

# Syllabus

---

Peru State College

ENGLISH 320, SCIENCE FICTION LITERATURE AND FILM

Syllabus--Spring--2012

## **Course: Science Fiction Literature and Film, English 320**

**Time:** On-Line Course

**Professor:** Bill Clemente

**Office:** FA 137

**Office Hours:** 11:00-1:00 p.m. MW;  
12:00-2:30 p.m. Tuesday and  
Thursday; 11:00-1:00 p.m. Friday.

**Office Telephone Number:** (872)-2233

**E-mail:**

[bclemente@peru.edu](mailto:bclemente@peru.edu)  
u;

**(I check e-mail  
frequently and will  
get back to you as  
quickly as possible.)**

**Teaching Schedule:**

**8  
:  
0  
0  
-  
9  
:  
1  
5  
  
T  
H  
  
(  
F  
A  
  
2  
0  
2  
)  
:  
  
L  
i  
t  
e  
r  
a**

**t  
u  
r  
e  
  
f  
o  
r  
  
C  
h  
i  
l  
d  
r  
e  
n  
  
T  
h  
r  
o  
u  
g  
h  
  
A  
d  
o  
l  
e**

**s  
c  
e  
n  
c  
e**

**9  
:  
3  
0  
-  
1  
0  
:  
4  
5**

**T  
H**

**(  
F  
A**

**2  
0  
2  
)  
:**

**W  
o  
r  
l  
d**

**L  
i  
t  
e  
r  
a  
t  
u  
r  
e**

**t  
o**

**1  
5  
0  
0**

**O  
n  
-  
l**

**i  
n  
,  
S  
c  
i  
e  
n  
c  
e  
  
F  
i  
c  
t  
i  
o  
n  
  
L  
i  
t  
e  
r  
a  
t  
u  
r  
e**

**a  
n  
d  
  
F  
i  
l  
m  
  
(  
S  
e  
c  
o  
n  
d  
  
E  
i  
g  
h  
t  
  
W  
e  
e  
k  
s  
)**

**O  
n  
-  
l  
i  
n  
e  
,  
  
W  
r  
i  
t  
i  
n  
g  
  
f  
o  
r  
  
P  
u  
b  
l  
i  
c  
a  
t  
i  
o**

**n  
(  
F  
i  
r  
s  
t  
  
E  
i  
g  
h  
t  
  
W  
e  
e  
k  
s  
)**

**Web page: Click [here](#). And then  
click on "Bill's Personal Web  
Page"**

**Please pay close attention to  
class announcements, for the  
information collected here is  
subject to change over the  
course of the term.**

To promote academic integrity, Peru State College subscribes to an electronic service to review papers for the appropriate citations and originality. Key elements of submitted papers are stored electronically in a limited access database and thus become a permanent part of the material to which future submissions are compared.

Continued enrollment in a course signifies your permission for this use of your written work.

Should you not wish to agree to this procedure, you may drop the course during the add/drop period before any works are completed and submitted.

#### Required Texts:

*Screening Space:  
The American  
Science Fiction Film  
(Second Edition) by  
Vivian Sobchack*

*The Wesleyan  
Anthology of Science  
Fiction by Arthur  
Evans and others.*

**Students in  
the class must  
either join  
Netflix for  
two months  
to watch  
assigned films  
or find  
another  
resource. I  
will try to**

**show one of  
the assigned  
films at the  
college on  
Tuesday  
evenings in  
FA 202.  
Many of the  
films  
assigned--and  
you always  
have choices--  
are available  
for  
immediate  
viewing on  
Netflix.**

### **Course Description and Objectives:**

**Science Fiction Literature and Film offers a critical perspective on both recent development in Science Fiction Literature and Science Fiction Film, with an emphasis on the history of American Science Fiction. The focus of the literature can change, and I can include such topics as Apocalyptic stories and New Space Opera.**

**This class introduces readers and watchers to a very popular genre of literature and film, which often, and for very good reasons, gets characterized as less than serious or worse. This class therefore abides by Sturgeon' s Law. In response to uninformed critics of SF Literature who labeled the genre “ trash,” Theodore Sturgeon replied that “ 90% of everything is crap.” This class will focus on the 10% of excellent literature and film available, from he late Octavia Butler' s compelling narrative “ Speech Sounds” to the chilling [Invasion of the Body Snatchers](#).**

**English 320 is a discussion-centered on-line class, so students must share on the discussion threads their ideas and questions in an informative and critically sophisticated manner. To reinforce issues and concerns raised in**

class, each week students will take part in two on-line discussion threads utilizing the Blackboard Template. Each week, one thread will focus on readings from **Screening Space** and the week's films; the other requires students to talk about the assigned readings from the anthology, **The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction**.

