



ENGLISH 357: TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN TEXTS

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Room 184 Andrews
Day TTh
Time 3:30-5:10

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This section of English 357 studies American science fiction narratives of the twentieth century. The course examines the ways in which select authors have extrapolated and critiqued the social and cultural landscape, often by speculating about the future and the application of advanced technologies. We will address a wide range of themes, among them time travel, cyberpunk, electronic media, alternate history, gender dynamics, fascism, cosmology, capitalism, and virtual reality. The goal of English 357 is to critically engage students with textual analysis while exploring the development of the science fiction genre and its reflection on American culture and experience.

TEXT

Evans, Arthur et al. *The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2010.

GRADING SCALE

Course grades will be based on the following percentages:

Attendance & Participation	20%
Assignments & Quizzes	20%
Midterm Essay	30%
Final Essay	30%

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is an essential part of this writing intensive, discussion-oriented course. It is expected that you will come to each class period prepared for the day's activities; when you do

not show up, or when you show up unprepared, the quality of the class's labor suffers. As we will usually only meet in person once a week, it is important that you attend class, barring any unforeseen illnesses, family emergencies, religious observances, etc. More than ONE absence will negatively affect your grade. You are responsible for all assignments given during a class period you miss. Tardiness is disruptive and demonstrates a lack for respect for your professor and peers. Showing up for class more than 10 minutes late counts as an absence.

PARTICIPATION

This includes in-class and online dialogue, activities, and responsive listening. Participation is crucial. Simply showing up for class does not constitute participation. You are expected to present your informed ideas and show respect for others in the classroom. Participation constitutes mental and verbal attendance. You will be graded on how much you contribute to the learning environment of each class session.

BOTTOM LINE: If you do not speak, you will not receive a good participation grade.

ASSIGNMENTS & QUIZZES

Throughout the semester, you will be given a number of assignments to be completed both in and out of the classroom. In-class assignments will generally not be given ahead of time; they will be issued during class and are to be completed during that class session. If you are absent, you will not be able to make up those assignments. Quizzes will be given periodically to ensure that the reading schedule is being followed. They will be administered at the beginning of class. If you are absent or tardy on a day that a quiz is administered, you will not be able to make it up.

MIDTERM & FINAL ESSAYS

For these writing assignments, students will identify a key theme in two science fiction stories and write a comparative and/or contrastive literary analysis. You may write on stories that we have not read and discussed in class as long as they are, of course, written by twentieth century American authors. You may also select a story and a film adaptation to write on (excluding "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" and *Total Recall*). The essay should make a clear and engaging argument, then proceed to defend that argument using support from the primary sources alongside your own commentary and interpretation. Use of secondary sources is not required. Format according to MLA guidelines. 4-5 pages each.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism occurs when a writer: (1) copies verbatim from an author without quotation or attempts to disguise the act by selective omissions or alterations; (2) paraphrases from an author without naming the source in the text of the paper or providing a list of references at the end; (3) turns in a paper written by somebody else. As a point of academic integrity, you are required to submit original material of your own creation. Plagiarism of any material is a serious offense and, if established with sufficient evidence, can result in failure of the course or dismissal from the university.

WRITING CENTER

The Lake Campus's writing center is located in room 221 in Dwyer Hall. Contact the director, Dr. Christine Wilson (christine.wilson@wright.edu), to make an appointment. STUDENTS WHO USE THE WRITING CENTER WILL BE GIVEN 5 EXTRA CREDIT POINTS FOR EACH VISIT.

CLASS CALENDAR

Week	Schedule
1	3/27 Introduction to the Course 3/29 Response: Definitions of Science Fiction
2	4/3 Isaac Asimov, "Reason" Alfred Bester, "Fondly Fahrenheit" 4/5 Response: Definitions of Posthumanism
3	4/10 Ray Bradbury, "There Will Come Soft Rains" 4/12 Response: Harlan Ellison, "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman"
4	4/17 FILM VIEWING: <i>Dreams with Sharp Teeth</i> 4/19 Discussion: Abstracts – Midterm Essay
5	4/24 Pamela Zoline, "The Heat Death of the Universe" 4/26 Midterm Essay
6	5/1 Philip K. Dick, "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" 5/3 Response: Carl Freedman, "Towards a Theory of Paranoia: The SF of Philip K. Dick"
7	5/8 FILM VIEWING: <i>Total Recall</i> 5/10 Response: "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" vs. <i>Total Recall</i>
8	5/15 Joanna Russ, "When It Changed" James Tiptree Jr., "And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side" 5/17 Response: Feminist Science Fiction

- 9 5/22
William Gibson, "Burning Chrome"
Bruce Sterling, "We See Things Differently"
5/24
Response: Pat Cadigan's "Pretty Boy Crossover"
- 10 5/29
Samuel R. Delany, "Aye, and Gomorrah ..."
5/31
Discussion: Abstracts – Final Essay
- E 6/7
Final Essay