

The University of Arizona
ASTR 325: Science and Science Fiction
Dr. Richard L. Poss
Spring 2015

Description:

This course uses science fiction narratives to stimulate discussion and argument about future advances in science and what those advances might do to society. Changes brought on by science and technology have social, political, psychological, spiritual, and philosophical dimensions, and may involve aspects of race, gender, social class, and the construction of personal identity. We will try to come to an understanding of science fiction as a modern art form intimately involved with humanity's progress in science and technology. Students should be aware that a great deal of reading is required in this course. Classroom sessions will be a combination of lecture and discussion, and may include demonstrations and short videos. Participants will study the materials first, and then we will discuss them in class. There will be reading quizzes, mid-term exams, a final exam, small writing assignments, and a research project.

Texts:

- Orson Scott Card, ed., *Masterpieces: The Best Science Fiction of the Twentieth Century*. Ace paperbacks, 2001.
- Arthur C. Clarke, *Childhood's End*. Del Rey, 1990.
- D.G. Hartwell and M.T. Wolf, Editors, *Visions of Wonder: The Science Fiction Research Association Anthology*. Tor, 1996.
- D.G. Hartwell, and K. Cramer, Editors, *Year's Best SF 14*.
- Nancy Kress, *Beggars in Spain*, Eos: Harper/Collins, 2004.

Course Outline: *(This class meets Tues/Thur from 11:00 pm to 12:15pm in Steward 204.)*

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|-------|---------|---|
| Thur. | Jan. 15 | Introduction and Overview: What can we expect from this class?
What is Science Fiction? Genres and sub-genres. Scientific Method. |
| Tues. | Jan 20 | Case Studies: John Kessel, "A Clean Escape."
Anne McCaffrey, "The Ship Who Sang." |
| Thur. | Jan. 22 | Origins: A Short History of Science Fiction. Jules Verne. H.G. Wells.
Futurism and the Perils of Prediction. |
| Tue. | Jan. 27 | The Golden Age: Asimov, Heinlein, Clarke, Bradbury.
Poul Anderson, "Call Me Joe." Heinlein, "All You Zombies." Ray
Bradbury, "Dark They Were, and Golden-Eyed." |
| Thur. | Jan. 29 | Asimov and Robotics: "Robbie." "Robot Dreams." "Valerie 23." |
| Tue. | Feb. 3 | Arthur C. Clarke, <i>Childhood's End</i> . |
| Thur. | Feb. 5 | Arthur C. Clarke, <i>Childhood's End</i> . |

Tue.	Feb. 10	James Blish, "A Work of Art." Keyes, "Flowers for Algernon."
		Michael Swanwick, "The Scarecrow's Boy."
Thur.	Feb. 12	Paolo Bacigalupi, "Pump Six."
		Larry Niven, "Inconstant Moon."
Tue.	Feb. 17	Algis Budrys, "Paradise Charted."
Thur.	Feb. 19	Exam #1
Tue.	Feb. 24	John Varley, "Overdrawn at the Memory Bank."
		James Tiptree, Jr., "The Girl Who Was Plugged In."
Thur.	Feb. 26	Dean Ing, "Devil You Don't Know."
		Ted Chiang, "Exhalation."
Tue.	Mar. 3	Frederick Poul, "Redemption in the Quantal Realm." <i>Locus Magazine</i> .
Thur.	Mar. 5	Murray Leinster, "First Contact." Karen Joy Fowler, "Face Value."
Tue.	Mar. 10	Robert Silverberg, "Passengers."
		Terry Bisson, "They're Made Out of Meat."
Thur.	Mar. 12	Reimagining gender: Suzy McKee Charnas, "Boobs."
		Joanna Russ, "Souls."
<i>March 14 – March 22 Spring Break – No Classes</i>		
Tue.	Mar. 24	Doctorow, <i>Little Brother</i> . Assange, Manning, Snowden
Thur.	Mar. 26	Doctorow, <i>Little Brother</i> . Computer Surveillance Issues
Tue.	Mar. 31	Cyberpunk Style: William Gibson, "Burning Chrome."
		William Gibson and Michael Swanwick, "Dogfight."
Thur.	Apr. 2	Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas."
		Greg Bear, "Blood Music."
Tue.	Apr. 7	Exam # 2.
Thur.	Apr. 9	Nancy Kress, <i>Beggars in Spain</i> .
Tue.	Apr. 14	Nancy Kress, <i>Beggars in Spain. Limitless.</i>
Thur.	Apr. 16	Kathleen Ann Goonan, "Memory Dog."
Tue.	Apr. 21	Neal Gaiman, "Orange." Elizabeth Bear and Sarah Monette, "Boojum."
Thur.	Apr. 23	Sue Burke, "Spiders." Kate Wilhelm, "Yours, Forever, Anna."
Tue.	Apr. 28	Student Presentations.
Thur.	Apr. 30	Student Presentations.
Tues.	May 5	Review and Evaluation. Papers Due.
Final Exam:		Tuesday, May 12, 10:30 – 12:30, in Steward 204.

