

HL3011

Science Fiction: Origins to Parody



Tracing its origins from nineteenth-century writing on the possibilities and threats of technology and the newly established sciences to its genre reconstruction and intertextual revisiting over the centuries, the analysis of its most prominent as well as of recently rediscovered works aims to illustrate how science fiction has transformed literature and film. In this, it also seeks to map the genre's most defining topoi: travel through space, time, and parallel universes; experimental technology; alien life; testing the boundaries of the mind and manipulating the body (cloning). Science fiction has always been experimental in its technique as well as in its criticism of social, psychological, and scientific definitions of selfhood, and its study taps into encompassing explorations of epistemological as well as ontological anxieties.

This course specifically addresses genre formation. We shall be looking at a number of different texts, and students will need to read beyond the “core texts.”

This course is 100% CA (Continuous Assessment).

Essay: 50%

Group Presentation 20%

Participation in class: 10%

In-class quiz: 20%

Note: Use of Generative AI is NOT permitted in this course.

Core Texts:

Please note that the presentations will be on texts outside the core texts.

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)

H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (1895)

James Whale, *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935)

Isaac Asimov, *I, Robot* (1950)

George Pal, *The Time Machine* (1960)

Star Trek: “The City on the Edge of Forever” (1967)

Brian Aldiss, “Super-Toys Last All Summer Long” (1969)

http://archive.wired.com/wired/archive/5.01/ffsupertoys_pr.htm

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Spielberg, *E.T.* (1982)

TNG: “The Measure of a Man” (1989)

Galaxy Quest (1999)

Spielberg, *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (2001)

Ally Condie, *Matched* (2010)

Preliminary Lecture Outline

Week No.	Topics	Readings
17 Aug	Introduction	Outline: Structure & Requirements
24 Aug	Science of the Times I: Making Good Monsters	<i>Frankenstein</i>
31 Aug	Science of the Times II: Mad Scientists	<i>Frankenstein; The Bride of Frankenstein</i>
7 Sept	Science of the Times III: Dystopia	<i>The Time Machine</i>
14 Sept	Time Travel I: The Future	<i>The Time Machine; Matched</i>
21 Sept	Time Travel II: The Past and its Alternatives	“The City on the Edge of Forever”
28 Sept	Aliens	<i>E.T.</i>
5 Oct	<i>Recess</i>	
12 Oct	Group Presentations	
19 Oct	Group Presentations	
26 Oct	Robot Stories to A.I.	<i>I, Robot</i> ; “Super-Toys Last All Summer Long”; “The Measure of a Man”; <i>A.I.</i>
2 Nov	Science Fiction Comedy	<i>Galaxy Quest</i>
9 Nov	Revision	<i>Quiz</i>