

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**  
<https://ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**2020-2021 C LIT 242, Section A1: Science Fiction**  
(2021 Spring Term)

*Note: Remote Delivery*

Instructor: Dr. Jerry Varsava                      Time: 9 to 10:50 a.m., Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays  
Office: REMOTE    Place: REMOTE  
Telephone: none provided by university  
Office Hours: 11 to noon, Wednesdays, and by appointment  
E-mail: [jerry.varsava@ualberta.ca](mailto:jerry.varsava@ualberta.ca)  
Course Website: see eClass for C LIT 242

**Bachelor of Arts / Major in Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:**

<https://www.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies/undergraduate-program-information/prospective-undergraduate-students>

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**Course Prerequisite:** None

**Technology requirements (minimum):** internet access

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate technology for the course.

**Experiential Learning Component**

this course has a significant experiential learning component (15% or more of the course grade)

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

Yes                      X No, not needed

**Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available**

Exam registry – Students' Union  
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>

X 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, student presentations, audiovisual materials, and a research project.

**Texts:**

**Required**

Cavendish, Margaret. *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing-World by Newcastle*. 1668. Selections.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/51783/51783-h/51783-h.htm>

Forster, E.M. "The Machine Stops." 1909.

<https://www.ele.uri.edu/faculty/vetter/Other-stuff/The-Machine-Stops.pdf>

Lucian, *True History*. C. 160 CE. The First Book.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/45858/45858-h/45858-h.htm>

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

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

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

<https://www.gutenberg.ca/ebooks/orwellg-nineteeneightyfour/orwellg-nineteeneightyfour-00-h.html>

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Dover, 1994. 1831 edition. 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>

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Dell, 1991. 1969. 978-0440180296

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*. Routledge, 2011. 9780415453790

**Additional Course Fees**

Yes       No

**Important Dates:** [See Academic Schedule in current Calendar](#)

First Day of Class: May 10, 2021

Add/Delete Date: May 13, 2021

50% Withdrawal Date: May 25, 2021

Withdrawal Date: June 15, 2021

Last Day of Class: June 23, 2021

Final Exam Date: June 24, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): 10 a.m. to noon, June 29, 2021

Deferred Final Examination: For information on how to apply for a deferred exam see [“I Missed my Final Exam, Now What?”](#)

**Components of Course Grade (see “Explanatory Notes”):**

**Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):**

In-class presentation: 10% (300-word abstract, 10-12 min. presentation, 10 min. question and answer)

In-class essay: 20% (one hour);

**written in class, 9 to 10 a.m., on Wednesday, May 26**

Major assignment: 35% major essay (1,800 to 2,000 words),

**due in eClass, at 1 p.m., Friday, June 18**

Class participation: 5%

Final examination: 30% (two-hour examination); **11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Thursday, June 24**

**Explanatory Notes on Assignments:**

Your grade will depend, in part, on the compositional quality of your submissions. Your in-class presentation will entail a 300-word abstract for advance distribution to the class, a 10-12 min. presentation, and a follow-up 10 min. question and answer session. The major assignment must be submitted electronically on eClass. 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 presentation, 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](#) 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 work and study 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](#).

***Sexual Violence Policy:***

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/campus-life/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. Given scheduling constraints, in-class presentations cannot be re-scheduled.

***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	%
<b>Excellent.</b> 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	<b>95-100</b>
	A	4.0	<b>90-94</b>
	A-	3.7	<b>86-89</b>
<b>Good.</b> 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	<b>82-85</b>
	B	3.0	<b>75-81</b>
	B-	2.7	<b>70-74</b>
<b>Satisfactory.</b> 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	<b>66-69</b>
	C	2.0	<b>61-65</b>
	C-	1.7	<b>58-60</b>
<b>Poor/Minimal Pass.</b> 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	<b>55-57</b>
	D	1.0	<b>50-54</b>
<b>Failure.</b>	F	0.0	<b>0-49</b>

**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. In what ways do novels F and G demonstrate a developmental trend in the history of science fiction as a literary genre?
5. Discuss the thematic relevance of the following quote for short story A.

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