Hailed by many critics as the best book ever written about Science Fiction films, **Screening Space** offers a comprehensive and critical look at this popular genre of cinema. The films and this text will provide class members with a history of the SF film in American cinema and an appreciation for the serious issues these films address, from Cold War fears (**Dr. Strangelove**) to race relations (**Brother from Another Planet**). The text also provides students with various perspectives on film and the vocabulary necessary in their critical essays and discussions to address the films and the assigned readings on line and in the anthologies. Students will also have an opportunity to view some foreign Science Fiction films such as Tarkovsky's brilliant **Stalker** or Jean-Luc Godard's **Alphaville**.

The critically acclaimed and long-awaited anthology published in 2010, **The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction**, provides narratives from wide variety of thematic perspectives, from Apocalypse and Prostatic to Gender and Sexuality, from Alien Encounters to Utopias/Dystopias. As the preceding sentence underscores, this collection of numerous award-winning short stories collected from 1844 to 2008 address issues at the heart of Science Fiction, from societal concerns such as gender roles and environmental challenges to the threat of a pandemic virus or nuclear annihilation. This collection of narratives will introduce readers to top writers in the field, including Arthur C. Clark, Stanislaw Lem, Ursula K. Le Guin, James Tiptree, Jr, Robert Silverberg, Judith Merril, Philip K. Dick, and a host of other notable authors.

The anthology and the film text also serve, therefore, to underscore the fact that serious Science Fiction literature and film concerns more than simply portraying a post-holocaust world or taking viewers on a space ship headed into a galactic war. The films and the literature may place readers in the future, but the issues concern matters of no small significance in contemporary society. Ray Bradbury, bristling at the notion that SF tried to predict the future, argued that the literature seeks instead to take contemporary problems and extrapolate, attempting to prevent that particular future from happening.

Studying the films and the fiction, students will come to appreciate and articulate the fact that while SF offers readers a tremendous vehicle for entertainment, they never escape the gravitational hold of the world's concerns.

### **Other Goals and Objectives:**

**The course seeks to make students more appreciative viewers of all films and better critical readers of all literature.**

**Science Fiction Literature and Film also requires students to write a series of essays and will help them improve critical-thinking and composition skills.**

**This literature and the cinema also connect with issues at the center of global concerns, from the dangers the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction pose to the political and social problems connected with global warming. Thus, Science Fiction Literature and Film also reinforces the college's mission to graduate informed citizens.**

**The class, moreover, fits in quite well with the English Department's and Peru State College's objects. With its heavy emphasis on writing and analysis, English 320 stresses coherent and logical communication, both oral and written. In addition, the course takes an across-the-curriculum approach to cinema and literature, which in turn reinforces the college's emphasis on the Liberal Arts.**

### **Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:**

- 1. Appreciate the diversity of themes SF Literature and Film investigate and their relation to contemporary concerns.**
- 2. Continue to hone critical and written skills.**
- 3. Continue reading and research with confidence in the area of Science Fiction film and literature.**
- 4. Understand the historical development of both Science Fiction literature and film.**

## **5. Talk clearly and critically about significant Science Fiction films and short narratives and their directors and authors.**

### **Instruction Method/Mode of Delivery:**

**This course is offered on line. Students who take this course must also join Netflix.**

## **Assessment Methods and Student Requirements**

### **Grades:**

**Your final grade will be based on the following (subject-to-change) areas and percentages:**

**Discussion Threads: 16**

**Weekly Quizzes: 16**

**Two Essays: 30**

**Midterm Examination: 20**

**Final Examination: 18**

### **Grading Policy:**

**A 90-100**

**B+ 85-89**

**B 80-84**

**C+ 75-79**

**C 70-74**

**D+ 65-69**

**D 60-64**

**F Below 60**

### **Discussion Threads:**

**This class requires that you take part in discussions each week; you will be asked each week to respond to prompts on two separate discussion threads.**

**To receive minimum credit (7 out of 10 points), you must respond in paragraph form to each prompt at least two times during the weeklong period allotted for each discussion; those who respond only on Saturday and/or Sunday will receive a minimum grade for posting instead of discussing. The threads require that you share your own ideas and respond to what other members of the class share.**

**These discussions will center on the films and the assigned readings. You must respond between Monday and midnight Sunday. Remember, you must write in paragraph form at least two times for each prompt. And you should also share and discuss interesting links related to the material.**

**Effective responses offer specific examples by way of support; in addition, successful paragraphs also include hyperlinks to material of specific interest for the issues discussed.**

**Take your discussion threads seriously, for enthusiastic participation will guarantee a good grade for 16% of your final grade.**

### **Short Essays:**

**This class requires that you write essays about Science Fiction cinema and literature, utilizing critical material from the class text and concepts discussed on the discussion threads.**

**Over the course of the semester, you will write two short essays (15% for each), each at least three double-spaced pages; you will in the essays offer analysis of films watched and stories read.**

