GENY0002

Academic Skills Plus
Science Fiction

Term Two // 2020

Course Overview
Staff Contact Details

Convenors
Dr James Bedford
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Dr Dominic Fitzsimmons
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Tutors
Shaun Lehmann
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Student and Academic Career Success Information (SACS)

Location: Morven Brown Building, Lower Ground, Room 66
Phone: (02) 9385 2060
Website: https://student.unsw.edu.au/skills

Student Academic and Career Success (SACS) would like to Respectfully Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Bedegal (Kensington campus), Gadigal (City and Art & Design Campuses) and the Ngunnawal people (Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra) of the lands where each campus of UNSW is located.

Course Details

Credit Points 6
Summary

This course will focus on a number of key academic skills including reading and writing at university, critical thinking, and essay structures. We will practice applying these skills (and more) to the topic of ‘Science Fiction’. Each lecture will explore a particular genre or subset of Sci-fi, ranging from Cyberpunk to Artificial Intelligence. Following each lecture, we will have a two-hour tutorial that focuses on enhancing your academic skills.

Course Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course students should be able to:

1. Apply critical thinking and writing to academic research and essay writing (Level of thinking 3 apply) Aligns with assessment 1,2,4
2. Analyse and reflect on research artefacts, in essay writing and in class discussion (Level of thinking 4 analyse) Aligns with assessment 2,3 and 5
3. Apply referencing conventions to researched essays and presentations
4. Communicate using clear, cohesive and concise language and expression in written, oral and digital formats (level of thinking 6 communication and design) Aligns with assessment 3

Textbooks:

*Essentials of Essay Writing: What Markers Look For* by Jamie Roberts

Assessment schedule (to pass the course all assessments must be completed)

1. Assignment 1: Essay 1 (15%). Due: 1000 words Friday 10th July 11:59pm
2. Assignment 2: Essay 2 (35%). 1500 words. Due: Friday 14th August 11:59pm
3. Assignment 3: Presentation (15%). Due: Monday 17th August 11:59pm (post on forum)
4. Assignment 4: Online exam (25%). Due: Wednesday 5th August 11:59pm
5. Class participation: (10%) Ongoing throughout the course

Penalties for late assignments:

Each assignment is designed to help you with various aspects of communication at a tertiary level. Plenty of feedback will be given to help you to improve your skills. If you are having difficulties in meeting the due dates, please speak to James Bedford. As this is a credit bearing
course, penalties for late work apply: 3% of the total mark will be subtracted each day the assignment is late, including weekends. For example, if you hand in the first essay five days late, then you will lose 15% of the total mark. If you feel that you are unable to complete the task by the due date, for whatever reason, please email your convenor or tutor to discuss.

Essay questions:

(NOTE: for each question, you must refer to at least two creative works):

1. Atwood writes: “What I mean by ‘science fiction’ is those books that descend from H. G. Wells’s The War of the Worlds, which treats of an invasion by tentacled, blood-sucking Martians shot to Earth in metal canisters – things that could not possibly happen – whereas, for me, “speculative fiction” means plots that descend from Jules Verne’s books about submarines and balloon travel and such – things that really could happen but just hadn’t completely happened when the authors wrote the books. I would place my own books in this second category: no Martians.” (From In other worlds, p.6)

With these remarks in mind, is it useful to distinguish between science fiction and speculative fiction? In answering this question you might also consider Le Guin’s suggestion that people who refer to their works as ‘speculative fiction’ rather than ‘science fiction’ are simply trying to protect themselves from some of the negative connotations associated with science fiction (see In other worlds)?

2. Is it useful to distinguish between literary and non-literary science fiction?
3. Is it bad if science fiction works contain a ‘message’?
4. Is it possible to differentiate between good and bad science fiction?
5. What is science fiction?
6. Select a science fiction theme or trope (for example, aliens, time travel, dystopia). Compare two or more creative works and evaluate which provides the most convincing treatment of this theme or trope.
7. Compare two or more works of science fiction and discuss which work contains a superior treatment of gender.
8. What do our depictions of Mars tell us about ourselves?
9. What do our depictions of Aliens tell us about ourselves?
10. To what extent is science fiction a valuable genre?
11. Why is science fiction sometimes seen as a joke? Is this perspective justified?
12. What is the difference between the genres of science fiction and fantasy? Is science fiction superior to fantasy?
13. Is utopian or dystopian SF more effective in addressing current global problems? (You can focus on a particular problem such as climate change, or address the question more generally).

Essay 1 (1000 words)
Answer one of the above questions. The feedback criteria will be discussed in class. Please use the Harvard Referencing System. At least five academic-quality sources must be used. At least one of these must come from the course readings. Blogs, Wikipedia, news articles, etc, do not count towards the four sources; although you can use these (with caution).

