English 223—Science Fiction

Dr. Carl Silvio
Office: 5-518
Office Hours: MWF 9:00-10:00; TTh 1:00-2:00; and by appointment
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Texts:

Hartwell, David G. The Science Fiction Century

Bradbury, Ray The Martian Chronicles

Heinlein, Robert Starship Troopers

Gibson, William. Neuromancer

Course Description: Reading, discussion, and written analysis of speculative fiction novels and short stories about human beings experiencing the changes resulting from science and technology. Three class hours. (SUNY-H)

Course Goals: This course is designed to help you explore and understand how science fiction works as a literary genre that helps us make sense of the world we live in. Particular attention will be paid to the representation of some of science fiction’s most prevalent themes in the works we read. Some of these themes include utopias, aliens, gadgets, time travel, etc. The course will also provide you with a general introduction to the historical development of science fiction as a literary genre.
Course Requirements:

Three Papers:

Over the course of the semester, you will write three papers. Of these, two will ask you to analyze one or more of the texts that we have read in class and to argue how they comment on one of the major themes that we have discussed in the course. One of these essays will be due at midterm and the other on the last day of class.

The last of these essays will have a research component. The third essay will be similar to the other two except that it will be about one of the three films that will be shown this semester as part of MCC’s Spring Science Fiction film festival. More details will be forthcoming about the dates that these films will be shown.

Each of these papers must be 3-5 pages in length and will be worth 25% of your grade.

Participation:

The quality of this class will depend largely on your contributions to class discussion, thus your participation will be factored into your overall grade. The daily reading assignments must be completed by the date they are scheduled for discussion in order to ensure your understanding of the in-class writing and discussions. Your participation grade is worth 10% of your final grade.

Quizzes:

Over the course of the semester I will give an unspecified number of unannounced reading quizzes based on the assigned material. These quizzes will cumulatively account for 15% of your grade.
Your overall grade will thus be composed of:

- Paper #1: 25%
- Paper #2: 25%
- Film Paper: 25%
- Quizzes: 15%
- Participation: 10%

Note: Any more than 10 errors in mechanics (spelling, punctuation, grammar, usage, citing sources, etc.) will result in an automatic D for the assignment. If you know that grammar/spelling has been a problem for you in the past, please don’t hesitate to meet me during my office hours for extra help. Free tutoring is also available in the English department writing lab.

All out of class assignments must be typed in 12 point Times New Roman and double-spaced.

Attendance:

Regular attendance is required for this course. Your final grade will be lowered by half a letter grade for each absence after the third. I reserve the right to drop you from the class after 5 absences. See p. 194 in the MCC 2003/2004 Catalogue and Student Handbook to review the policy.

Withdrawal Policy:

I will not withdraw you from class. See p.195 in the handbook for withdrawal policies. Note: Withdrawal may impact your eligibility for financial aid.

Late Work:

Late work will not be accepted without my prior consent. If absent from class, you cannot make up in-class work and are responsible for any homework assignments. Please exchange phone numbers/email addresses with another student so as to be able to contact them to find out what you may have missed.
Email:

**DO NOT SEND WORK TO ME VIA EMAIL.** You may email me with questions about assignments or concerns you have about the class.

Preparation:

Please come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Students who come to class unprepared will be asked to leave and will be counted absent. **Timeliness:** Arriving late to class or is disruptive, as is packing up before class is over. Chronic tardiness will count against your final grade.

Learning Centers:

Additional help with writing can be obtained at either the Brighton Learning Center (Bldg. 11 #106) or the Damon Learning Center (4-130), both of which are staffed with instructional personnel and computers. The writing center (rm 11-208, # 292-3360) staffs professional, free tutors available to assist you with your individual writing needs/concerns. They offer a walk-in service Monday-Friday. Call for hours.

Emergency Closings:

If the college closes due to bad weather or other emergencies, all Rochester media will be notified by 5:30 a.m. You can also go to MCC’s homepage at [www.monroecc.edu](http://www.monroecc.edu) to find out more information.

Plagiarism:

Any student caught plagiarizing any part of any assignment will receive no credit for the assignment in question and I reserve the right to initiate proper university disciplinary action. See p. 201 in the *MCC 2003/2004 Catalogue and Student Handbook* to review the policy.

Disability Statement:
“MCC recognizes the importance of encouraging and helping students with disabilities reach their full potential” (*MCC 2003/2004 Catalogue*). If you possess a **documented** physical or learning disability please speak to me after class so that we can make the appropriate accommodations. See your catalogue and handbook, p.213 for university guidelines.

**Order of Readings**

(This schedule is subject to change. I may delete some items or supplement with handouts, so be sure to contact me for any schedule changes if you miss class)

1. “Ginungagap” Swanwick (304)
2. “A Story of the Days To Come” Wells (57)
3. “The Machine Stops” Forster (139)
4. *Metropolis* Film viewing in class
5. *The Martian Chronicles* Bradbury
6. “A Work of Art” Blish (127)
8. “Time In Advance” Tenn (333)
9. *Starship Troopers* Heinlien
10. “The Dimple in Draco” Latham (754)
11. “He Who Shapes” Zelazny (812)
12. “‘Repent Harlequin’ Said the TickTockMan” Ellison (952)
13. “Beam Us Home” Triptree (21)
14. “If the Stars are Gods” Eklund and Benford (558)
15. “Mother” Farmer (265)
16. “Something Ending” (805)
17. *Neuromancer* Gibson
18. “Good Night Sophie” (352)
19. “Swarm” Sterling (869)
20. “I Still Call Australia Home” Turner (585)
23. Film of our Choosing.