**In general, these efforts require your applying what you learned in the reading assignments and discussions to the films we watch and the literature we discuss.**

### **Revisions:**

**For most written assignments (exceptions include the final essay), you will have an opportunity to revise work and to elevate the grade.**

**Bear in mind, however, that a rewrite does not automatically raise the essay's grade. If the revised essay receives a higher mark than the original, the**

**better grade goes into the book, replacing the earlier effort. A revision never lowers your grade.**

**In general, revisions are due a week after the assignment is returned; however, I will accept revisions until the term's conclusion.**

**Plagiarism:**

**Do your own work. Read the statement on Academic Dishonesty later in this document.**

**Plagiarism comes in a number of forms--from using another person's work to cutting and pasting without source acknowledgment from the internet.**

**Plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment and will if repeated result in failure of the class.**

**If you have questions about plagiarism, see me.**

**Peer Evaluation:**

**I often supply the class with copies of student work on my web page.**

**Midterm and Final Examination:**

**These examination will require your writing about the texts and films seen and discussed over the first four and final four weeks; each examination will come in two sections: short responses and an essay.**

**You will have a choice of topics on which to write for each essay, putting into practice ideas discussed during the term.**

**Due Dates and Late Material:**

**Turn in all work on assigned dates. If you must turn in something after the due date, let me know in advance. Grades for late work will be lowered at the**

**rate of one-half a grade each day. In addition, as a general rule, no make-ups are allowed for missed quizzes.**

**Incomplete Coursework Policy:**

**To designate a student's work in a course as incomplete at the end of a term, the instructor records the incomplete grade (I). Students may receive this grade only when serious illness, hardship, death in the immediate family, or military service during the semester in which they are registered prevents them from completing course requirements. In addition, to receive an incomplete, a student must have completed substantially all of the course's major requirements.**

**Unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise, students must initiate requests**

**for an incomplete by filling out an Incomplete Grade Completion Contract, which requires the signature of the student, instructor, and Dean. The Incomplete Grade Completion contract cites the reason(s) for the incomplete and details the specific obligations the student must meet to change the incomplete to a letter grade. The date by which the student agrees to complete required work must appear in the contract. The Dean, the instructor, and the student receive signed copies of the Incomplete Grade Completion Contract.**

**Even if the student does not attend Peru State College, all**

**incomplete course work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester. Unless the appropriate Dean approves an extension and if the student does not fulfill contract obligations in the allotted time, the incomplete grade automatically becomes an F.**

### **Academic Integrity Policy**

**The College expects all students to conduct themselves in a manner that supports an honest assessment of student learning outcomes and the assignment of grades that appropriately reflect student performance. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to understand and**

**comply with instructions regarding the completion of assignments, exams, and other academic activities. At a minimum, students should assume that at each assessment opportunity they are expected to do their own original academic work and/or clearly acknowledge in an appropriate fashion the intellectual work of others, when such contributions are allowed. Students helping others to circumvent honest assessments of learning outcomes, or who fail to report instances of academic dishonesty, are also subject to the sanctions defined in this policy.**

**Instances of academic dishonesty may be**

**discovered in a variety of ways. Faculty members who assign written work ordinarily check citations for accuracy, run data base and online checks, and/or may simply recognize familiar passages that are not cited. They may observe students in the act of cheating or may become aware of instances of cheating from the statements of others. All persons who observe or otherwise know about instances of cheating are expected to report such instances to the proper instructor or Dean.**

**In order to promote academic integrity, the College subscribes to an electronic service to review papers for the appropriate citations**

**and originality. Key elements of submitted papers are stored electronically in a limited access database and thus become a permanent part of the material to which future submissions are compared. Submission of an application and continued enrollment signifies your permission for this use of your written work.**

**NSCS Board of Trustees Policy 4220 states that each College “ . . . will establish a distance learning assessment policy that will include, at a minimum, a substantial culminating experience that is proctored.” Peru State College’ s policy is that each course that is offered entirely online will**

**feature a proctored final exam that substantially measures the extent the course's stated learning objectives are achieved. Online course syllabi will clearly state that, regardless of grades earned previously, the proctored final exam must be passed in order to receive credit for the course. Courses which feature graded site-based activities (e.g., teaching demonstrations) and/or video-taped presentations that occur near the end of the term, and that are designed to substantially assess the achievement of learning objectives, can be considered in compliance with this policy. Project-based capstone and graduate**

**courses utilizing real-time discussions held by web-cam, phone or in person with the faculty member as part of the assessment process can also be considered in compliance with this policy.**

**Should an occurrence of academic misconduct occur, the faculty member may assign a failing grade for the assignment or a failing grade for the course. Each incident of academic misconduct should be reported to the Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The VPAA may suspend students for two semesters found to be responsible for multiple instances of academic dishonesty. The reason**

