

University of California Santa Cruz

Crown College

CRWN 80F-01 Science Fictions

Instructor: Dion Farquhar, Ph.D.

Reader: Ana Pedroso (Ph.D. Candidate)

M/W 1-4:30 p.m.

Oakes Academy 106

Summer Session 2 / 2022

“It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories.”  
—Donna Haraway\*

**Course Description:**

Science fiction and speculative fiction (SF) are genres that 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 different possibilities they create—either as hope for a better world or as a warning about a worse world to come—or as a reconfiguration of the past from different points of view. SF also raises important questions about the independence of the technological from the social and the political realms.

This course will ask how SF has shaped popular receptions of science (and even stimulated science research projects) at the same time that it asks how SF shapes knowledge and reflects on, shapes, and criticizes the present. Whether utopic or dystopic, SF imagines alternative scenarios for social relations and ways of living. This course reads and analyzes the force of this utopian/dystopian impulse from the 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 (high-brow/low-brow; literary fiction/genre fiction). Asking readers to imagine the (technologically) *impossible*, SF demands different reading strategies. It rejects the assumption that the future is (and can only be) an extension of the present by embracing “what-if” scenarios. Indeed, its themes are time travel, intergalactic space travel, androids and robots, alien worlds, cyberspace, and virtual technologies that presume radically-different social practices and institutional worlds.

Or, following SF theorist Darko Suvin in defining SF as entailing “cognitive estrangement” and presenting readers with a “novum” [a new thing] that characterizes fictive worlds that are different from our empirical, realist present. SF imagines worlds, relations, experiences, and institutions that are better than or worse than, and different from, present, empirical commonsense life. For better and for worse. SF takes up the search for community (or dealing with its lack), the conflict between individual and community, the role of individual agency, domination and colonization, the destructiveness of war, exploitive social relations,

\*Donna Haraway, Science Fiction Research Association Talk, July 2011

embodiment, artificial life, viruses, genetic engineering, the role of machines and robots, surveillance, apocalyptic environmental degradation, and others. The novels this course reads presume alternate worlds that are 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—and their competing and contested institutional histories of exploitation and oppression.

This course will examine how SF can help us imagine (and demand) better futures that include 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, and lionization of the “free” market, the role of the state or centralized governance (for whom?), and the goals of ever-increasing consumption and profit—all to the end of preserving the power, money, and conquest that is the legacy of the global North—the context that supplies most SF authorship and readership.

As such, this course explores how SF explores some of the contradictions that overlay our present—siloed isolation (exacerbated under pandemic conditions), the attack on democratic processes (like voting access), ubiquitous surveillance, continual data bombardment, compulsory consumption, and environmental crisis—to name a few.

### **Required Reading –Fiction\*** (in order of assignment):

Isaac Asimov. “The Fun We Had” (short story; PDF on Canvas)

Ursula LeGuin. “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” (short story; PDF on Canvas)

N.K. Jemison, “The Ones Who Stay and Fight” (short story; PDF on Canvas)

Philip K. Dick. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* [1968] (PDF on Canvas)

Olga Tokarczuk, *Drive Your Plow over the Bones of the Dead* (PDF on Canvas)

Richard Powers, *Plowing the Dark* (Farrar Strauss) [2000] (PDF on Canvas)

\* Please try to secure a print copy of the required fiction reading. Hardcopy allows you to read texts off-screen and mark and cross-reference them in a variety of ways that are not available electronically. In addition, the scale and the materiality of reading articles or books in hard copy is different from screen reading in the materiality of its aspect ratio (like in film) and corporeal engagement. So, please find a print copy—especially of *Plowing the Dark*.

### **Suggested Reading – Articles:**

Mark Bould. “Sf Now: Introduction.” *Paradoxa*. Volume 26

H. Bruce Franklin. "What is Science Fiction and How It Grew." *Reading Science Fiction*. James Gunn, et al. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008

Sherryl Vint. "Introduction to the Futures Industry"

Steven Best and Douglas Kellner. "The Apocalyptic Vision of Philip K. Dick."

\*All are available 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 of science and technology production and reception in the U.S. including its ties to military weapon development
- Attunement to a 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 styles and subject matters of U.S. and U.K. SF
- Ability to provide helpful feedback to peers in class discussion and respond to student presentations

### **Course Methods**

This course will use a variety of methods to explore a selection of science fiction texts and a sampling of critical literature about them. These include lecture, textual analysis (close reading of the text), reading and discussing literary and historical criticism, student oral presentations, discussion in both small and large groups, Go-Arounds, and brief (timed) writing in class.

- **One required in-class Presentation** (3-5 minutes)

Beginning on the second day of class, students (who have signed up in advance) will lead the discussion by noting what they found interesting, provocative, or challenging about the text. Does the text make an argument, advance a thesis, or question an assumption? Are its

warrants well supported? What does the text add to, or challenge, about your understanding of the world? Identify the element of “cognitive estrangement” in the novel, and note what is significant about it.

