The Learning Centre

GENY0002
TERM 2 2019
COURSE OUTLINE

Academic Skills Plus
Science Fiction

Lecture: Tuesday 11:00-12:00 Civil Engineering G1

Tutorials: Tuesday 12:00-14:00 Quad G042, G055

Units of Credit: 6
Contact hours per week: 3

Lecturer/convener: Dr Jamie Q Roberts
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Tutor: Tracey-Lee Downey
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Tutor: James Bedford
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Background:
Welcome to Academic Skills Plus! The course will focus on a number of key academic skills: how to research more effectively, produce strong introductions and paragraphs, integrate the ideas of others, think critically, and much more. You will have the opportunity to practice your skills by producing assignments on the subject of Science Fiction. Over the weeks we will examine key themes and sub-genres within science fiction, such as aliens, cyber punk and space opera. Weekly readings will be provided and you will also be expected to do your own outside reading for your assignments. Each week there will be a 1 hour lecture on science fiction and a 2 hour academic skills tutorial. Any questions, please contact Jamie – I’m happy to talk about anything.

Textbook

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

Assessment schedule
1. Essay 1 (15%) due Week 6 (Sunday 14 July, 11:59pm) submit via Turnitin (1000 words)
2. Essay 2 (35%) due Week 11 (Wednesday 14 August, 11:59pm) submit via Turnitin (1500 words)
3. Presentation (15%) (Friday 16 August, 11:59pm)
4. Exam (25%) Week 10 (in tutorial classes, 12pm – 2pm)
5. Class participation (10%) ongoing throughout the term

More about the assignments + late penalties
Plenty of feedback will be given to help you improve your ability to write and speak clearly and persuasively. If you are having difficulties in meeting the due dates, please speak to me (Jamie). Communication is key. 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 essay 1 five days late, then you will lose 15% of the total mark, i.e. 2.25. If you scored 10/15, your mark for essay one will be 7.75/15.
Essay questions (for each question, you must mention 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).
You may also come up with your own question; however you must discuss it with your tutor first.

Essay 1
Answer one of the above questions. The feedback criteria will be discussed in class. Use the referencing system you prefer. 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):

- 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)
- Structural diagram: Thesis and main points. (3 marks)

Essay 2
You may respond to the same question as your first essay, making use of the feedback you have received to improve the essay (you don’t need to worry about self-plagiarism). Alternatively, you can produce an entirely new essay. The feedback criteria will be discussed in class. Use the referencing system you prefer. At least seven academic-quality sources must be used. At least two of these must come from the course readings and two from beyond the course. 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 2 (total marks = 100):

- 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 question answered: Is there a sustained and convincing engagement with the question? (20 marks)
- Research: Are there a sufficient number of 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)
- Structural diagram: Thesis and main points. (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.
This is the process to follow:

1) Film your presentation (use your phone or tablet if you like). You can just film yourself and upload a full video, do a screencast (with your face), or, if you are feeling creative, you can use a program such as Windows Movie Maker to make a slicker presentation; but doing this won’t get you more marks. You don’t need to edit every line: saying ‘um’ or pausing to find a word is fine; it even makes your presentation more human.

Windows movie maker: http://www.windows-movie-maker.org/
Imovie: https://www.apple.com/au/imovie/

2) Upload your video to youtube and set the privacy setting to ‘Unlisted’.
https://www.youtube.com/

3) Post the link to your movie in the moodle presentation forum.

4) Your tutor and your fellow students will comment on your video.

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 reasonable. (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 in your last tutorial class. It is closed book. **Its focus will be on the academic skills component of the course, not the science fiction.** The exam will consist of 10 multiple choice questions, 4 short answer questions, 1 referencing question and 2 introduction/paragraph analysis questions.

Class participation
By participating in class you will develop your understanding of the material, improve your ability to think critically and improve your communication skills. You will also help to make the class a fun place to be. Be a leader, not a follower, participate in class today!

Moodle
GENY0002 makes use of moodle. The course guide, readings and class notes will all be posted on moodle.

Help with assignments
The university provides a number of avenues for academic support. Your first step is to ask your teacher/convener. Also the Learning Centre offers both generic workshops in academic skills, and also individual consultations for specific help with your own work. Also see the Learning Centre website for brochures on academic skills: www.lc.unsw.edu.au

Attendance
This course adopts the regular university rule that you must attend at least 80% of classes. This includes lectures. Please contact the convener of the course if you are not able to attend a class.

What is Plagiarism?
Plagiarism is the presentation of the thoughts or work of another as one's own. Examples include:

- direct duplication of the thoughts or work of another, including by copying material, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document (whether published or
unpublished), composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, web site, Internet, other electronic resource, or another person’s assignment without appropriate acknowledgement;

• paraphrasing another person’s work with very minor changes keeping the meaning, form and/or progression of ideas of the original;

• piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole;

• citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the 'secondary' source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

• presenting an assessment item as independent work when it has been produced in whole or part in collusion with other people, for example, another student or a tutor; and

• claiming credit for a proportion a work contributed to a group assessment item that is greater than that actually contributed.