**for the suspension will be noted on the student' s transcript.**

**A faculty member need present only basic evidence of academic dishonesty. There is no requirement for proof of intent. Students are responsible for understanding these tenets of academic honesty and integrity. Students may appeal penalties for academic dishonesty using the process established for grades appeals.**

## **Title IX Compliance Notice**

**Peru State College is an equal opportunity institution. PSC does not discriminate against any student, employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion,**

**or age in employment  
and education  
opportunities,  
including but not  
limited to admission  
decisions. The College  
has designated an  
individual to  
coordinate the  
College' s  
nondiscrimination  
efforts to comply with  
regulations  
implementing Title VI,  
VII, IX, and Section  
504. Inquiries  
regarding non-  
discrimination policies  
and practices may be  
directed to Eulanda  
Cade, Director of  
Human Resources,  
Title VI, VII, IX  
Compliance  
Coordinator, Peru  
State College, PO Box  
10, Peru, NE 68421-  
0010, (402) 872-2230.**

**Students requesting  
reasonable**

**accommodation and  
tutoring services  
should contact the  
Center for  
Achievement and  
Transition Services  
(CATS).**

**Tentative Schedule (Subject to Change):**

**For accurate assignments and films  
shown, see [assignments link](#) on the web  
page or simply click at the specific week.**

**Week ONE**

**Reading: Screening Space: (1-25)**

**Anthology--*Alien Encounters*: "A Martian Odyssey"; "The  
Sentinel"; "Out of All Them Bright Stars" ); "Think Like a  
Dinosaur"**

**FILM: [It Came From Outer Space](#) and [The Thing From  
Another World](#) or [The Day the Earth Stood Still](#) ([Farewell to  
the Master](#) by Harry Bates (On line reading but not required.)**

**Week TWO**

**Reading: Screening Space: (26-42) “ Transylvania on Mars:  
Horror and Science Fiction” ; (43-63) “ **The Trouble with  
Creatures and Monsters**” ; “ **Magic, Science, and Religion:  
Towards Synthesis and Definition**”**

**Anthology: *Artificial/Posthuman Life-Forms*: "Rappaccinni's  
Daughter"; "The Golem" ; "Nine Live."**

**Films: [Them](#) (on demand) and [Invasion of the Body Snatchers](#)  
(1959) or [Johnny Mnemonic](#) (on demand)**

**Week THREE**

**Reading: Screening Space: Images of Wonder: The Look of Science Fiction, 64-99.**

**Anthology: *Utopias and Dystopias*: "Repent, Harlequin! Said the Ticktockman" (367); "Everywhere" (717).**

**Films: A Clockwork Orange and Ghost in the Shell or Alphaville**

**Week FOUR**

**Reading: Screening Space: Images of Wonder: The Look of Science Fiction, 100-145.**

**"Last Testament" by Carol Amen (handout)**

**Anthology: *War and Conflict*: "That Only a Mother"; "We See Things Differently"; "Thunder and Roses"**

**Film: "Dr Strangelove: or How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb" and Testament or Starship Troopers**

**Week FIVE:**

**Reading: Screening Space: The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo: The Sounds of Science Fiction, 146-185.**

**Anthology: *Computers and Virtual Reality*: "We Can Remember it for You Wholesale"; "Burning Chrome"; "Computer Friendly"**

**Films: Blade Runner and Solaris or 2001: A Space Odyssey**

**Week SIX:**

**Reading: Screening Space: The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo: The Sounds of Science Fiction, 186-222.**

**Anthology: *Gender and Sexuality*: "When It Changed"; "And I Awoke and Found Me Here"; "Abominable"; "Closer."**

**Film: Stalker I Married a Monster from Outer Space and Alien or The Stepford Wives (1975)**

**Week SEVEN:**

**Reading: Screening Space: Postfuturism: 223-272**

**Anthology: *Time Travel and Alternate History*: "All You Zombies"; "Air Raid"; "Forever Yours, Anna"; "Invaders"**

**Film: [La Jetee \(a short film\)](#) and [Twelve Monkeys](#) or [Planet of the Apes](#) or [Groundhog Day](#)**

**Week EIGHT:**

**Reading: Screening Space: Postfuturism: 273-303**

**Anthology: *Apocalypse and Post-apocalypse*: "There Will Come Soft Rains"; "The Cage of Sand"; "Speech Sounds"; "Chippole Na Gomi"**

**Films: [The Road](#) and [Mad Max](#) or [A Boy and His Dog](#)**

Contact: [Peru State College](#)

This page has been visited 1,134 times since 01/11/2009

---

http://www.hpcnet.org/schoolartsandsciences/language/clemente/spring2009/sf/syllabus Modified: Last  
01/04/2012