Say *what you think* about the novel or story; don’t merely summarize it. Note a significant argument, point, or thesis of the text. Discuss how the text relates to challenges and dilemmas of contemporary life as well as the contemporaneous period in which it was written.

- **Two Response Papers**

**Response Paper One** is required of everyone.

**Your additional ONE Response Paper is FREE CHOICE.**

You pick the book you’d like to write about. Every paper is submitted on Canvas and has a *1,000-word minimum* and must include at least three supporting quotes with in-text (accurate) citation.

**Course Requirements with grade weight:**

- One in-class oral presentations (20% each) **20%**
- **TWO Response Papers (60%).** See below.
  - The Prompt for each appears under the vertical nav bar “Assignments.”
  - Students will address only one or two of the a few questions (from array of micro-questions) in the Prompt.
  - Use reflection, close reading, criticism, contextualization, personal experience, historical knowledge, research—or a combination of these methods.
- Response Paper 1 (1,000-word min.)
  - Self-introduction (300-word min.)
  - Analysis of Asimov, LeGuin, or Jemison’s stories (700-word min.)
  - This paper is required of all students **30%**
- Response Papers (1,000-word min.) refer to a specific reading.
  - Choose **one** of the three books to write about **30%**

All Response Papers must include:

- At least **three (brief) quotations** from the text that support your observations, analysis, and assertions
- **Critical analysis** (connecting the text to at least one contemporary social, political, or philosophical issue, question, or theme)
- **No Plot summaries;** we’ve all read the book (or the stories)
- What oppositions or **framework/s** does the text use to center its themes and worldview—and your evaluation of these?
- Regular attendance and punctuality\*
  - *Two or more* absences (in summer session) jeopardize your ability to *pass* the course.

- Class participation\* in discussion, Go-arounds, Small Group Discussion, Discussion of the whole, etc. 20%
  - Please listen respectfully to your peers.
  - Disagreement is welcome and enriches the course.
  - Optimal engagement entails 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.**

### **Late Paper policy:**

All Response Paper are due on their due date. Please note that Canvas submissions close on that date. If you have an extreme personal or family emergency that prevents you from getting your paper in on time, please write me a note explaining why you need an extension. When that new, agreed-upon date is reached, please email your Response Paper to me in an email as a Word attachment because Canvas submissions close by the end date.

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

#### **Week 1**

**Monday, July 25, 2022** – Introductions: Syllabus; Asimov

**Reading due: (We will read it in class.)**

- Isaac Asimov, “The Fun We Had” (very short story)

**Discuss:**

- What is your main take-away from Asimov’s story?
- What does the story imply is lost with mechanical teaching machines?
- Is anything gained?
- What has your learning experience on Zoom been like?
- What does the technological capacity for remote learning presuppose? (Then or now?)
- What gender relations are explored in this story? Anything you notice about race?
- Do you think education was “fun” *before* remote or mechanical learning?

**Wednesday, July 27** – LeGuin and Jemison

**Reading due:**

- Ursula LeGuin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas”
- N.K. Jemison, “The Ones Who Stay and Fight”
- link: <https://www.lightspeedmagazine.com/fiction/the-ones-who-stay-and-fight/>

**In class:**

- Student Presentations (1-5 people each day): Students sign up to present (Google Sheet on Canvas)

**Saturday, July 30, 2022**

**Writing due: Response Paper 1**

## Week 2 -- *Androids*

**Monday, August 1, 2022** – Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1/2)

### Reading due:

- *Androids*, Chapters 1-13 (pp. 3-153)

### Supplementary Reading:

- Adam Roberts. “Chronology of Science Fiction”
- Sherryl Vint, “Introduction to ‘The Futures Industry’”
- Edward Simon, “The Science Fiction that Came before Science,”  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/11/the-science-fiction-that-came-before-science/508067/>
- Eva Short, “Prediction or Influence? Science Fiction Books that Forecast the Future”
- <https://www.siliconrepublic.com/machines/science-fiction-future-technology>

### In class:

- Student Presentations
- Connect the text to larger contemporaneous trends, events, or institutions (E.g.: fear of nuclear war; environmental consciousness [Earth Day in 1970], etc.)
- What are Deckerd’s motivations for doing his job, which is “retiring” androids?
- Describe Deckerd’s social relations? His affect and worldview? Other characters?
- What are some differences/similarities between the world of the novel and your world?
- How does technology influence feeling (affect)—in the novel? In your life?
- Note one thing that is strange for you (that engages your cognitive estrangement).
- Name a specific difference/similarity between the world of the novel and your world.

**Wednesday, August 3** – *Androids* (2/2)

### Reading due:

- *Androids*, Chapters 14-22 (pp. 154-244/end)

### Supplementary Reading:

- Mark Bould. “Sf Now: Introduction.” *Paradoxa*. Volume 26
- Steven Best and Douglas Kellner. “The Apocalyptic Vision of Philip K. Dick.” *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies* (2003)

### In class:

- Student Presentations
- Which characters struggle with marginalization, persecution, contingency, piecework/gig economy, survival, and consumption?
- Does Deckerd think for himself, and if not, where does he get his orders—and his ethics? Does work constrain his freedom? Ours? How?
- Which characters struggle with marginalization, persecution, contingency, piecework/gig economy, survival, and consumption?
- Does Deckerd think for himself, and if not, where does he get his orders—and his ethics? Does work constrain our freedom? How?

