community, the destructiveness of war, exploitive social relations, embodiment, artificial life, viruses, genetic engineering, the role of machines and robots, the trade and sale of biological organs and prosthetics, surveillance, and environmental degradation. The novels this course reads are books that presume alternate worlds peopled by racialized and gendered androids, cyborgs (and slaves), robots, and AIs—enacting unconventional virtual or real relations among people, machines, and animals. A central

question this course asks is how science fiction's utopic and/or dystopic projections give us insights about equality, justice, and difference.

This course will examine how SF can help us imagine (and demand) better futures that include more social justice and equality as well as better forms of association, work, play, and social organization—and how a “better” future might go beyond the techno-optimism of better AI, robots, and self-driving cars or business-as-usual, globalized digital capitalism of offshored labor, job elimination, punitive privatization, the “free” market, and the teloi of ever-increasing consumption and profit—all to the end of preserving the power, capital, and conquest that is our legacy in the global North. As such, this course explores some of the contradictions that overlay our present—such as siloed isolation and ubiquitous surveillance, in the face of continual data bombardment, consumption, and environmental crisis.

Every day, there will be one 20-minute break.

### **Required Books\*** (in order of assignment):

Although I am placing a PDF of each book on Canvas, I am requiring you to have all three of our four books in hard copy. For the fourth book, we will consider only “selections.” While you are welcome to buy the book, we will be discussing only the selections that are available as a PDF.

Reading a text in hard copy allows you to read in a different aspect ratio as well as mark and cross-reference the text in ways that are not available electronically. In addition, the scale and the materiality of reading in hard copy is different from screen reading. All books are available at The Literary Guillotine, (downtown on Locust Street [open M-F, 10-6], although you may purchase them wherever you wish.

[article on Canvas] Mark Bould. “SF Now, Introduction.” *Paradoxa*. 2015

Philip K. Dick. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (Random House, 1968)

Ursula LeGuin. *The Dispossessed* (Harper Collins, 1974)

William Gibson. *Neuromancer* (Ace Books, 1984)

Margaret Atwood. *The Heart Goes Last* (Penguin, 2015) – Selections only (on Canvas)

### **Supplementary Reading\***

Steven Best and Douglas Kellner. “The Apocalyptic Vision of Philip K. Dick.” *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies* (2003)

Wendy Brown. *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. “Undoing Democracy: Neoliberalism's Undoing of State and Subject” [chapter 1]. Zone Books. 2015.

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

Nick Dyer-Witheford, "Cybernetic" [chapter 3] and "Silicon" [chapter 4], *Cyber-Proletariat: Global Labour in the Digital Vortex* [PDF of entire text is on Canvas]

Neil Easterbrook, "State, Heterotopia: The Political Imagination in Heinlein, LeGuin, and Delany." *Political Science Fiction*. Ed. Donald Hassler and Clyde Wilcox.

Benjamin Fair, "Stepping Razor in Orbit: Postmodern Identity and Political Alternatives in William Gibson's *Neuromancer*." *Critique* (Winter 2005, vol. 46, no. 2). Pp. 93-102.

Peter Fitting. "Estranged Invaders: *The War of the Worlds*." Ed. Patrick Parrinder. *Learning from Other Worlds: Estrangement, Cognition, and the Politics of Science Fiction and Utopia*. (Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 127-145

\_\_\_\_\_. "Utopia, Dystopia, and Science Fiction." *The Cambridge Guide to Utopian Literature*. Ed. Gregory Claeys. Cambridge University Press, chapter 6, 135-153

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

James E. Gunn, *Paratexts: Introduction to Science Fiction and Fantasy*. "Philip K. Dick" Scarecrow Press, (Plymouth, UK, 2013), pp. 82-83

N. Katherine Hayles. "Print is Flat; Code is Deep: The Importance of Media-Specific Analysis." *Poetics Today*. 25. 1 (2004), pp. 67-90

