Syllabus
IDS 2110

The Science of
Science Fiction

Spring 2010 (January 19 to March 09)
Section 00030 Tuesdays 11.00-12.45 a.m. in DSCS 115

Instructor: Dr. Peter Germroth, Office DSCS 112,
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e-mail: pgermroth@hawkmail.hccfl.edu
Homepage: http://www.hccfl.edu/faculty-info/pgermroth.aspx

Office hours*: Mondays 8.00 - 9.00 a.m.; 10.45 – 11.00 a.m.
Tuesdays 8.00 a.m.-9.30 a.m. and 8.30 p.m. -9.00 p.m. online
Wednesdays 8.00 - 9.00 a.m.;10.45 – 11.00 a.m.
Thursdays 8.00 – 9.30 a.m. 12.45-2.00 p.m., 4.30-6.00 pm
and 11.00 a.m. to 12.15 p.m. online

* in DSCS112 except for online office hours and MW 11.45 in
DSCS103

Communication: If you like to talk to me in a one-to-one setting I will be available
during the posted office hours, however you should make an appointment with me so
that I can prepare for you and you do not have to wait. The out of class communication
in this course is going to be primarily via Hawkmail (CampusCruiser); i.e. you must send
me e-mail from within Hawkmail. If your e-mail does not include your name and
course/section I will not respond to it. I expect to be properly addressed and the content
to be in a professional, standard-English style. Notice also that I will respond as fast as I
can, but that does not mean that you can expect return on the weekend or holidays or
the same day.

College Catalog Course Description:

A selected topics capstone interdisciplinary experience course for the AA
degree curriculum. Summarizes major points in the bodies of knowledge
acquired while participating in the general education experience in an applied
manner. Involves research, application of theoretical models and utilization
of learned skills.
Description of Activities for This Section of IDS-2110:

Three major activities will comprise the bulk of the coursework for this section of Connections.

ACTIVITY ONE:

In this activity, you will examine some of the “classic” science fiction literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I will provide a reading list of "historical" science fiction works to choose from for this assignment. You will evaluate the work you choose and determine to what degree the author based the work on the body of scientific knowledge then in existence, and to what degree the work attempted to predict the future of technology and society. Selected papers may be chosen for class discussion.

Among the questions and issues that should be addressed (where applicable) in analyzing specific works are the following:

• To what degree does the work reflect the technology/science of the time of publication versus the author's predictions of future developments?

• How accurate were the author's predictions concerning the future?

• Considering the work within its historical context, was the portrayal of the future believable?

• What events in society and world events at the time of publication may have shaped the author's expectation of the future state of human affairs?

• Is the plot a vehicle to deliver a moral message or warning to (then) contemporary society?

• If it is a parable, does it borrow from identifiable plot lines of earlier works from other genres?

• What reasons can be given to explain any departures of the "real future" (i.e. actual history) from the future as depicted by the author? These can include discoveries made later that invalidated the premise of the work.

• In contrast, is there any evidence to indicate that the author's work may have played a part in influencing the future in real life – in other words, was it in any way a self-fulfilling prophecy?

• What makes a work “good fiction” in the literary sense, and are those attributes present in this work?

• What makes this fiction “scientific?”
ACTIVITY TWO:

We will watch one Sci-Fi movie in class and you will watch another one at home. I will provide question/comment sheets for download which have to be filled out. The meeting after the movie screening will include some discussion of the movie. Note: there are many good movies out there. My pick will be from the movies listed below, all of which are usually in lists containing the “100 best Sci-Fi movies of all times”. **If you have not seen these, I suggest you rent and watch all of them sometime. They are truly great Sci-Fi movies.**

1. 2001- A space Odyssey (1968)
2. GATTACA (1997)
4. Planet of the Apes (1968)
5. The Blade-Runner (1982)

ACTIVITY THREE:

Using one of the concerns/trends that we identified in class you **create your own science fiction short story**. This short story should incorporate the basic characteristics of good science fiction, that is, it should have a fictional plot based on scientific concepts or principles. Use your creativity, but be sure to make the focus of the plot the “concern” that you selected.

Ideally your story should be between 5 and 15 pages in length, 2 line-spaced.

Alternative submission: like the above regarding plot, but instead of a written short story you can make this an audio-production. You would deliver it as an mp3 file and it should be between 5 and 10 minutes in length. Note that audio quality, ability to understand the narration and production quality will be also evaluated if you choose this option.
## Class Schedule:
This is a tentative schedule. It may change.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Lecture part</th>
<th>Your part</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Orientation, Handing out syllabus and materials</td>
<td>Be there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Topic: What is Science Fiction? discussion of selected examples</td>
<td>Come prepared, having read the assigned material and done what was explained in the first meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No class meeting</td>
<td>You prepare activity one</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Discussion of activity 1 samples; Also: “The evolution of Science Fiction” Introduction to movies on the movie list</td>
<td>Have assignment 1 posted. Due latest Feb 06, 11 pm. Have read your assigned material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Viewing of the selected movie.</td>
<td>Receive handout for analysis and commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Viewing rest of movie. Discussion of movie.</td>
<td>Have read the assigned materials and viewed the second movie at home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>No class meeting</td>
<td>Have Assignment 2 posted. Due latest Feb 27, 11 pm. You prepare activity three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Presentation of some selected submissions Final discussion</td>
<td>Have activity 3 posted. Due latest March 6, 11 pm. Participate in the class discussion.</td>
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**GRADES:**
This course will be graded on a pass-fail basis. In order to receive a passing grade the student must have a class score of 75% based on the value of the elements listed below. Specific information has been provided in this syllabus for each of the three written assignments. These instructions must be followed for the assignments to be accepted for credit.

- Activity 1 writing assignment - 30%
- Activity 2 writing assignment - 30%
- Activity 3 writing assignment - 40%
Expectations for activity 3:

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<th>Well done = pass +</th>
<th>Acceptable = pass</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plot</td>
<td>Original, logical, entertaining</td>
<td>At least two of the three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Originality</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language used</td>
<td>Correct in grammar, appropriate in style, well organized</td>
<td>Mostly correct, mostly appropriate and somewhat organized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relays to class discussions</td>
<td>Shows knowledge from class applied</td>
<td>Shows attempt to apply some knowledge from class.</td>
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**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

I insist on your assignments being submitted electronically via Campus Cruiser. No other mode of submission is accepted. Assignments 1 and 3 are due latest the Saturday before the class meeting in which they are discussed. Late submissions are not accepted as a rule. In exceptional circumstances and at my discretion I may accept a late submission up to the day we discuss the assignment. Any assignment accepted that late will have a 50% point deduction. All submitted assignments must be in either .doc; .docx; .rtf; or pdf format. NO other format is accepted.

**Academic Dishonesty policy:** I expect honesty – academic and otherwise. If you have a problem, talk to me. I will try to help. I will not tolerate plagiarism or other types of cheating.

**Attendance:** Class attendance will be monitored because of scholarship issues. Your attendance record has no direct bearing on your grade. However, be advised that although regular attendance does not guarantee a successful result, it tends to be very helpful. There are numerous studies that show a strong correlation between attendance and success in college undergraduate courses.

*Do not attend class if you experience flu-like-symptoms. If you had a fever, wait at least 24 hours after the fever has ended before you return to college.*

**Miscellaneous:**

- Cell phones must be silenced during class.

**Students with disabilities:**

- Arrangements can be made for students with learning disabilities if they provide me with documentation from an HCC LD advisor and see me in my office to discuss any special arrangements.
- Remember that you first need to contact the Office of Services to Students with Disabilities. They are located at DSTU 208, Tel 813-259-603