

ENGLISH 4381: Special Topics/Science Fiction

Alien Worlds

M/W/F 9:00am-10:10am

Dr. ALLISON DUSHANE

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Office: Academic 019B

Office Hours

Mondays and Wednesdays

12:00pm-2:00pm

Virtual Office Hours by Appointment



COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will survey the development of the genre of Science Fiction from its origins to the present, focusing on how popular culture develops 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 Early Modern period? Or the Gothic tales and visions of the future in the 19th Century? Or does it begin with the “scientifiction” of the pulp magazines in the 1920s? Throughout the course, we will discuss the ways that Science Fiction asks larger questions about gender, race, class, and the relationship between humans, technology and the natural world. In particular, we will think about how representations of aliens and alien worlds might read as a commentary on our (post)human condition.

REQUIRED BOOKS

- Bulwer-Lytton, *The Coming Race* (Broadview Press): ISBN #9781551118369
- Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (Broadview Press): ISBN #9781551113531
- LeGuin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (Penguin): ISBN #9780441007318
- Butler, *Dawn* (Warner): ISBN# 9781538753712
- Chiang, *Stories of Your Life* (Knopf): ISBN# 9781101972120
- Vandermeer, *Annihilation* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux): ISBN# 9780374104092

GRADED COURSE WORK

Blackboard will calculate your final grade according to the following weighting system:

- 10%** Preparation and Active Participation
- 40%** Reading Responses
- 15%** Perusall Assignments
- 20%** Literary Analysis Essay
- 15%** Final Course Reflection Essay

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR ENGLISH 4381

- Students will gain an awareness of the history of Science Fiction and practice techniques for literary interpretation and through readings, lectures, essays and in-class discussion.
- Students will develop their close reading skills through careful analysis of literature, informing their study through consideration of the culture in which such literature was created and the critical debates surrounding specific texts.
- Students will learn the discipline-specific terminology and writing conventions that will be expected of them as English majors and strengthen their writing abilities.
- Students will work closely with literary and critical texts in order to learn how to develop their own interpretations of literature and to engage with the work of professional scholars.

COURSE POLICIES

I. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Method of Instruction

- **This class will meet in person.** If you are not able to regularly attend class in person you will not be able to complete this class and should see the EML Department Chair to request enrollment in a fully online section.
- Due dates for all assignments are listed on the weekly schedule on the syllabus and on Blackboard. You are responsible for planning your own schedule to meet assignment deadlines. Students should be proficient with Blackboard and must be able to access Blackboard on a regular basis. All assignments will be submitted through Blackboard.
- In the interest of fairness to all students, I will only make exceptions to the attendance and late work policies in the syllabus if you contact Students Affairs (studentaffairs@angelo.edu) for an official excuse. Student Affairs will inform all of your professors of your situation so that you can get the accommodations you need. **This includes any COVID-related issue (suspected contact/illness, quarantine, etc.)**
 - If you are catastrophically ill, experiencing significant challenges due to a chronic illness, or have some other kind of emergency that would normally prevent you from attending class for more than a week, you should contact Student Affairs *and also let me know as soon as possible* so I can work with you.

Technology Requirements and Policies

- You will need access to computer (not a phone) with reliable internet to access Blackboard, complete and submit writing assignments, and take quizzes.
- All files uploaded to Blackboard must be in Microsoft Word or .pdf format. Remember, ASU students have free access to Microsoft Office.
- The latest version of an internet browser is recommended. Firefox and Chrome work well with Blackboard, and others, such as Safari, work less well.
- Internet connectivity problems and other personal computer issues will not be accepted as excuses for missing classwork or failing to submit assignments before the deadline.

Technical Support

The instructor is NOT qualified to provide technical support.

- If you have technology issues and/or questions, contact ASU tech support.
 - E-mail: elearning@angelo.edu
 - Phone: 325-942-2911 (24/7 helpline)
- Blackboard also has a website with guides to frequently asked student questions:
 - <https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student>

Communication

- You must use your ASU e-mail for official course communication.
- I will communicate with you through e-mail, Blackboard Announcements, and feedback on your written assignments. I check e-mail from 9-5 Monday-Friday and very rarely on the weekends. I will typically respond to e-mail within 24 hours.
- The deadlines for the course are set so that you have the option of completing assignments in the evenings, but I only check e-mail during the regular business hours specified above. I am happy to help you, but if you leave an assignment until the last minute, you will not get a response from me on Wednesday at 8:00pm or Thursday at 11:00pm.
- Students should be mindful of professional etiquette when sending e-mail.
 - I am better able to help you if you include the course you are referencing in your e-mail, a clear and concise question, and some idea of the resources you have already consulted (syllabus, course materials, Blackboard help guide) to try and answer your question.
 - Remember to always include a professional greeting in e-mails to professors! Professor Dushane, Dr. Dushane, and Dr. D all work for me.

