

ENGLISH 2231
Foundations of Science Fiction

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Office and Fall Hours: McCain 1193; Wed. 2:35-4:35, or by appointment

Dalhousie is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) people first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

Dalhousie's Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the McCain Building (room 3037) or contact the programs at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803 (leave a message).

Course Description:

The "origin" of SF has been situated everywhere from classical Greece texts, to the Early Modern period, to the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, and all the way to twentieth-century pulp publications in the interwar and post-WWII periods. Depending on the critic, therefore, the genre can include or run parallel to utopian fiction (and politics), fantasy, and even the gothic.

Focussing on literature in English, we will read science fiction from these various origins through to the beginnings of the so-called pulp era in the 1920s and 30s. We will see, generally, the ways in which SF not only comments on the developments and implications of new technologies, but also how it creates fictional worlds that, in part, work as detailed comparative structures to "actual" societies. These functions make SF especially well-suited to an analysis of social issues; we will, therefore, also discuss the relationship between these cultural products and debates about class, gender, race, religion, and sexuality, to mention a few topics.

In part because of its varying histories, we will define SF widely, but focus primarily on works that draw on the utopian and "scientific fiction" elements of the tradition; this focus means, as well, that our primary attention will be on the so-called "long nineteenth century" (generally defined as spanning the period 1789-1914), though we will begin in the Early Modern period. Early in the term we will discuss some of the dominant critical definitions of SF, and examine some of the relationship between science fiction and the sciences.

Required Texts

- James De Mille, *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*
- Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood*
- William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*
- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
- H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*
- Course Reading Package (on Brightspace)

Course Requirements

Assignments

Mini essays, 300-450 words (approx. 1-1.5 pages, double spaced): 10%; **do TWO of FIVE**
 Midterm: 25%
 Essay, 1200-1500 words (approx. 4-5 pages, double spaced): 25%; **DUE 28 March**
 Final exam: 35% (during University exam period).
 Attendance and Participation: 5%

Assignment Descriptions

Mini essays: These brief assignments are designed to encourage students to develop their own interpretation of texts before they are covered in class, in order to stimulate a more active class discussion and help students to develop their close reading skills. There are five possible due dates; students are to choose two of those dates to hand in assignments.

Each mini-essay should be structured like a regular essay: a brief introduction with a thesis statement; one or two body paragraphs to develop and prove the thesis (with evidence) and a brief conclusion. The conclusion could gesture to remaining questions you may have regarding the text. Proper citation and MLA documentation is mandatory; all sources consulted and cited should be listed in a "Works Cited and Consulted" list.

Due dates and possible texts for each mini-essay:

15 January: Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

5 February: Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter"

26 February: Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*

5 March: Wells, "The Star"; **or** Bellamy, "The Blindman's World"; **or** London, "The Shadow and the Flash"

2 April: Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"; **or** Gibson, "The Gernsback Continuum"

Midterm: This in-class test will be based on the readings up to and including the class before the midterm. The test will consist of two sections: the first will be a quick test of your basic knowledge of the texts we have read; the second will consist of doing close readings and interpretations of several short passages chosen from the works studied. This latter section is designed to test both comprehension and interpretive skills.

Essay: This essay will be an in-depth analysis of two of the primary works read during the term. You will choose your topic from a list handed out by the instructor. Outside research is not required, but you may use secondary sources. The use of scholarly sources will be discussed in class. Proper citation and MLA documentation is mandatory; all sources consulted and cited should be listed in a "Works Cited and Consulted" list.

Final Exam: The final exam will consist of three sections. The first two sections will follow the format of the midterms, and will only cover material from after the Winter midterm. The third section will consist of an essay examining a range of works in relation to a particular topic; essays will have to cover material from both terms.

Attendance and Participation: Each of these will be worth half of the 5%. Attendance will be based on attending each class and signing the sign-in sheet. Participation will be based on activity in class discussions and on the level of engagement with the text that is demonstrated (i.e. you must demonstrate that you have read *and* thought seriously about the text before class).

Note: Formal written assignments must be submitted through the Brightspace page.

Other important course and university policies are listed on the final pages of this syllabus.

