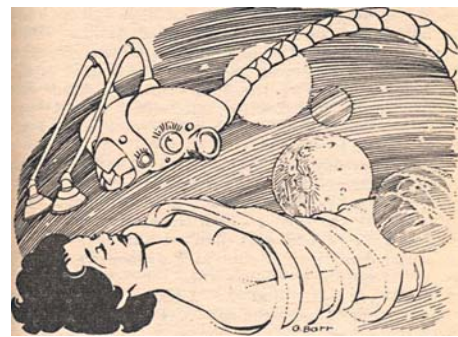




ENGL 257: Science Fiction and Fantasy

- + West Virginia University
- + Department of English
- + Professor Sandy Baldwin
- + charles.baldwin@mail.wvu.edu (primary contact)
- + Class: TR 13:00-14:15
- + Chitwood Hall 102
- + Office: G20 Colson Hall
- + Hours: TR 14:30-15:30 and by appointment



Dorothy: "Toto, I think we're not in Kansas anymore."

This syllabus: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aIYWyXrB_SkKs_EYNVH0p_oc5FfuK6jT_04FS65vtug/edit?hl=en&authkey=CN70rZ0H or <http://tinyurl.com/25v8I7I> or link from Mix

ENGL 257 Course Catalog Description

"A study of the history and nature of science fiction from H. G. Wells to the present, with special attention to those features of prose narration that science fiction shares."



"Everything is becoming science fiction. From the margins of an almost invisible literature has sprung the intact reality of the 20th century. What the writers of modern science fiction invent today, you and I will do tomorrow -- or, more exactly, in about 10 years' time, though the gap is narrowing." J. G. Ballard

Topics

- + Science? Fiction? and what about Fantasy?
- + Literature or not? The Cultural Work of Science Fiction.
- + The Language of Science fiction and Fantasy (“...monopole magnet mining operations in the outer asteroid belt of Delta Cygni ...”)
- + Nostalgia for the Future
- + High Fantasy vs. Swords and Sorcery vs. Horror
- + Fantasy as Political Philosophy
- + Post-Apocalyptic Zombies
- + Techno-Scientific Cyborgs
- + Human-Alien Hybrids



Arthur C. Clarke: “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.”

The Shortest Science Fiction Story: "The last man on earth sat in his room. There was a knock at the door."

Texts

- Max Brooks, *World War Z*, Crown/Random House, 2006, 0307346609
Samuel Delany, *Tales of Nevèrÿon*, Wesleyan, 1993, 081956270X
H. P. Lovecraft, *H. P. Lovecraft: Tales*, Library of America, 2005, 1931082723
Grant Morrison, *We3*, Vertigo, 2005, 1401204953
J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2007, 0618968636
H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Broadview, 2009, 9781551113272

Requirements

Isaac Asimov review. Due via email Feb 1. 20% of overall grade. For this assignment, you will write a short review of a story, book, or other resource in the WVU Libraries Isaac Asimov Collection. WVU's Wise Library holds one of the largest collections of science fiction writer Isaac Asimov's work, with over 800 items, including books, games, stories, movies, etc. Asimov held books and libraries in high esteem. In a speech to the 1989 American Booksellers Association, he asked the audience to imagine a device that "can go anywhere, is totally portable. [...] Something that can be started and stopped at will [and] requires no electric energy to operate." Of course, he was referring to the book! "It will never be surpassed because it represents the minimum technology with the maximum interaction you can have." Your task: 1) use Mountainlynx to find

a work of Asimov. 2) Read it and write a short review (600 words minimum). The work should be at least 10 pages long (so you could choose a short story or a chapter in a larger work, or a complete book, or something else such as a recording or a game). The review should summarize the work, discuss its significance (what makes it interesting?), and ask at least one critical question about the work (what are its limitations?). The review should include the bibliographical information, including the call number. Many of the works are in the Rare Book Room on the 6th floor of the Wise Library. I strongly encourage you to start your search there.

Essay 1 Due via email Mar 17. 20% of overall grade. 750 words minimum. Topic to be announced.

