

ENGE3220 Literature and Film

Course Lecturer: Dr. Carolyn Lau (carolynlau@cuhk.edu.hk)

About the Course

This course focuses on visions and representations of end times in science fiction literature and film. Set against environmental disasters, pandemics, and societal collapse, post-apocalyptic science fictions consistently offer alternatives to how we live now and even imagine real grounds for hope. Topics include time travel, race, class and gender, religion and culture, and kinship and survival. To encourage further research, we engage with relevant critical, philosophical, and sociocultural approaches in our readings. The goal of this course is for you to leave with a broader understanding of what science fiction can do, and how strategies of extrapolation and world-building unique to the genre serve as transferable skills in both intellectual and everyday practices.

Learning Outcomes

Having successfully completed this course you shall be able to:

- develop an appreciation of the tradition of science fiction and its contemporary relevance
- understand the significance of sociohistorical contexts and other disciplinary frameworks in the production and reception of literature and film
- demonstrate knowledge of comparative and critical approaches in literary criticism
- investigate, discuss and write critically, reflectively, and analytically

Texts

Butler, Octavia E. *Parable of the Sower*. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2019.

McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*. New York: Vintage, 2016.

Note: Please get a copy of these specific editions of the texts. All page references in class will be based on them.

Films

La Jetée (Chris Marker, 1962)

12 Monkeys (Terry Gilliam, 1995)

Strange Days (Kathryn Bigelow, 1995)

Children of Men (Alfonso Cuarón, 2006)

Recommended Readings

Braidotti, Rosi. *The Posthuman*. London: Polity, 2013.

Currie, Mark. *About Time: Narrative, Fiction and the Philosophy of Time*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.

Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Kuhn, Annette. *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*. London: Verso, 1990.

Sobchack, Vivian. *Screening Space: The American Science Fiction Film*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997.

Vint, Sherryl. *Science Fiction: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.

Assessment

Class preparation, attendance, and participation 10%

Tutorial presentation 20%

Mid-term paper 30%

Final paper 40%

Grade Descriptors

Grade A / Excellent: Outstanding performance on ALL learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would surpass the normal expectations at this level and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study. The 'A' grade should be reserved for truly excellent work that exceeds the level expected for the majority of students and are expected to be achieved only by a small minority.

Grade A- / Very Good: Generally outstanding performance on ALMOST ALL learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would fully fulfill the normal expectations at this level and occasionally reaches standards that may be common at higher levels of study.

Grade B+ / Good (Plus): HIGH performance on all learning outcomes, OR HIGH performance on some learning outcomes which compensates WELL for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply WELL the principles or skills learned in the course in a comprehensive manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level WELL.

Grade B / Good: SUBSTANTIAL performance on all learning outcomes, OR SUBSTANTIAL performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a MORE COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade B- / Good (Minus): GOOD performance on all learning outcomes, OR GOOD performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

Grade C+ / Fair (Plus): VERY SATISFACTORY performance on the majority of learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a SOMEWHAT SUSTAINED manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C / Fair: SATISFACTORY performance on the majority of learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to partially apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

Grade C- / Fair (Minus): SOMEWHAT SATISFACTORY performance on A NUMBER OF learning outcomes.

Demonstrates the ability to SOMEWHAT apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the BARE basic requirement at this level.

Grade D+ / Pass (Plus): BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on A FEW learning outcomes.

Addresses the course inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in some areas while responding minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

Grade D / Pass: ALMOST BARELY satisfactory performance on VERY FEW learning outcomes.

Addresses the course inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in very few areas while responding very minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

Grade F / Failure: Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Fails to address the course and likely does not understand what the course requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point.