ENGL 37: SCIENCE FICTION LITERATURE: REIMAGINEERING REALITY

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2025
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture per week (48 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Demonstrated proficiency in English by placement via multiple measures OR through an equivalent placement process OR completion of ESLL 125 & ESLL 249.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 3: Arts & Humanities
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Apply literary theory to analyze Science Fiction literature
- Apply relevant theoretical frameworks in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of literary texts.
- Compare/contrast similar tropes, including discussion of technology/innovation (or other themes), across cultures/history since the genesis of Science Fiction literature.

Description

Introduction to the evolution of science fiction, emphasizing analysis of literature and artwork in or after the age of reason, exploring how new scientific insights and technologies hypothetically shape reality through: poems, short stories, novels, plays, film, comics, paintings, or other artistic expressions. Examines how the history and evolution of this distinct literary field has inspired many different modes of art and genres of literature. Because this form of storytelling is used by artists all over the world to express the human condition and specific socio-cultural insight, the course inspires world-wide cross cultural awareness.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Situate the rise of science fiction art—paintings, visual texts, novels, short stories, poems, films, and plays—in global, historical, and literary contexts
2. Apply basic literary terminologies, theories, categories, motifs, and genres appropriate to an introductory college-level discussion of literature and art
3. Appraise the value, cross-cultural significance, and meaning of science fiction as a growing field of artistic expression, especially through its literary manifestations

Course Content

1. Situate the rise of science fiction art—paintings, visual texts, novels, short stories, poems, and plays—in global, historical, and literary contexts
   a. History of science fiction, early tropes and themes
      i. Narrative hints before the genre
      ii. Arrival in Enlightenment/Age of Reason, confronting religious paradigms
      iii. Images of technology: fire to iPhones, wheel to warpdrive
   b. Defining science fiction
      i. Broader than a genre: a field
   c. Consider many definitions of field and sub genres, such as hard/soft sci-fi, cyberpunk, dystopia, futuristic, space exploration, space opera, (post) apocalyptic, climate fiction, feminist sci-fi, superhuman, steampunk, biopunk, time travel, sci-fi poetry and music, alternate history, Kaiju, etc.
   d. Variety of forms and emerging forms
      i. Age of Reason and early narratives in science fiction (19th-20th century)
      ii. Art forms: painting, literature, poetry, etc.
      iii. Comics
      iv. Film: consider rise of film as artistic representation of the many tropes of sci-fi
2. Apply basic literary terminologies, theories, categories, motifs, and genres appropriate to an introductory college-level discussion of literature and art
   a. Application of literary theory to science fiction
   b. Modern criticism: New Critical and Structural criticism
      i. Plot, theme, structures
      ii. Imagery, symbol, metaphor
   c. Postmodern criticism, such as Deconstruction, Feminist, Post-colonialism, Marxist, Psychoanalytical, and other literary theory
   d. Multiplicity of meanings through different lenses appropriate to textual/visual analysis
   e. Visual analysis (film/art/comics)
      i. Composition, contrast, point of view, framing, sound, music
      ii. Compare literature meaning making to film
   f. Genre analysis, such as hard/soft sci-fi, cyber/biopunk, time travel, alternate history, (post) apocalyptic, space exploration, social science fiction, climate fiction
3. Appraise the value, cross-cultural significance, and meaning of science fiction as art in various times and places
   a. Critique and analyze science fiction narratives across cultures
   b. Separate content/form in cultural settings
   c. Socio-cultural issues addressed through science fiction
   d. Compare/contrast similar tropes, forms, or themes across cultures/history

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

Access to internet when offered online.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

At least two critical papers and/or essay exams
Quizzes, journals, midterm, oral reports, and/or final exam
Participation in classroom discussion

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture
Discussion
Small group activities

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Clarke, Neil. The Best Science Fiction of the Year: Volume Six (Best Science Fiction of the Year Book 6). 2022.

Roberts, A.. The History of Science Fiction. 2007.

Vint, Sherryl. Science Fiction: A Guide for the Perplexed. 2014.

Seed, David. Science Fiction: A Very Short Introduction. 2011.

Imarisha, Walidah. Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories From Social Justice Movements. 2003.

James, Edward. The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction. 2010.

VanderMeer, Jeff. The Big Book of Science Fiction. 2016.

Shelley, Mary. Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus. 1818.

Capek, Karel. R.U.R. (Rossum Universal Robots). 1920.

Clarke, Arthur C.. 2001: A Space Odyssey. 2000.

Le Guin, Ursula. The Left Hand of Darkness. 1987.

Casares, Adolfo Bioy. The Invention of Morel. 2003.

Texts older than five years are considered foundational texts. Although many of these texts are older than the suggested "5 years or newer" standard, they remain seminal texts in this area of study.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Writing assignments:
    a. Compare/contrast two sci-fi narratives in two distinct forms, to examine how the art form evokes meaning in reader across forms and cultures
    b. In what ways does science fiction re-imagine reality for us?
    c. What philosophical question does the sci-fi literature propose to the reader through the text?

Discipline(s)

English