Office Hours

- In-person office hours are posted on the syllabus, but also available virtually by appointment. I am very happy to meet with you if you have questions or need help! Please e-mail me at least 24 hours in advance and give me your availability so that we can schedule a time.

II. ACADEMIC HONESTY: ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

All ASU students are expected to understand and to comply with the University's policies on [Academic Honesty](#) (link to Angelo State University's Honors Code and several links to resources on plagiarism and how to avoid it). Your enrollment this course assumes your agreement to this honor code, and your adherence to the policies contained in the Angelo State University Student Handbook: <https://www.angelo.edu/current-students/student-handbook/>

I have a zero tolerance policy for violations of the honor code, especially plagiarism. To be clear: submitting work that is not your own on ANY assignment, no matter how small, in addition to committing other acts of academic dishonesty as outlined in the code, is a violation punishable by your immediate failure for the *course*, not just the assignment.

III. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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

- Please e-mail me early in the semester so we can discuss how I can make your accommodations work for this class! See “Other University Policies: Providing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities” below for more details.
- Students with disabilities that may warrant academic accommodations **must contact the Student Life Office** before the instructor can implement them. Room 112, Houston Harte University Center. E-mail: ADA@angelo.edu

IV. COUNSELING SERVICES

I encourage students struggling with events in their lives or ongoing mental health issues to seek out the allies and resources available to them on campus (links to campus offices included).

- [Campus Counseling Services](#): 325-942-2171
- [Campus Police](#): 325-942-2017
- Michelle Boone, [Title IX](#) Coordinator: 325-486-5367

V. ASSIGNMENTS: EXPECTATIONS and LATE POLICIES

Preparation and Active Participation (10% of course grade) and Attendance Policy

- At the end of the semester, I will assign an overall Preparation and Active Participation grade. Your grade in this category will depend on the following: coming to class on time and bringing the assigned text for the day, your willingness to participate in class discussion, and, most importantly, your overall level of engagement and attitude.
- I grant three 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 give me proof of anything to use your absences
 - I allow *three* absences without question or penalty to your preparation and active participation grade.
 - After your *fourth* absence, your absences will affect your overall preparation and active participation grade.
 - After *six* absences, your total grade for preparation and active participation category will be a zero.
 - ***Nine or more absences is grounds for failure of the course.***
- 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 post any lecture slides that I use on Blackboard (though I don't use slides during every class; many classes consist of discussion). Please do not e-mail me to ask: "what did I miss?" I am happy to answer clarifying questions, but it is your responsibility to check the schedule and stay on track!
- If you are experiencing an illness or another life event that will result in more than the allowed number of absences, you will need to contact Students Affairs (studentaffairs@angelo.edu) for an official excuse.

Reading Responses (40%)

- Each week on the dates and times indicated on the syllabus, students will submit a 250-500 word Reading Response based on a selection of assigned prompts.
- Reading responses must be posted to the Blackboard Discussion Board. Reading responses will not be accepted by e-mail.
- **No late responses will be accepted for any reason, but *one* reading response grade will be dropped** before calculating the average for that category. Blackboard will automatically drop the lowest grade.

Perusall Assignments (15%)

- This semester, we will be experimenting with responses to and annotation of texts through Perusall.com, which you can access through our Blackboard site. You will be completing weekly assignments that ask you to take notes on, highlight, and comment on the texts in conversation with other members of the seminar.
- These assignments are graded based on completion, but I also take the overall quality of your Perusall participation into account when assigning your Active Preparation and Participation grade.

Literary Analysis Essay (20%)

- The 1000-1500 word Literary Analysis Essay must be turned in via Blackboard via the SafeAssign dropbox by the due date and time specified in the syllabus/on Blackboard announcements. Essays must be submitted as a Word document or converted to .pdf format. If I cannot open the document via Blackboard, the essay will receive a 0. I will not accept essays in hard copy or via e-mail attachment.
- I will accept Literary Analysis Essays up to 1 week beyond their due date with a late penalty. See The Literary Analysis Essay assignment handout for details.

Final Course Reflection Essay (15%)

- The 1000-1500 word Final Course Reflection Essay will ask you to focus on the development of a central theme, issue, or question over time through a discussion of several course texts.
- The Final Course Reflection Essay must be submitted to the SafeAssign Dropbox in Blackboard as a Word document (.doc or .docx file) document or a PDF document (.pdf). Blackboard will not read other file types; if I can't open/read your file for any reason, the assignment will be counted as a zero. Be sure to confirm that your file has been submitted. I will not accept essays in hard copy or via e-mail attachment.
- Due to the limited time I have to submit final grades, there is only a 24 hour late window for this assignment. See the Final Course Reflection assignment handout for details.

OTHER UNIVERSITY POLICIES

[Link to Angelo State State University COVID-19 Policies and Updates](https://www.angelo.edu/covid-19/)
<https://www.angelo.edu/covid-19/>

From [Operating Policy 10.5 \(Providing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities\)](#):

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA) and subsequent legislation.