Reading and Class Schedule:

Jan 8 Introduction: Sciences, Fictions, Fans, Critics
10 CANCELLED

Utopias and Other Non-Places

12 Thomas More, *Utopia* (selections)

15 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (selections); **1st mini-essay due date**
17 William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*
19 Shakespeare (continued)

22 Washington Irving, "Men of the Moon"
24 Edgar Allan Poe, "MS Found in a Bottle"
26 James De Mille, *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*

29 De Mille (continued)
31 De Mille (continued)

Mad About Science

Feb 2 Munroe Day, University Closed

5 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter"; **2nd mini-essay due date**
Last day to drop winter term course without a "W"
7 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
9 Shelley (continued)

12 Shelley (continued)
14 Shelley (continued)
16 **Midterm**

19 Nova Scotia Heritage Day, University closed
20 – 23 Study Break. No classes.

26 H.G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*; **3rd mini-essay due date**

- 28 *Island of Doctor Moreau* (continued)
 Mar 2 *Island of Doctor Moreau* (continued)

The Fin de Siècle: The End of the World as We Know It (and That's Just Fine)

- 5 Wells, "The Star": **4th mini-essay due date**
 7 Edward Bellamy, "The Blindman's World"
 9 Jack London, "The Shadow and the Flash"

 12 W.E.B. DuBois, "The Comet"
 14 Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, "Sultana's Dream"
 (Last day to drop a course with a "W")
 16 Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood*

 19 *Of One Blood* (continued); **Final essay due**
 21 *Of One Blood* (continued)
 23 *Of One Blood* (continued)

The Pulps and the Beginnings of the Future

- 26 *Amazing Stories*, April 1928
 28 *Amazing Stories*, April 1928, continued
 30 University Closed

Looking Forward; Looking Backward: The End of the Future

- Apr 2 Ursula K Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas": **5th mini-essay due date**
 4 *Star Trek: Deep Space 9*, "Far Beyond the Stars": Viewing
 6 *Star Trek: DS9* Lecture

 9 William Gibson, "The Gernsback Continuum"
 10 Review or Extra Office Hours

Course and University Policies:

Missed or Late Academic Requirements due to Student Absence

- Dalhousie students are asked to take responsibility for their own short-term absences (3 days or less) by contacting their instructor by email prior to the academic requirement deadline or scheduled time and by submitting a completed Student Declaration of Absence to their instructor in case of missed or late academic requirements. **Only two** separate Student Declaration of Absence forms may be submitted **per course during a term** (Note: faculty, college, school, instructor or course-specific guidelines may set a lower maximum). (read more: [https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/university_secretariat/policy-repository/StudentAbsenceRegulation\(OCT2017\)v2.pdf](https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/university_secretariat/policy-repository/StudentAbsenceRegulation(OCT2017)v2.pdf))

- **Note:** please see “Late Penalties,” below, for course-specific policies.

Late Penalties

- All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated, or at the time and date indicated. Late assignments will be docked 5% for each 24-hour period that they are late. For example, a paper due at 12:00 pm on Day 1 will drop 5% starting at 12:01 pm on Day 1, another 5% starting at 12:01 pm on Day 2, etc. **Assignments will not be accepted after the marked, on time assignments are handed back; any assignment not handed in by that point will be given a grade of 0 (zero).** Marking schedules will be made clear in class.

- In-class assignments can only be completed during the time and date listed on the syllabus. Missed assignments will receive a grade of zero.

- **Illness and self-reported absence:** self-reported illness or absence can excuse lateness **if reported prior to the due date of the assignment**. Self-reported illness or absence can excuse **no more than 3 days of lateness or absence**; any assignment lateness or class absence beyond this period will require documentation or be subject to late penalties or lost attendance and participation grades, respectively. Any such documentation must state which days the student was unable to complete work, and must be provided within a week of the missed work, or the documentation must cover the time past that week.

- **Travel plans are not an excuse for missing assignments or the final exam. Book your travel accordingly.**

Academic Integrity

- At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect (The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999). As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity. Read more: http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html.

- This course may use plagiarism-detection software; **you are required to maintain electronic copies of your work and produce them on request; failure to do so may be subject to academic misconduct policies.**

Accessibility

The Advising and Access Services Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD). For more information, see the Academic Support website at https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html

Student Code of Conduct

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner-perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. See the Statement on Student Conduct at https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-life-policies/code-of-student-conduct.html

Diversity and Inclusion - Culture of Respect

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2). See the Statement on Respect and Diversity at <https://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>

University Policies, Statements, Guidelines

- This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the University Calendar and the Senate. <https://academiccalendar.dal.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog>
- Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates): http://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html
- University Grading Practices: Statement of Principles and Procedures: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html
- Scent-Free Program: <http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>