ENGLISH 4381: Special Topics
Science Fiction
MTWThF 12:00pm-1:45pm

Dr. Allison Dushane
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Office: Academic 019B

Office Hours
MTWTh
2:00pm-3:00pm
And By Appointment

Course Description
This course will survey the development of the genre of science fiction, focusing on how forms of popular culture work in conversation with more traditional literary history.

We will begin by considering the multiple origin stories of the genre: does science fiction begin with the utopias and tales of discovery that date back to the Renaissance? Or does it begin with the scientifiction of the pulp magazines in the 1920s? As we trace the history of science fiction from its origins to the present, we will pay attention to how these stories experiment with literary form and focus on how they draw from the traditions of epic, fantasy, travel literature, satire, and the gothic. We will also discuss ethical and political questions about scientific responsibility, encounters with otherness, and shifting conceptions of the relationship between humans, technology and the natural world.

Graded Course Work

- 20% Midterm Exam
- 20% Final Exam
- 35% Quizzes and In-Class Work
- 15% Blackboard Discussion Posts
- 10% Preparation and Active Participation

Required Books and Materials
You will need hard copies (no e-books) of the following two books:

- The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction
  ISBN# 978-0819569554
- VanderMeer, Annihilation
  ISBN# 978-0374104092

Other Materials:
- Printed Handouts and Readings from Blackboard
- Notebook/paper for in-class writing and something to write with

Blackboard:
- This course has a Blackboard website, where you can access important announcements, find course materials, and turn in your discussion board assignments.
**Learning Goals**

The goals of this class will be accomplished by reading and discussing works of science fiction in multiple genres that engage with a related set of ethical and philosophical questions.

In short, this course seeks to help you:

- gain a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual and cultural activity
- learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
- develop your creative capacities

**COURSE POLICIES**

**I. ATTENDANCE POLICY**

I do not differentiate between “excused” absences and “un-excused absences.” Instead, you have two free absences to use in cases of illness, appointments, family issues, work conflicts, or circumstances that might prevent you from attending. **You do not need to get my permission or e-mail me with an excuse to use your absences.**

If you miss a class, you will need to determine what you missed during your absence by checking the Blackboard announcements, asking your classmates or by seeing me during office hours. I will post any lecture slides that I use in class on Blackboard. I will not respond to email inquiries that simply ask: "what did I miss?" It is your responsibility to check the schedule and stay on track.

Here is how I factor absences into your course grade:

- **Quizzes/In Class Work:** I will drop the *two* lowest grades from this category before calculating your final grade. **I do not give make up quizzes or replacements for in-class work.** Exception: If you intend to miss class to participate in a school-sponsored event or to observe a recognized holy day (see VI below), notify me in writing prior to the absence.
- **Active Participation:** I allow students *two* absences without penalty to their overall participation grade.
- More than four absences is grounds for failure of the course.

*If a situation arises that you suspect will result in excessive absences* (something like a chronic health condition or true emergency such as a death in the immediate family or hospital stay), you should notify me *as soon as possible* so we can discuss possible accommodations. In these cases, I will need to see some kind of documentation of your situation, and may refer you to the Dean of Students to get an official excuse. Once you have missed class meetings in excess of these allowances, there is nothing I can do for you that will preserve fair treatment for the rest of the class.
II. DAILY GRADES and ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Because this is primarily a discussion-based class where all members depend on the input of others, you will be graded according to your participation. This will include, but is not limited to: your coming to class prepared and on time, your willingness to participate in class discussion, your readiness to volunteer when needed, and, most importantly, your overall level of engagement and attitude. Your active participation grade will be determined by all of these factors.

You must bring the appropriate printed texts to class for every discussion.

On any day that an assigned reading is due, I may give a reading quiz that covers the reading and/or the assigned literary terms for the day. These quizzes are meant to be very straightforward and are designed to make sure you made a good faith effort to get through and understand the material. Occasionally, these quizzes will be open book (even more incentive to bring your printed texts to class!).

On many class days I will assign prompts for in-class writing and small group discussions, which I grade on a scale of 1-5, but also take into consideration when determining your participation grade. You will be encouraged to share and discuss your insights with the class. Be sure to bring a notebook/paper and something to write with to every class meeting.

IV. DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS

Every Friday, a written response to the reading will be due by 5:00pm. Instructions and prompts will be posted on the Blackboard Discussion Board.

- I will accept one late Blackboard post if you submit it by 12:00 midnight on the Sunday after it was due. Otherwise, there are no make-ups for Blackboard posts.

Responses will be graded according to the following scale:

5=Answers the questions clearly and concisely, and shows exceptional insight into the reading. Must include direct quotations from the text(s).

4=Adequately addresses the questions, and includes relevant observations about the reading. Must include direct quotations from the text(s).

3=Attempts to answer the questions, but demonstrates only a cursory familiarity with the reading or contains significant stylistic and/or grammatical issues. May be missing direct quotations from the text(s).

