

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**
<https://ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

2021-2022 C LIT 242, 642-800: Science Fiction
(Fall Term)

Instructor: Dr. Jerry Varsava

Time: 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Mondays

Office: REMOTE

Place: REMOTE

Telephone: none provided by university

Office Hours: 11:00 a.m. to noon, Tuesdays, and by appointment

E-mail: jerry.varsava@ualberta.ca

Course Website: see eClass for C LIT 242

Bachelor of Arts / Major in Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies/undergraduate-program-information/prospective-undergraduate-students>

Course Prerequisite: None

Technology requirements (minimum): internet access

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate technology for the course.

Experiential Learning Component

this course has a significant experiential learning component (15% or more of the course grade)

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes No, not needed

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available

Exam registry – Students' Union

<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>

See explanations below

Document distributed in class

Other (please specify)

NA

Course Description, Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:

An introduction to literary science fiction as an international literary genre, with emphasis on major works and germinal trends. The course will draw from a variety of cultural traditions and geopolitical areas extending from the early nineteenth century to the contemporary era, and will

engage such topics as scientific hubris, class conflict, totalitarianism, genetic cloning, and environmental ruination. At the end of the course, successful students will be able to develop independence analyses of the aforementioned topics through enhanced close-reading and writing skills, and understand their relevance to life in the early twenty-first century.

Course Format:

The objectives of this course will be realized through a combination of assigned readings, lectures, student presentations, class discussions, audiovisual materials, and a research project.

Texts:

Required

Forster, E.M. "The Machine Stops." 1909.

<https://www.ele.uri.edu/faculty/vetter/Other-stuff/The-Machine-Stops.pdf>

Lui, Ken, ed. *Invisible Planets: Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction in Translation*. Selections. Tor, 2018. 9780765384201

McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*. Vintage, 2007. 2006. 9780307387899

Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Selections. Penguin, 2008. 1949. 9780141036144

Rich, Nathaniel. *Odds Against Tomorrow*. Picador, 2014. 2013. 9781250043641

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Dover, 1994. 1818. 9780486282114

Verne, Jules, and Michel Verne. "In the Year 2889." 1889. Gutenberg, 7 Feb. 2018, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19362/19362-h/19362-h.htm>

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Dell, 1991. 1969. 978-0440180296

Wells, H.G. *The Time Machine*. Dover, 1995. 1898. 9780486284729

Background Reading (optional; not ordered for Bookstore)

Bould, Mark, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sherryl Vint. *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*. Routledge, 2011. 9780415453790

Additional Course Fees

Yes No

Important Dates: [See Academic Schedule in current Calendar](#)

First Day of Class: September 1, 2021

Add/Delete Date: September 15, 2021

50% Withdrawal Date: October 4, 2021

Withdrawal Date: November 30, 2021

Last Day of Class: December 7, 2021

Final Exam Date: 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., December 6, in-class, on Zoom

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., Monday, Jan. 24, 2022

Deferred Final Examination: For information on how to apply for a deferred exam see ["I Missed my Final Exam, Now What?"](#)

Components of Course Grade (see “Explanatory Notes”):

In-class presentation:	10% (300-word abstract, 8-10 min. presentation, 10 min. question and answer)
In-class essay:	20% (one hour); written in class, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., on Monday, October 18
Major assignment:	35% major essay (1,800 to 2,000 words), due in eClass, by 1:30 p.m., Monday, Nov. 22
Class participation:	5%
Final examination:	30% (two-hour examination); written in class, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., December 6, 2021

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Your grade will depend, in part, on the compositional quality of your written submissions. Your in-class presentation will entail a 300-word abstract for advance distribution to the class through Google Docs, an 8-10 min. presentation, and a follow-up 10 min. question and answer session. The major assignment must be submitted electronically in eClass. The formatting of the essay should be in MLA style. MLA style and formatting guide can be found at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>. Instructions for the in-class presentation, the in-class essay, and the major assignment will be provided in class.

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness, domestic affliction, or other extenuating circumstances, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the [Code of Student Behaviour](#).

In this course, 5% of the total course grade will be assigned for in-class participation.

Policy for Late Assignments:

A late penalty of 5% per calendar day late will be imposed on tardy written submissions. The condition of being “busy” is not a valid excuse for tardiness. (Tardy written submissions will be graded, with the application of the appropriate late penalty, but they will not receive commentary.) Effective time management is an important element of successful university-level studies. Given scheduling constraints, in-class presentations cannot be re-scheduled.

Required Notes:

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of

the University Calendar.

Student Responsibilities:

Academic Integrity:

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the [Code of Student Behaviour](#) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars, student presentations, or any other teaching environment by students is not allowed. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Disclaimer:

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Student Resources:

The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

[The Academic Success Centre](#) provides professional academic support to help students maximize their academic success and achieve their academic goals. We offer appointments, advising, group workshops, online courses, and specialized programming year-round to students in all university programs, and at all levels of achievement and study.

They also administer the University of Alberta's [Duty to Accommodate procedure](#) for students and works with students, instructors, campus units, Faculties and departments, community and government agencies, and on and off-campus service providers to coordinate students' disability-related accommodation needs for participation in university programs.

For general information and to register for services visit the [Academic Accommodations](#) webpage.

[The Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

[The First Peoples' House](#) provides an environment of empowerment for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners to achieve personal and academic growth.

[Health and Wellness Support for Students](#) outlines available mental and physical health resources that are offered on-campus and in the community.

[The Office of the Student Ombuds](#) is a confidential service that strives to ensure that university processes related to students operate as fairly as possible. We offer information, advice, and support to students, faculty, and staff as they deal with academic, discipline, interpersonal, and financial issues related to student programs.

Learning and working environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment.

It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct. Resources and more information can be found at <https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-life/sexual-violence>

The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) section of the University Calendar.

Grading:

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
<p>Excellent. A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.</p>	A+	4.0	95-100
	A	4.0	90-94
	A-	3.7	86-89
<p>Good. B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.</p>	B+	3.3	82-85
	B	3.0	75-81
	B-	2.7	70-74
<p>Satisfactory. C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.</p>	C+	2.3	66-69
	C	2.0	61-65
	C-	1.7	58-60
<p>Poor/Minimal Pass. D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.</p>	D+	1.3	55-57
	D	1.0	50-54
<p>Failure.</p>	F	0.0	0-49

Representative Evaluative Course Material

The final examination will be of two-hour duration and will be a formal sit-down exercise. It will require the writing of two essays that respond to questions such as those below. The essays must be articulate and well-organized; they must make specific references to the literary work(s). There will be limited choice of essay questions; that is, for example, you will be directed to write on two of four essay topics, or two of three, as the case may be, depending on the generality of the questions themselves. Your grade will depend, in part, on the compositional quality of your essays. The final examination

will cover the material of the entire course. Please consult me if you are unclear about the requirements of the final examination.

1. Compare and contrast the discussion of technology in novels A and B.
2. In what ways are style and narrative structure used to present the main themes in novel C?
3. Discuss the significance of the following passage for novel D as a whole.
4. In what ways do novels F and G demonstrate a developmental trend in the history of science fiction as a literary genre?
5. Discuss the thematic relevance of the following quote for short story A.

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