Frederic Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*. "Introduction: Utopia Now," *Archaeologies of the Future*. Verso, 2005, pp. xi-xvi [text of entire book is available on Canvas]

Frederic Jameson. *Archaeologies of the Future*. "Introduction: Utopia Now," *Archaeologies of the Future*. Verso, 2005, pp. xi-xvi [entire book available on Canvas/Files/Supplementary Reading]

\_\_\_\_\_. "Varieties of the Utopian," pp. 1-9

\_\_\_\_\_. "Journey into Fear," pp. 182-210

\_\_\_\_\_. "Utopia and its Antinomies," pp. 142-169

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

Dunja Mohr, "Demanding the Possible: The Artificiality of Boundaries." *Worlds Apart: Dualism and Transgression in Contemporary Female Dystopias*. London: McFarland, 2005,

pp. 49-68

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_. "Definitions," *The History of Science Fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 1-20.

Salman Sayyid. "Do Post-racials Dream of White Sheep?" Center for Racism and Ethnicity Study.

Grzegorz Trębicki. "Supragenealogical Types of Fiction versus Contemporary Non-Mimetic Literature." *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (November 2014), pp. 481-501

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

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

Brian Willems "Introduction." *Speculative Realism and Science Fiction*, Edinburgh University Press, 2017, pp. 1-5 and "The Zug Effect," pp. 6-39

\*Most supplementary texts are online on Canvas.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- Developing strategies for critical reading, understanding, and analyzing challenging SF texts
- Understanding of the history of discourse about tools and machines (technology)
- Increased ability to think independently, understand and analyze the arguments of others, and argue persuasively in an academic classroom community
- Understanding the historical context and political implications of science and technology production and reception in the U.S.
- 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. science fiction from the mid-twentieth century to the present.
- Ability to model and provide helpful feedback to peers in class discussion and response to student reports and presentations

### **Course Methods:**

- Lecture
- Group discussion and debate
- Go-arounds (In the first week, you may “pass.”)
- Small group discussion
- Student Presentations

This course will use a variety of methods to explore a selection of science fiction novels and a sampling of critical literature about sci-fi. These include lecture, textual analysis (close reading of the text), reading and discussing literary and historical criticism, and discussion in both small and large groups of the whole, Go-Arounds, and Student Presentations.

Beginning on the second day of class, several students (who have signed up in advance) will lead a brief, informal discussion about what they found interesting, provocative, or challenging about the novel we are focusing on. Then in Small Groups, you will discuss together—assess, analyze, and interpret what the text adds to your understanding of the world—and hopefully stimulate class discussion and debate about how fiction informs thinking about the present.

Be sure to highlight what your chosen text is saying, noting how it functions in terms of at least one of the following qualities: form, content, dramatic setting, style, goal, dynamics, context, themes, imagery, and approach. What overview or philosophical point is being advocated?

You are being asked *what you think* about the source novel you’re presenting on—not merely to summarize it. What do you think of the argument, thesis, and style/form of your source text? What does it make you think about the world of the novel? In what respects does it contrast with the world of the present? Are the conundrums and dilemmas of the novel irrelevant to contemporary life or continuous? Exacerbated? Lessened? Be specific.

### **Course Requirements with grade weight:**

- Regular attendance and punctuality (priceless)
  - If you are absent, you must write a half-page review of the reading assignment you missed. *Due one week after absence.*
  - *Two or more* absences jeopardize your ability to pass the course.
- Class participation\* in discussion, Go-arounds, and other activities **10%**

- *One* short (2-4-minute) critical Presentation 15%
- **Four Discussion Posts on Canvas**
  - Using close reading, evaluation, personal experience, and argument —or a combination of these criteria, reflect on the issues, themes, or problems the novel raises?
  - There is *one Discussion Post* required for each of four novels.
  - Use at least one quotation.
  - Due 11:59 p.m. on the following schedule:
    - *Androids* – due Friday, June 28
    - *The Dispossessed* – due Wednesday, July 10
    - *Neuromancer* – due Wednesday, July 17
    - *The Heart Goes Last* – Wednesday, July 23 40%