### **Week 3 – *Drive Your Plow over the Bones of the Dead***

**Monday, August 8** – *Drive Your Plow over the Bones of the Dead* (1/2)

**Reading due:**

- *Drive Your Plow* (Chapters I-IX, pp. 1-148)

**In class:**

- Describe the society?
- Which characters do you resonate (or empathize) with?

**Wednesday, August 10** – CATCH-UP DAY – *Drive Your Plow over the Bones of the Dead* (1/2)

**Reading due:**

- *Drive Your Plow* (Chapter X-XVII, pp. 148-274/end)

### **Week 4 – Powers, part 1**

**Monday, August 15** – Powers (1/4)

**Reading due:**

- Powers, Chapters 1-21 (pp. 5-169)

**In class:**

- Student Presentations

**Wednesday, August 17** – Powers (2/4)

**Reading due:**

- Powers, Chapters 22-29 (pp. 170-238)

**In class:**

- Student Presentations

### **Week 5 – Powers, part 2**

**Monday, August 22**– Powers (3/4)

**In class:**

- Student Presentations

**Reading due:** Powers, Chapter 30-38 (pp. 239-369)

**Wednesday, August 24** – **LAST CLASS** – (Powers, 4/4)

**Reading due:**

- Powers, Chapter 39-46 (pp. 369-415/end)

**In class:**

- Student Presentations

**Saturday, August 27****Writing due:**

- Response Paper *Plowing the Dark*

**Course Tips:**

- **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. Whenever possible, read in hard copy.
- Regardless of the medium you read in, be sure to 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. Please participate actively in the discussion—exploring, questioning, and arguing with the text, each other, and me.
- Listen to your fellow students as they give their presentations. Be prepared to respond to their questions and comments with your own considered ideas.

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 excel 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, taking notes, and marking the text. In addition, participating in discussion in both large groups and in Breakout Rooms, and critically (and respectfully) commenting on your peers' presentations will help you generate ideas, engage in dialogue with others, and make you more aware of your—and their—intellectual choices. You are each other's great resource. Please participate.

**Supplementary Reading** (most are on Canvas under “Files/Supplementary Reading”)

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
- William Gibson. Interview *Mother Jones*. "The Future Will View Us as a Joke." [mentions LeGuin and Butler]  
<https://www.motherjones.com/media/2014/10/william-gibson-peripheral-vision-time-travel-interview/>
- James E. Gunn, *Paratexts: Introduction to Science Fiction and Fantasy*. "Philip K. Dick" Scarecrow Press, (Plymouth, UK, 2013), pp. 82-83
- Donna Haraway. SFRA Talk, July 2011, "SF: Science Fiction, Speculative Fabulation, String Figures, So Far"
- 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]

Cade Metz, "Riding Out the Quarantine with a Chatbot Friend: 'I Feel Connected.'" *NY Times*, June 16, 2020.

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

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

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 Trębecki. "Supragenological 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

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

### **Students with Disabilities:**

I am committed to being open to and supportive of *all* students, and I seek to accommodate different learning styles, so if you have an accommodation letter, please send it to me (via email). I want you to succeed in this class, so if you have any learning issues, please see me in Office Hours to explain what specific 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 February 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:** Mondays, 11-12:00 p.m. Sign-up Sheet is posted on **Modules** in Canvas. If that time doesn't work for you, please send me an email, and we'll find one that does.

## **DRC Remote Accommodations**

The Disability Resources Center reduces barriers to inclusion and full participation for students with disabilities by providing support to individually determine reasonable academic accommodations. Operations continue via remote appointments. If you have questions or concerns about exam accommodations or any other disability-related matter, email the DRC Schedulers at [drc@ucsc.edu](mailto:drc@ucsc.edu) for an appointment.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. Academic dishonesty diminishes the university as an institution and all members of the university community. It tarnishes the value of a UCSC degree. All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty in order to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC.

For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the [Academic Integrity page](#) at the Division of Undergraduate Education.

## **Title IX**

The university cherishes the free and open exchange of ideas and enlargement of knowledge. To maintain this freedom and openness requires objectivity, mutual trust, and confidence; it requires the absence of coercion, intimidation, or exploitation. The principal responsibility for maintaining these conditions must rest upon those members of the university community who exercise most authority and leadership: faculty, managers, and supervisors.

The university has therefore instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct. [Information about the Title IX Office](#), the [online reporting link](#), applicable campus resources, reporting responsibilities, the [UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#), and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can be found at [titleix.ucsc.edu](http://titleix.ucsc.edu).

The Title IX Office is actively responding to reports and requests for consultation. If you are not currently working with someone in the office and want to make a report/request a consult, you can expect the fastest response by using our [online reporting link](#).

For more information please visit the [Title IX Operations under Covid-19](#) page.