0=Response does not follow the directions and/or is incomplete

IV. CLASSROOM CONDUCT and EMAIL ETIQUETTE

I request that you turn off all electronic devices and put them in your bags during class. Cell phone use is 100% prohibited at all times. Your phone should be on silent and away from sight. If you are expecting an important call, please put your phone on vibrate and let me know before class that you may need to leave class to answer your phone.
When questions about course content occur to you outside of our scheduled class sessions, I encourage you to come to office hours or email me. However, please understand that I receive a lot of email, so it’s important that your email messages attend to some basic conventions of electronic communication. For example, your emails to me should contain a helpful subject line that contains your course number and section to direct my attention to your question. They also should begin with some sort of salutation, “Dear Dr. Dushane,” or “Hi, Dr. D,” are both fine. I will attempt to answer emails quickly within business hours (M-F 9am-5pm), though I have meetings on and off campus and sometimes cannot answer as quickly. After 5pm and on weekends, I check my email less regularly and it may be several hours or even a day before you hear back from me.

V. OBSERVANCES OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS and TRAVEL TO UNIVERSITY EVENTS

Students traveling to university-sponsored events and students who have spoken to me in advance about missing a class for purposes of religious observance will have the opportunity to make up whatever work can be completed. The opportunity to make-up work is the student’s responsibility to arrange: (1) notification must be made in writing and in advance of the absence and (2) all work must be completed in what I deem to be a timely manner. To be clear, no makeup work will be permitted after the fact; all arrangements must be made in advance and you and I must agree upon a timetable prior to your absence.

VI. STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

“All ASU students are expected to understand and to comply with the University’s policy on Academic Honesty as stated in the ASU Bulletin and in the ASU Student Handbook. Students who violate the Policy on Academic Honesty will be subject to disciplinary action, including a failing grade in the course.”

Your enrollment in 2321 assumes your agreement to this honor code. Stealing from another person or source is wrong and passing off work you did not complete as your own is a violation punishable by your immediate failure in the course. I have no patience for this breach of trust and ethics.

VII. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I am sympathetic to all disabilities, and request that all persons requesting accommodation work through the student life office to make sure that they receive the attention they need.

“Persons with disabilities that may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, located in room 112 of the University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any being implemented. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.”
**DAILY SCHEDULE**

*Subject to change

Be sure to check Blackboard daily for details and any changes to the schedule. This schedule provides an overview of the semester, but I will post more detailed reading assignments, handouts, lecture slides and other important information on a weekly basis.

**BB:** Reading available on Blackboard. Please print out a copy and bring to class. I don’t allow phone/computer use in class, so you will need printed copies to participate.

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<th>Week One</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>M 7.8</strong></td>
<td>Course Introduction: Definitions and History In-Class: <em>Amazing Stories</em> Issue One (BB/In-Class Handout)</td>
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<td><strong>T 7.9</strong></td>
<td>Nathanial Hawthorne, &quot;Rappaccini's Daughter&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>W 7.10</strong></td>
<td>Forster, “The Machine Stops” (Optional): Wells, &quot;The Star&quot; and Verne, from <em>Journey to the Center of the Earth</em></td>
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<td><strong>TH 7.11</strong></td>
<td>Moore, &quot;Shambleau&quot; Isaac Asimov, &quot;Reason&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>F 7.12</strong></td>
<td><strong>Discussion Board Post #1: Science Fiction vs. Traditional Canon</strong></td>
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<td><strong>M 7.15</strong></td>
<td>Ray Bradbury, &quot;There Will Come Soft Rains&quot; Ellison, &quot;Repent, Harlequin!&quot; Said the Ticktockman</td>
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<td><strong>T 7.16</strong></td>
<td>Freud, &quot;The Uncanny&quot; (BB) In-Class: <em>Moon</em></td>
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<td><strong>W 7.17</strong></td>
<td>In-Class: <em>Moon</em> Midterm Prep</td>
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<td><strong>TH 7.18</strong></td>
<td><strong>Midterm Exam</strong></td>
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<td><strong>F 7.19</strong></td>
<td><strong>Discussion Board Post #2: 3 Myths About the Future of Work</strong></td>
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<td><strong>M 7.22</strong></td>
<td>Ballard, &quot;Which Way to Inner Space?&quot; (BB) Zoline, &quot;Heat Death of the Universe&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>T 7.23</strong></td>
<td>Sterling, &quot;Preface to <em>Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology</em>&quot; (BB) Gunn, &quot;Computer Friendly&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>W 7.24</strong></td>
<td>LeGuin, &quot;Nine Lives&quot; and &quot;The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction&quot; (BB)</td>
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<td><strong>TH 7.25</strong></td>
<td>Octavia Butler, &quot;Speech Sounds&quot; and &quot;The Lost Races of Scientific Fiction&quot; (BB)</td>
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<td><strong>F 7.26</strong></td>
<td><strong>Discussion Board Post #3: Reading Feminist Futurism</strong></td>
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### Week Four

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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>Cli-Fi: Everything Change, Volume II <em>(BB)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>Cli-Fi: Everything Change, Volume II <em>(BB)</em></td>
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| W   | 7.31 | VanderMeer, "The New Weird" *(BB)*  
|     |      | VanderMeer, *Annihilation* Chapter 1 |
| TH  | 8.1  | VanderMeer, *Annihilation* Chapters 2-3 |
| F   | 8.2  | Discussion Board Post #4: Everything Change |

### Week Five

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<th>Day</th>
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| M   | 8.5  | VanderMeer, *Annihilation* Chapters 4-5  
|     |      | In Class Film: *Annihilation* |
| T   | 8.6  | In Class Film: *Annihilation*  
|     |      | In-Class Writing  
|     |      | Final Prep |
| W   | 8.7  | Final Exam |