Final *Research Paper* (6-8 pages) 35%

Your Final Paper should—

- ✓ go into depth about a question or theme from one fiction book (or more)
- ✓ use at least one non-fiction book in your research
- ✓ use/cite *at least* one peer-reviewed article
- ✓ be 6-8 pages long
- ✓ use in-text citation (author’s name and page number in parentheses)
- ✓ have a Works Cited page as last page (see Online Writing Lab, Purdue University: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_sample\\_works\\_cited\\_page.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_sample_works_cited_page.html))
- ✓ have page numbers
- ✓ have a compelling title
- ✓ have your name on the first page
- ✓ be spell-checked and grammar-proofed
- ✓ use standard margins and fonts
- ✓ be double-spaced
- ✓ be stapled (no binders or paper clips)
- ✓ be delivered in hard copy on the last day of class

\*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.*

**Ways to earn extra credit:**

- Do a second Presentation
- Post a second Discussion entry for the week

## **Class Reading/Writing Schedule:**

### **Week 1 – *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?***

**Tuesday, June 25, 2019**

#### **Reading due:**

- Roger Zelazny, “Introduction”
- Reuters Press Release, 1966, p. 2
- Chapters 1-4, pp 3-48.

#### **In class:**

- Introductions: course/syllabus
- Index card introductions

#### **Discuss: Go-around**

- Your major? Year? Interests
- Do you read science fiction? If you like the genre, what do you like about it?
- Why did you take this class? (OK to say anything, including, need a Gen Ed course to graduate)
- Discuss the role of android production in the Mars colonization effort.

#### **Lecture:**

- Introduction – main themes in *Androids*

#### **Discussion Questions for Canvas Post: (Pick one. Due Friday, June 28)**

- Describe the world that *Androids* portrays. What social relations, technologies, and institutions does our world share with the world of the novel? Be specific.
- Consider Decker and what drives him to kill androids?
- How are disability, mental illness, and depression treated in *Androids*? How about sex and gender?
- Are the challenges that Decker and other characters face related to the technologies that are used in their world? How is technology and economics related—in the novel? For us?

**Thursday, June 27**

#### **Reading due:**

- finish *Androids*

#### **In class:**

- Student Presentations (3-5 people each): Students will sign up to present.

**Friday, June 28**

**Canvas Discussion Post due** (see above, June 25)

**Week 2 – begin *The Dispossessed***

**Tuesday, July 2**

**Reading due:** begin *The Dispossessed*?

**In class:**

- Student Presentations

**Discussion Questions for Canvas Post:** (Pick one. Due **Wednesday, July 10**)

- How is Shevek like an anthropologist?
- Analyze the significance of “walls” in *The Dispossessed*?
- Discuss Shevek’s view of knowledge? How does it compare with yours?
- Pick one planet and discuss its downsides. Explain which planet you would prefer to live on.
- Discuss the role of technology in fostering equality and/or exacerbating inequality. Be specific.

**Thursday, July 4<sup>th</sup> – Holiday – NO CLASS**

**Week 3 – Tuesday, July 9**

**Reading due:**

- finish *The Dispossessed*

**In class:**

- Student Presentations

**Wednesday, July 10**

**Canvas Discussion Post due** (see above, July 2)

**Thursday, July 11**

**Reading due:** start *Neuromancer*

**In class:** Student Presentations

**Discussion Questions for Canvas Post:** (Pick one. Due **Wednesday, July 17**)

- How is the body/embodiment (and transcending it) described? Is it gendered and racialized?
- What are Case’s social relations like? His affect and worldview? Do they change in the course of the novel?
- Describe the economy in *Neuromancer*’s world?
- What technologies does *Neuromancer* assume and normalize?