Also keep the following in mind:

• For the purposes of this policy, submitting an assessment item that has already been submitted for academic credit elsewhere may be considered plagiarism.

• Knowingly permitting your work to be copied by another student may also be considered to be plagiarism.

• Note that an assessment item produced in oral, not written, form, or involving live presentation, may similarly contain plagiarised material.

• The inclusion of the thoughts or work of another with attribution appropriate to the academic discipline does not amount to plagiarism.

The Learning Centre website is main repository for resources for staff and students on plagiarism and academic honesty. These resources can be located via:

www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism

The Learning Centre also provides substantial educational written materials, workshops, and tutorials to aid students, for example, in:

• 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 The Learning Centre.

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. an additional assessment or extend a deadline. As far as is possible, you should try and keep your lecturer informed of 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 if you miss a formal exam. This is a formal application procedure lodged with Student Central.

**Student support services**

There are a number of student services on campus including Student Central, Counseling Service, Nura Gili, Equity & Diversity, and the Library. The role and contact details for each of these services will be discussed in the Academic Acculturation in Week One.
EMAIL AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

All students are allocated a UNSW email account. This is the email account that the University and your lecturer will use if they want to communicate with you about classes, timetables, enrolment and final grades. You need to ensure that you can access this email account and it is your responsibility to check it regularly. We assume that all students can be contacted via their UNSW email account. If you use another email address, you must arrange to have your UNSW email account forwarded to that address. Also make sure that you regularly check your myunsw home page.

GENY0002: Timetable T2 2019
Lecture/tutorial on theme: Science Fiction + Academic skills based seminar
Below you will find a list of weekly topics, some books and movies you might like to read/watch, and the main course readings. These readings and some additional readings will be posted on Moodle. You don’t have to do the readings. But generally the first academic reading from each week will introduce you to some of the key issues related to the topic.

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lecture:</strong> Introduction to course + Lecture: What is Science Fiction: definitions and sub-genres</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Academic skills:</strong> Understanding university philosophy, reading strategies, the research process</td>
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<th>Week 2</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lecture:</strong> Classic genres: Space Opera</td>
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<td>- Key SF work (Space Opera): Iain M Banks <em>Consider Phlebas</em> (Book) [the Culture series more generally], Herbert <em>Dune</em> (Book), Asimov <em>Foundation series</em> (Book), <em>Starwars</em> (Movie)</td>
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**Academic skills: The research process continued**

**Week 3**

**Lecture: Classic genres: Cyber Punk**

- Key SF works (Cyberpunk): Gibson *Neuromancer* (Book), *Akira* (Movie), *Ghost in the Shell* (Movie), *Bladerunner 1 and 2* (Movies) Stephenson *Snow Crash, The Diamond Age* (Books)

**Academic skills: The essay part 1 (introductions)**

**Week 4**

**Lecture: Speculative Fiction / Literary Science Fiction**

- Key SF works: Atwood *The Handmaid’s Tale* (Book), Orwell *1984* (Book), Huxley *Brave New World* (Book), Shelly *Frankenstein* (Book)
- Reading: Milner, A 2012, ‘Chapter 1’ in *Locating Science Fiction*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool.

**Academic skills: The essay part 2 (body paragraphs)**

**Week 5**

**Lecture: Gender in SF**

Key SF works: *Annihilation* (Movie), *The Last Jedi* (Movie), *Alien Quadrilogy* (Movies), *Mad Max: Fury Road* (Movie); Piercy *Woman on the edge of time* (Book), more TBA (possibly)

**Academic skills: The essay part 3 (the conclusion and analyzing/marketing a student essay)**

**Week 6**

**Lecture: Aliens and Colonisation**

- Key SF works (Aliens): Lem *Solaris* (Book), The Strugatsky brothers *Roadside Picnic* (Book), *Solaris* [Tarkovsky] (Movie – on Youtube), *Stalker* [Tarkovsky] (Movie – on Youtube), *Alien* (Movie), *Starship Troopers* (Movie)
- Key SF works (Colonisation): *District 9* (Movie), *Avatar* (Movie)

**Academic skills: Referencing and integrating research 1**

**Week 7**

**Lecture: Laughing at and with SF**

- Key SF works: *Rick and Morty* – the beginning of ‘Rest and Ricklaxation’ (TV show), *Prometheus* (Movie), Adams *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* (Book), *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (Movie),
- Reading TBA

**Academic skills: Referencing and integrating research 2**

**Week 8**

**Lecture: Utopia/Dystopia**

- Key SF works: Le Guin *The Dispossessed* (Book), Stephenson *Seveneves* (Book), Robinson *2312* (Book)

**Academic skills: Referencing and integrating research 2**

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**Week 9**

**Lecture: Robots and A.I.**

- Key SF works: *Ex Machina* (Movie), *2001* (Movie), *Her* (Movie)

**Academic skills: Expression and grammar, presentation skills**

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**Week 10**

**Lecture: Sill recap**

**Academic skills: In class test**