The following are the criteria used to mark Essay 1 (total marks = 100):

- Structural diagram: Thesis and main points. (3 marks)
- Introduction: Orientation, thesis, outline. (20 marks)
- Body: General logic (relationship between paragraphs), structure of paragraphs (topic sentences, elaboration, concluding sentences). (25 marks)
- Conclusion: Summary, thesis restated. (12 marks)
- Is the question answered: Is there a sustained and convincing engagement with the question? (10 marks)
- Research: Are there a sufficient number of sources, are the sources well integrated, is knowledge and understanding of the subject demonstrated, is a referencing system followed? (10 marks)
- Critical thinking: Is the student’s voice strong? Are the arguments nuanced? Does the response engage with the ideas of others in a thoughtful manner? Etcetera. (10 marks)
- Expression: Grammar, level of formality, clarity, etc. (7 marks)
- Presentation: Line spacing, font size, page numbers, etc. (3 marks)

Essay 2 (1500 words)
You may respond to the same question as your first essay or attempt a new question. **At least seven academic-quality sources must be used.** At least two must come from within the course and at least three must come from outside the course (there will be a significant mark penalty for not using the required readings). Non-scholarly websites do not count towards the seven sources; although these sources can be used with caution and citation. **You must also include a structural diagram of your essay’s structure.**

The following are the criteria used to mark your essay (total marks = 100):

- Structural diagram: Thesis and main points. (3 marks)
- Introduction: Orientation, thesis, outline. (10 marks)
- Body: General logic (relationship between paragraphs), structure of paragraphs (topic sentences, logic, transitions, etcetera). (17 marks)
- Conclusion: Summary, thesis restated. (5 marks)
- Is the questions answered: Is there a sustained and convincing engagement with the question? (20 marks)
- Research: Are there enough sources? Is knowledge and understanding of the topic demonstrated? Are the sources well integrated and engaged with? (15 marks)
- Referencing: Is a referencing system adhered to (in-text citations / footnotes and reference list / bibliography)? (5 marks)
- Critical thinking: Is the student’s voice strong? Are the arguments nuanced? Does the response engage with the ideas of others in a thoughtful manner? Etcetera. (15 marks)
- Expression: Grammar, level of formality, clarity, etc. (7 marks)
- Presentation: Line spacing (1.5), font size (11 or 12), page numbers, margins (not too narrow) etc. (3 marks)

**Presentation**

Your task is to film yourself and upload your presentation. Your presentation should go for 5 minutes (or 7 minutes if you include a video – the video should be no more than 2 minutes).

Here is your topic:
Suvin writes, “SF is distinguished by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional ‘novum’ (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic” (From *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, p.63). In your presentation you are required to select a work of science fiction, identify the novum (focus on one only) and evaluate the extent to which the novum is validated by cognitive logic; that is, the extent to which it is plausible/believable.

**Steps to follow:**

1) Film your presentation (use your phone/tablet/webcam etc). You can film yourself and upload a full video, do a screencast (with your face), or, if you are feeling creative, you can use a program to make a slicker presentation; but doing this won’t get you more marks.
2) Upload your video to YouTube. Set privacy setting to ‘Unlisted’. (SEE instructions on Moodle)
3) Post the link to your presentation on the Moodle presentation forum.
4) Make comments on each other’s videos.

The following are the criteria used to mark your presentation:

- **Opening/introduction:** Here you should introduce yourself and say what, generally, you will talk about. Make sure that you provide an outline that gives the audience a sense of how your presentation will develop (don’t tell the audience there will be an introduction, body and conclusion – this is useless) and your attitude to the material. (15 marks)
- **Clarity of structure:** It should always be clear where you have just been in your presentation, where you are, and where you are going. (15 marks)
- **Quality of information:** Make sure that the information you present is interesting and from appropriate sources (eg: if you are talking theory, get your theory from academic sources). (15 marks)
- **Quality of critique/analysis:** Make sure you explore the nuances of your example. Make sure your own voice is present. (15 marks)
- **Conclusion:** Summarise what you have said and don’t introduce any new information. Don’t start your analysis in your conclusion. (10 marks)
- **Performance:** Think about pace, volume, eye contact, body language, and use of visuals. You will do poorly here if you read and well if you have a conversational manner. (30 marks)
Exam
The exam will be two hours. It will take place on the last day of the course and be open book. Its focus will be on the academic skills component of the course, not the sci-fi content. The exam will consist of 10 multiple choice questions, 4 short answer questions, 1 referencing question and 2 introduction/paragraph analysis questions. Referencing guidelines will be given during the exam so you don’t have to memorise a particular referencing system.

Class participation
Class participation is based on a number of factors including: your willingness to discuss and share ideas in class, your ability to respond to questions and feedback, as well as your overall attendance throughout the term. You can gain participation marks by talking in class and by making thoughtful online comments on the Microsoft Teams channel as well as in your responses to others’ presentations.

Attendance
This course adopts the regular university rule that you must attend at least 80% of classes. This includes lectures. Please contact your tutor or the course coordinator if you are not able to attend a class. It is expected you will attend your online classes as well as participate in the related activities.