Student Disability Services is located in the Office of Student Affairs, and is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability. It is the student's responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting an employee of the Office of Student Affairs, in the Houston Harte University Center, Room 112, or contacting the department via email at ADA@angelo.edu. For more information about the application process and requirements, visit the Student Disability Services website at www.angelo.edu/ADA

From [Operating Policy 10.19 \(Student Absence for Observance of Religious Holy Day\)](#):

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. See ASU Operating Policy 10.19 Student Absence for [Observance of Religious Holy Day](#) for more information.

[Incomplete Grade Policy](#)

It is policy that incomplete grades be reserved for student illness or personal misfortune. Please contact faculty if you have serious illness or a personal misfortune that would keep you from completing course work. Documentation may be required. See ASU Operating Policy 10.11 [Grading Procedures](#) for more information.

[Title IX at Angelo State University](#):

The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance.

Students are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU's Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at:

Michelle Boone, J.D.

Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator

Mayer Administration Building, Room 210

325-942-2022 / michelle.boone@angelo.edu

You may also file a report online 24/7 at www.angelo.edu/incident-form.

If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the *University Health Clinic and Counseling Center* at 325-942-2173 or the *ASU Crisis Helpline* at 325-486-6345.

For more information about Title IX in general you may visit www.angelo.edu/title-ix.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE*

*See Blackboard for more detailed reading assignments and updates. Week One gives a detailed breakdown of Monday/Wednesday/Friday meetings; daily breakdowns of subsequent weeks will be posted on Blackboard.

Week # and Dates	Readings (R), Lectures (L), and Handouts (H)	Assignments Due
Week One: Defining Science Fiction 8.23-8.29	Monday: Lecture H: Syllabus H: Reading Response Assignments L: <i>Science Fiction and the Literary Canon</i> Wednesday: Lecture and Perusall Assignments R: from <i>Amazing Stories</i> L: <i>Science Fiction and the Literary Canon</i> Friday: Reading Response Discussion R: from <i>Amazing Stories</i>	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall Assignment #1 Due Thursday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> RR #1
Week Two: Histories of Science Fiction 8.30-9.5	R: Bacon, <i>The New Atlantis</i> R: Hawthorne, "The Birth-Mark"	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall #2 Due Thursday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> RR #2
Week Three: 19th Century Science/Fiction 9.6-9.12	R: Bulwer-Lytton, <i>The Coming Race</i>	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall #3 Due Thursday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> RR #3
Week Four 19th Century Science/Fiction 9.13-9.19	R: Bulwer-Lytton, <i>The Coming Race</i>	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall #4 Due Thursday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> RR #4
Week Five 19th Century Science/Fiction 9.20-9.26	R: Wells, <i>The War of the Worlds</i>	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall #5 Due Thursday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> RR #5

Week Six The New Wave 9.27-10.3	R: LeGuin, <i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i>	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall #6 Due Thursday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> RR #6
Week Seven The New Wave 10.4-10.10	R: LeGuin, <i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i>	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall #7 Due Thursday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> RR #7
Week Eight Literary Analysis Essay 10.11-10.17	R: Literary Analysis Essay Assignment Sheet R: Literary Analysis Essay Topics L: <i>Literary Analysis Essay Workshop</i>	Due Friday @ 11: 59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Literary Analysis Essay
Week Nine Afrofuturism 10.18-10.24	R: Butler, <i>Dawn</i>	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall #8 Due Thursday @ 11:59pm RR #8
Week Ten Afrofuturism 10.25-10.31	R: Butler, <i>Dawn</i>	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall #9 Due Thursday @ 11:59pm RR #9
Week Eleven Technofutures 11.1-11.7	R: Chiang, <i>Stories of Your Life and Others</i>	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall #10 Due Thursday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> RR #10
Week Twelve Technofutures and Climate Fiction 11.8-11.14	R: Chiang, <i>Stories of Your Life and Others</i> R: <i>Everything Change</i> collection (online)	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall #11 Due Thursday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> RR #11

Week Thirteen Climate Fiction 11.15-11.21	R: <i>Everything Change</i> collection (online)	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall #12 No Assignments Due Thursday: Thanksgiving Break
Week Fourteen The New Weird 11.22-11.28	R: VanderMeer, <i>Annihilation</i>	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall #13 Due Thursday @ 11:59pm RR #12
Week Fifteen The New Weird 11.29-12.5	R: VandeMeer, <i>Annihilation</i> H: Course Reflection Essay Assignment	Due Tuesday @ 11:59pm <input type="checkbox"/> Perusall #14 No Assignments Due Thursday: Work on Course Reflection Essay
Week Sixteen/ Final Exam	Course Reflection Essay Due: Monday, December 6th @ 11:59pm	