

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

2019-2020 C LIT 242, Section X01: Science Fiction
(2019 FALL Term)

Instructor: Dr. Jerry Varsava
Office: 4-41 Humanities Centre
Telephone: none provided by university
Office Hours: 4 to 5 p.m., Mondays, and by appointment
E-mail: jerry.varsava@ualberta.ca

Time: 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., Mondays
Place: 1-7 Humanities Centre
Fax: 780-492-9106

Course Prerequisite: none

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed

Community Service Learning component

Required Optional None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

- Exam registry – Students’ Union
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

Course Description, Objectives, and Expected Learning Outcomes:

An introduction to literary science fiction as an international literary genre, with emphasis on major works and germinal trends. The course will draw from a variety of cultural traditions and geopolitical areas extending from the early nineteenth century to the contemporary era, and will engage such topics as scientific hubris, class conflict, totalitarianism, genetic cloning, and environmental ruination. At the end of the course, successful students will be able to develop independence analyses of the aforementioned topics through enhanced close-reading and writing skills, and understand their relevance to life in the early twenty-first century.

Course Format:

The objectives of this course will be realized through a combination of assigned readings, lectures, class discussions, audiovisual materials, and a research project.

Texts:

Required

Houellebecq, Michel. *The Elementary Particles*. Trans. Frank Wynne. Vintage, 2001. 1998. 9780375727016

Lui, Ken, ed. *Invisible Planets: Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction in Translation*. Selections. Tor, 2018. 9780765384201

McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*. Vintage, 2007. 2006. 9780307387899

Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Penguin, 2008. 1949. 9780141036144

Rich, Nathaniel. *Odds Against Tomorrow*. Picador, 2014. 2013. 9781250043641

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Dover, 1994. 1818. 9780486282114

Verne, Jules, and Michel Verne. "In the Year 2889." 1889. Gutenberg, 7 Feb. 2018, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19362/19362-h/19362-h.htm>

Wells, H.G. *The Time Machine*. Dover, 1995. 1898. 9780486284729

Background Reading (optional; not ordered for Bookstore)

Bould, Mark, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sherryl Vint. *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*. New York; Routledge, 2011. 9780415453790

Additional Course Fees

Yes No

Important Dates: See Academic Schedule in current Calendar

First Day of Class: September 9, 2019

Add/Delete Date: September 16, 2019 50%

Withdrawal Date: October 3, 2019

Withdrawal Date: November 29, 2019

Last Day of Class: December 2, 2019

Final Exam Date: 5:30-7:30 p.m., December 2, 2019, 1-7 Humanities Centre

Date of Deferred Final Exam: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday, February 3, 2020

Please consult the following site:

[https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations \(Exams\)](https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations (Exams))

Deferred Final Examination: For information on how to apply for a deferred exam, see "I Missed my Final Exam, Now What?"

Grade Distribution (see "Explanatory Notes"):

In-class essay: 20% to be written in class on **Monday, September 30** (one hour)

Major assignment: 10% 300-word abstract and annotated bibliography,
due in class, 5:30 p.m., Monday, Oct. 21;
35% major essay (2,000 words)
due in class, at 5:30 p.m., Monday, Nov. 18)

Class participation: 5%

Final examination: 30% (two-hour examination)

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Your grade will depend, in part, on the compositional quality of your submissions. The major assignment must be submitted in printed hard copy, without a cover page, and not be put in folders, covers, binders, etc. The formatting of the essay should be in MLA style. MLA style

and formatting guide can be found at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>
Instructions for the in-class essay and the major assignment will be provided in class

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.”

Student Responsibilities:

Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (<https://www.ualberta.ca/governance/resources/policies-standards-and-codes-of-conduct/code-of-student-behaviour>) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct.

Resources and more information can be found at <https://www.ualberta.ca/campuslife/sexual-violence>

Territorial Statement:

“The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community” (from the beginning of the Calendar).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

In this course, 5% of the total course grade will be assigned for in-class participation.

Policy for Late Assignments:

A late penalty of 5% per calendar day late will be imposed on tardy written submissions. The condition of being “busy” is not a valid excuse for tardiness. Effective time management is an important element of successful university-level studies.

Disclaimer:

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Student Resources:

The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

Accessibility Resources: (1 – 80 SUB)

The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources

promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the [Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

The Academic Success Centre: (1-80 SUB)

[The Academic Success Centre](#) offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.

The Centre for Writers: (1-42 Assiniboia Hall)

The [Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

Health and Wellness Support: There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit the [Health and Wellness Support](#) webpage.

Office of the Student Ombuds:

The [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) offers confidential interviews, advice and support to students facing academic, discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties.

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92

Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
Failure.	F	0.0	0-59

Representative Evaluative Course Material

The final examination will be of two-hour duration and will be a formal sit-down exercise. It will require the writing of two essays that respond to questions such as those below. The essays must be articulate and well-organized; they must make specific references to the literary work(s). There will be limited choice of essay questions; that is, for example, you will be directed to write on two of four essay topics, or two of three, as the case may be depending on the generality of the questions themselves. Your grade will depend, in part, on the compositional quality of your essays. The final examination will cover the material of the entire course. Please consult me if you are unclear about the requirements of the final examination.

1. Compare and contrast the discussion of technology in novels A and B.
2. In what ways are style and narrative structure used to present the main themes in novel C?
3. Discuss the significance of the following passage for novel D as a whole.
4. Discuss the thematic relevance of the following quote for novel E.
5. In what ways do novels F and G demonstrate a developmental trend in the history of science fiction as a literary genre?

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