Help with assignments
The university provides a number of avenues for academic support. Your first step is to ask your tutor or the course convenor. You might also like to contact Student Academic and Career Success (SACS). SACS offers both generic workshops in academic skills, and also individual consultations for specific help with your own work. You can also book Careers advice consultations. Visit the Learning and Career Hub here.

Plagiarism
UNSW defines plagiarism as using words or ideas of others and passing them off as one’s own, or republishing one’s own previously submitted work and presenting it as new findings or work without referencing the earlier work. This practice undermines academic and research integrity and is not tolerated at the University.
### Types of Plagiarism:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Copying</strong></td>
<td>Using the same or very similar text or idea to the original text or idea without appropriately acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment, without appropriate acknowledgement. This can also include combining cited and non-cited (copied) passages.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inappropriate paraphrasing</strong></td>
<td>Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another’s ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.</td>
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<td><strong>Collusion</strong></td>
<td>Presenting work as independent work when it has been prepared in whole or part in through unauthorised collaboration with other people. This includes students providing their submitted work to another student for the purpose of them plagiarising, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person’s work or seeking or receiving payment for completing academic work. This should not be confused with academic collaboration.</td>
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<td><strong>Contract cheating</strong></td>
<td>Contract cheating is also known as engaging in ‘ghost-writing’. It is a form of collusion. When a student or researcher engages another person to complete work for them and then submits the work as their own. This includes circumstances where a student or researcher submits work they may have edited which was substantially the work of another person, or where a student or researcher prepares a draft that is substantially modified by another (beyond minor editing).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inappropriate citation</strong></td>
<td>Citing sources which have not been read, not acknowledging the 'secondary' source from which knowledge of them has been obtained. This may include fabricating citations, or inaccurately citing sources which goes beyond typographical errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-plagiarism</strong></td>
<td>An author republishing their own previously submitted work and presenting it as new findings or work without referencing the earlier work, either in its entirety or partially. Self-plagiarism is also referred to as 'recycling', 'duplication', or 'multiple submissions of research findings' without disclosure. In the student or researcher context, self-plagiarism includes re-using parts, or all of a body of work that has already been submitted for assessment without proper citation. Where a student is repeating a course, they should seek permission from the course coordinator before re-submitting, in whole or part, the same piece of assessment.</td>
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For more information see: [https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism](https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism)

### Further resources on plagiarism

Student Academic and Career Success (SACS) provides educational written materials, workshops, and tutorials to aid students in their university studies. These include:

- correct referencing practices;
- paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing, and time management;
• appropriate use of, and attribution for, a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from Student Academic and Careers Success.

Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting, and the proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

Special consideration

On some occasions, sickness, misadventure, or other circumstances beyond your control may prevent you from completing a course requirement such as handing in a piece of written work by the due date, or sitting the formal end of session examination. It is also possible that such situations may significantly affect your performance in an assessable task. The University has procedures that allow you to apply for an extension or for special consideration for the affected assessments. Depending on the circumstances, the University may take action to allow you to overcome the disadvantage; eg: giving you an extension on an assignment or allowing you to complete a different assessment task. As far as is possible, you should try and keep your lecturer informed of the circumstances that are having an adverse effect on your studies. The University also offers Counseling Services and assistance for students with an ongoing disability.

You can apply for Special Consideration through the following page:

www.student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration

Student support services

There are a number of student services on campus dedicated to supporting the student experience. These services include: New Student Support, International Student Experience Unit, Financial Assistance, Wellbeing, Health & Safety, Peer Support Program, Nura Gili, Equitable Learning Services, the Nucleus and the Library.

GENY0002: Timetable Term 2, 2020

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1: 1st June – 5th</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Intro to Science Fiction</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>The Philosophy of University</td>
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<td><strong>Detailed instructions for each week’s tutorial and lecture can be found on Moodle. You must consult Moodle regularly for updates and reading material.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2: 9th June – 12th June</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Space Opera</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>The Research Process</td>
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<td>Week 3: 15th June – 19th June</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Cyberpunk</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Writing Introductions</td>
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<td>Week 4: 22nd June – 26th June</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Speculative Fiction/Literary SF</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Writing body paragraphs</td>
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<td>Week 5: 29th June – 3rd July</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Gender in Science Fiction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Writing Conclusions + analysing a student essay</td>
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<td>Week 6: 6th July – 10th July</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>NO LECTURE (Break week)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>NO CLASSES (Break week)</td>
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<td>Week 7: 13th July – 17th July</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Aliens and Colonisation</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Integrating Evidence</td>
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<td>Week 8: 20th July – 24th July</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Utopia and Dystopia</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>Week 9: 27th July – 31st July</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Artificial Intelligence</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Grammar and Expression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10: 3rd August – 7th August</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Academic Skills Recap</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>EXAM</td>
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