

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

2019-2020 MLCS 299, B2: Fictional Languages in Science Fiction and Fantasy Worlds
(Winter Term)

Instructor: Richard Feddersen

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Personal Website: N/A

Time: T R 9:30-10:50

Place: BUS 3 10

Office Hours: T R 11-12,
or by appointment

Course Website: N/A

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: No prerequisites

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

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

Yes No, not needed

Community Service Learning component

Required Optional None

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:

Welcome! From Klingon to Dothraki – we will look at fictional languages in works of science fiction and fantasy (SFF), how they are used and how their societies shape them. This course will equip you with tools to understand the role of fictional languages in fictional societies and give you the option to engage in worldbuilding yourself.

Questions we will ask ourselves may include:

- Do all Klingons speak Klingon? – Why do different groups speak different languages?

- How do you swear in Elvish, and why does the Firefly crew use Mandarin swearwords?
- What happens if someone encounters an alien race for the first time – how do you communicate? Would universal translators be helpful or not?

No knowledge of fictional language(s) is necessary. However, I am happy to accommodate your interests in fictional languages, and welcome suggestions for fictional languages and languages in fiction to discuss in class.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- use concepts to evaluate fictional languages and language settings in regard to their plausibility and coherence.
- use their knowledge of natural languages to justify choices in the creation of fictional languages and language settings

Course Format: The objectives of this course will be learned from in-class work such as lectures, group work, etc., assigned readings, audiovisual material, and engagement in eClass tasks.

Texts:

All texts will be available through eClass or the library.

Additional Course Fees

Yes No

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

First Day of Class: January 6, 2020

Add/Delete Date: January 17, 2020

50% Withdrawal Date: February 5, 2020

Winter Term Reading Week: February 18-21, 2020

Withdrawal Date: April 1, 2020

Last Day of Class: April 8, 2020

Final Exam Date (if applicable): N/A

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): Please consult the following site:

[https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations_\(Exams\)](https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations_(Exams))

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

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

Participation and Attendance	10%
eClass Assignments	20%
Quizzes	20%
Final Project: In-Class Presentation	20% (April 2 + April 7, 2020)
Final Project: Term Paper	30% (April 14, 2020)

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Participation and Attendance (10%):

Both participation and regular, punctual attendance are important to complete this course successfully. Your preparation for each lesson, attention, participation in class discussions and group work will be considered in your evaluation.

eClass Assignments (20%):

There will be three short written assignments on eClass, in the form of reflections, responses to readings, and online discussions, in which you will be asked to demonstrate your understanding of the material covered during the week. The assignments will be marked based on how well you apply knowledge of the course material to the task.

Quizzes (20%)

There will be three short quizzes, testing your knowledge and understanding of basic terms and concepts covered in class, for example by asking for definitions and short answers to questions, as well as your ability to apply this knowledge to fictional languages and language in fiction, for example by presenting you with a hypothetical situation and asking you evaluate it.

Final Project:

For the final project, you will have the choice between a creative project and an in-depth critique of existing fictional work.

For a creative project, you may come up with your own world or specific language community, then explain and justify the role that language plays in your world or setting. The premise may differ from possible or current settings and dynamics of human languages, e.g. language use on an ark-like spaceship or among a community of beings that communicate in colour.

For a critique of an existing fictional work, you will be expected to analyze the language use or language setting considering concepts learned in class as they apply to the work you are looking at.

- In-Class Presentation (25%)

In the last two weeks of classes (April 2 + 7, 2020), you will present your project in a poster session. Your poster should be 48"x36". It should be clear, informative, concise, and interesting. It does not have to follow layout guidelines for academic research posters.

The purpose of this session is to give and receive feedback on your idea. At this stage, your topic should be finalized, and you should have finished the first drafts of your

analysis or creation which you present during this poster session (it is not necessary to hand in term paper drafts at this point). However, it is expected that details may change after receiving feedback from students and the instructor.

- Term Paper (25%)

Based on the feedback you have received, you will write a term paper (approx. 8 pages excluding title page and references, double-spaced, citation format APA) on either your creative work or analysis of existing fictional work. The final paper is due on Thursday, April 23, 2020, at 4pm, and to be delivered to your instructor's office (239-C, Old Arts).

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](#).

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

Sexual Violence Policy:

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>

Territorial Statement:

“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.” (*from the beginning of the Calendar*).

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. 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).

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 or domestic affliction, 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, participation and attendance count for 10% of your overall grade. Repeated absences from class will result in a lower mark.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Assignments are due on the days listed above and on eClass. Students are responsible for being aware of the deadlines and handing in assignments on time. Students who are for any reason not able to meet a deadline and consult with the instructor in advance may be granted an extension at the discretion of the instructor. In case of emergencies, students are responsible for notifying the instructor within two days of the deadline, and

may be granted an extension at the discretion of the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to not accept late assignments.

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>.

Accessibility Resources: (1 – 80 SUB)

The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the [Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

The Academic Success Centre: (1-80 SUB)

[The Academic Success Centre](#) offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.

The Centre for Writers: (1-42 Assiniboia Hall)

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.

Health and Wellness Support: There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit the [Health and Wellness Support](#) webpage.

Office of the Student Ombuds:

The [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) offers confidential interviews, advice and support to students facing academic, discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties.

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	%
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.	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
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.	B+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
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.	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
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.	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
Failure.	F	0.0	0-59

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