- What is the role of cyberspace/the matrix in *Neuromancer*?

## Week 4

### Tuesday, July 16

#### Reading due:

- finish *Neuromancer*

#### In class:

- Student Presentations

#### Writing due:

- Research Paper Form (filled out and handed in)

### Wednesday, July 17

**Canvas Discussion Post due** (see above, July 11)

### Thursday, July 18

#### Reading due:

- start *The Heart Goes Last*

#### In class: Student Presentations

#### Discussion Questions for Canvas Post: (Pick one. Due **Wednesday, July 24**)

- Discuss the relationship of trading security for protection in *Heart*.
- Do characters in *Heart* accept intolerable conditions out of necessity? Self-protection? Ignorance?
- Why do people collaborate in their own oppression?
- Do people put up with an intolerable “now” in exchange for the promise or fantasy of a “better” future?
- Discuss how portraying heteronormative, misogynist or homophobic practices and/or speech can be critical.

## Week 5

### Tuesday, July 23

#### Reading due:

- finish *The Heart Goes Last*
- Alex Williams. “Do you take this robot...” *New York Times*, January 19, 2019  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/19/style/sex-robots.html>

#### In class:

- Student Presentations

- Selection Final Paper Presenters (volunteers or voting?)
- Why do we recoil at the idea of sex with robots? Or do we? Is it the idea that a sex robot is not just a technological sex aid or sex toy but that it mimes a person with the ability to consent and communicate, which is disturbing?
- What are sex robots surrogates for? Should we ask the people who use them—or who want to use them?

### **Wednesday, July 24**

**Canvas Discussion Post due** (See above, July 18)

### **Thursday, July 25 – LAST CLASS**

**Reading due: none**

**In class:**

- Student Research Paper Presentations: What did you discover through researching and writing your paper?
- Conclusions/summaries

**Writing due:**

- Final Research Paper

### **Course Tips:**

Good thinkers and writers 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 may 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, taking notes, and marking the text. In addition, commenting on your peers' presentations will help you generate ideas, share ideas with others, and make you more aware of your—and their—political and ethical choices. You are each other's great resource.

Welcome to our class!

- **Regular reading is critical for success in this course.** Pace yourself. Read each text carefully and completely. Whenever possible, re-read and refer to your notes, markings of the text, etc.

- 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, style, and voice of each text as well as some of the issues they raise 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.

**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.

As a result, each *five-credit course* expects students to put in approximately *15 hours of work per week*.

- class time – 3 hours and 10 minutes per week (1 hours and 35 min/class times two classes/week)
- reading – 7 hours/week
- note-taking – 2 hours/week
- writing – 3 hours/week

### **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.

**CARE: UCSC Campus Advocacy, Resources and Education**

The CARE program provides support, advocacy, resources and violence prevention education to the UC Santa Cruz community. We respond to the needs of students, staff, faculty and non-affiliates impacted by stalking, dating/domestic violence and sexual assault by providing free and confidential services.

CARE also works collaboratively with students, faculty and staff to educate the campus community about the vital role that each of us has in preventing violence and creating social justice locally and globally.

They are located at Kresge, Building R-7, office 714 (across from the Owl's Nest).

For an appointment: Call (831) 502-2273 or Email [care@ucsc.edu](mailto:care@ucsc.edu)

Fill out an [appointment request](#).

## **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](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](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>

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 all to visit this site.

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

**Office Hours:** Right before or after class—or by appointment.

**Research Paper Form – due Tuesday, July 16, 2019**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tentative Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thesis/argument:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

**Textual support: (at least one book and one article that are not read in class)**

---

---

---

**Annotated bibliography 1: How is it relevant or helpful to your thesis? (non-fiction book)**

---

---

---

**Annotated bibliography 2: How does it expand or support your thesis? (peer-reviewed article)**

---

---

---