Essay 2 Due via email May 3. 40% of overall grade. 1500 words minimum. Topic to be announced.

20 questions. 20% of overall grade. The class format focuses on discussion rather than lectures. There are 21 classes marked with *. For each of those classes, come prepared with a written question that will be collected at the beginning of the class. It can be handwritten. It must have your name on it. I will select questions to read aloud and stimulate discussion. The question must be a substantive, discussion-provoking question, not simply a question of fact. You can skip one of the 21 days - that's why it is called 20 questions.

Attendance and Participation are compulsory and assumed as part of your grade. Every unexcused absence after the second class (1/13) will reduce your overall grade by $\frac{1}{3}$ (from A to A-, and so on). I will determine what constitutes an excused absence.

Plagiarism Policy

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the Student Conduct Code at <http://www.arc.wvu.edu/rightsc.html>. Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

Social Justice Statement

"West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veterans status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services (293-6700)."



China Miéville: “When you tell a fantasy story you pretend that things that you know to be *impossible* are not only possible but *real*. In that way you create a mental space (a pretended world, or whatever) which redefines (or pretends to redefine) the impossible. That is a psychologically and aesthetically radical thing to do—it allows us a kind of sleight of mind, because redefine the 'impossible' and you're changing the categories within the not-real.”

Schedule

You must read / watch the assigned work before coming to class. Due dates are indicated in yellow.

January 11 Introduction

Jan 13 Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, [“The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction”](#) Optional: look at [Frank R. Paul covers from Science Fiction magazines](#) , [Hugo Gernsback images](#)

Jan 18 Asimov, [“Nightfall”](#) Optional: “The Last Question” (both stories are in a single pdf)

Jan 20 No class. Look at WVU Libraries’ [Asimov resources](#) and go to library for Asimov Review (see Requirements). Begin reading Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*.

Jan 25 *The Island of Doctor Moreau* through Chapter 14. [Island of Doctor Moreau Images](#). Talk about Asimov reviews. *

Jan 27 *The Island of Doctor Moreau* through end. *

February 1 *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. **Asimov Review due via email .**

Feb 3 Morrison, *We3* *

Feb 8 Morrison, *We3* *

Feb 10 Lovecraft, “Cool Air,” “Herbert West – Reanimator.” Trailer for [Reanimator](#) movie *

Feb 15 Brooks, *World War Z*, [WWZ website](#) *

Feb 17 Brooks, *World War Z* *

Feb 22 Brooks, *World War Z* *

Feb 24 Lovecraft, “Call of Cthulhu” and “The Color out of space” [Cthulhu images](#) *

March 1 Lovecraft, “At the Mountains of Madness” *

Mar 3 Lovecraft, “At the Mountains of Madness” *

Mar 8 [Arena](#) (*Star Trek* original series), Butler, [“Bloodchild”](#) *

Mar 10 Campbell, [“Who Goes There?”](#) Bear, [“Blood Music”](#) Optional: Look at [Who Goes There images](#) *

Mar 15 Workshop on Essay 1. Bring printed draft.

Mar 17 *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (DVD at WVU Library) **Essay 1 due via email**

Mar 22 No Class: Spring Break

Mar 24 No Class: Spring Break

Mar 29 Lovecraft, "The Dunwich Horror," "The Shadow over Innsmouth" *

Mar 31 Howard, "[The Tower of the Elephant](#)" (Optional: look at [images](#)), "[The Queen of the Black Coast](#)" (Optional: look at [images](#)), Look at [Conan Movie Trailer](#) *

April 5 Tolkein, *The Hobbit* *

Apr 7 Tolkein, *The Hobbit* *

Apr 12 Tolkein, *The Hobbit* *

Apr 14 Delany, *Tales of Nevèrÿon* *

Apr 19 Delany, *Tales of Nevèrÿon* *

Apr 21 Delany, *Tales of Nevèrÿon* *

Apr 26 *Princess Mononoke* * (DVD at WVU Library)

Apr 28 Workshop on Essay 2. Bring printed draft.

May 3 **Essay 2 due via email**