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Class Meets: Tuesday / Thursday at 11:00 – 12:15, Steward Observatory 204.
Instructor: Dr. Richard Poss
Office: Steward Observatory 212
Email: rposs@email.arizona.edu
Telephone: 621-8630
Office Hours: 2:00 - 2:50 Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday, and by appointment.

CLASS POLICIES:

CLASS PARTICIPATION: It is important to keep up with the day-to-day reading assignments, reading the selections **before** coming to class. Always bring your text to class with you. Expect occasional short quizzes or writing exercises over the day's reading assignment. Try to marshal your thoughts (favorable or unfavorable) about the material before coming to class. Then argue your point of view when class begins. **You are encouraged to get to know each other during the semester, and to study together if possible.**

ATTENDANCE: Regular attendance is **essential**. Your attendance and your participation in class discussion are important, and are taken into consideration in preparing your final grade. In addition, the exams and paper topics are all geared to class discussion. If you are not present and alert, it will not be possible to do well in this course.

GRADING: Your grade is based on the two exams, the term paper, the final exam, participation in class, and reading quizzes and writing exercises. The term paper is a research paper for which you will turn in a rough draft which will be returned to you. You will be expected to make a brief presentation to the class on the results of your research paper.

Exam #1	20 %
Exam #2	20 %
Term Project	30 %
Final Exam	20 %
Class Participation (including quizzes and writing exercises)	<u>10 %</u> 100 %

INTEGRITY: Absolute academic integrity is expected of every student in all academic activities. All students are expected to be aware of and follow the *University of Arizona Code of Academic Integrity*. The *Code* prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication. The repercussions for all of those found guilty of violating the *Code* will include loss of credit for the work (grade=0) and may include failure of the course or more extreme measures.

CONDUCT: *No laptops are allowed during class.* No Ipads, tablets, texting or cell phones are allowed during class. Cell phones must be turned off when class begins. Do not eat, drink, or read newspapers in class. When another student is speaking to the class, please give them your attention. You are expected to treat your fellow students with dignity and respect.

EXCUSED ABSENCES: All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion. Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee) will be honored.

THREATENING BEHAVIOR: The University prohibits threatening behavior, which it defines as "Any statement, communication, conduct or gesture, including those in written form, directed toward any member of the University community that causes a reasonable apprehension of physical harm to a person or property." If you would like more information, it can be found here: <http://policy.web.arizona.edu/threatening-behavior-students>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that disability-related accommodations are necessary, please register with Disability Resources (621-3268; drc.arizona.edu) and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

MISSED TESTS: The exams are already scheduled and posted on the class schedule. If you know that you will miss a test (before the test), you must make arrangements (for valid reasons) for an oral exam at a time and date *prior to* the written test. Missing one of the midsemester exams is an automatic loss of 20% of your grade. Missing the final is a loss of 20%.

GRADES: You have one week from the time an exam is returned to challenge any perceived errors. Although rare, there are occasions when grading errors occur, and you should review your returned work.