

ENGL 2303-006

Science Fiction after Empire

Instructor: Dr. Paul Lee

Office Number: Carlisle Hall 518

Email Address: paullee@uta.edu

Office Hours: MWF 12:00-1:00pm

Time and Place of Class Meetings: TR 2:00-3:20, TH 302

Description of Course Content: The main focus of this class will be on science fiction. However, throughout the semester we will be looking at how science fiction was born due to European empire-building, and how colonialism and post-colonialism continued to shape science fiction in the West and make it what it is today. In addition, later in the semester we will compare Western science fiction to a few examples of non-Western flavors of the genre and determine how it “speaks back” to Western versions in political and social ways. Before considering any of these examples, however, we will begin the semester with a brief overview of postcolonial theory which will be a tool that we can use to more effectively analyze each individual text and determine how the texts fit together a whole and respond to one another. Our goal will be to explore the things that led to modern science fiction, but to also understand the genre more deeply by exploring the theories that help to explain both science fiction and the social and cultural implications of colonialism and its aftermath.

Course Purpose Statement: This course satisfies the University of Texas at Arlington core curriculum requirement in Language, Philosophy, and Culture. This requirement’s objectives are critical thinking, communication, personal responsibility, and social responsibility.

Core Objectives:

1. Critical thinking skills: creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
2. Communication Skills: effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication.
3. Personal Responsibility: ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making
4. Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will acquire, practice, and demonstrate the critical thinking skills of creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.
2. Students will acquire, practice, and demonstrate the communication skills of effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas in written, oral and visual communication.
3. Students will acquire, practice, and demonstrate personal responsibility in their ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.
4. Students will acquire, practice, and demonstrate social responsibility in their intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Required books and other course materials:

- *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction.* John Rieder ISBN: 9780819568748
- *The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction.* Istvan Csicsery Ronay. ISBN: 9780819568892
- *The War of the Worlds.* H.G. Wells. (any copy will do)

- *So Long Been Dreaming*. Nalo Hopkinson and Uppinder Mehan. ISBN: 978-1551521589
- Plus materials available online or through Blackboard

Readings:

Complete the entire reading selection by the discussion date. Since several of the books we'll be studying are fairly long, I advise you to read ahead. I also suggest that you take text notes to help you keep track of plot, characters, image patterns, and the like. This not only helps in exam preparation; it makes you an active rather than a passive reader.

Responses:

To make sure that you understand the readings, you will write fifteen (15) short responses over the course of the semester. Each response should be one page in length (typed, double-spaced, following all criteria for papers), and should be your response to some element of the reading. You do not need to respond to every single reading during the semester, but you **DO** need to choose fifteen separate readings (you can't do more than one response to the same novel, for instance). These responses give you a space to explore your reaction(s) to the reading, discuss an element/theme you find intriguing, or ask questions about the text and/or its historical context. These will help you prepare for class discussions and generate ideas for your essays. Be ready to discuss your responses and ideas during class. I want you to share your knowledge and questions with the class.

It is your responsibility to keep track of how many responses you have turned in. You do not need to turn in a response every day we have assigned reading in order to accumulate 15 responses, **but you may not turn in more than one response per day**. In other words, you will need to write a response most days we have reading (though not quite every day) and will **not** be allowed to let this slide and then turn in a "wad" of responses at the end of the semester. Furthermore, you must be in class to turn in a response, as I **will not** accept late or emailed responses, **(a response for a particular reading must be turned in within a week of that reading)**. Their purpose is not simply to get you thinking about the readings but also to provide a starting point for class discussion. Thus, if you do not have your response written when you come to class, it is much less useful.

These responses will be graded simply. Your grade will not be based on grammar, mechanics, spelling, etc. (unless grammatical or other problems interfere with my understanding of your ideas), nor will it be based on whether or not I agree with your ideas about or interpretation of the text/film/etc. **Your grade will be solely based on whether or not you respond thoughtfully and engage with the text, raising intelligent questions (not limited to plot), making interesting connections, and generally responding in productive ways.** If you have done these things then your response will receive a completion grade.

Exams:

There will be two exams during the semester. The first (the midterm) will cover only the first half of the course and the other is a final exam, which may include questions about the second half of the course and will certainly include some more comprehensive questions addressing issues of the class as a whole and asking you to make connections across the different sections of the class. For these exams you will be responsible for the texts, class discussions, any lectures I give, and information from student presentations.

Essays:

You will write two focused essays. The first will be a minimum of three pages in length, and the second (the Signature Assignment) should be 4-5 pages in length and is discussed below.

Signature Assignment:

The signature assignment addresses all four of the course objectives. Personal responsibility: This essay includes the integration of outside sources; it, therefore, requires students to demonstrate personal responsibility as they use the words and ideas of other writers in an accurate and ethical manner. Citing sources properly isn't just a matter of mechanics. It's a question of personal responsibility (with real consequences for students) that overlaps with students' responsibility to the academic community of

which they are a part. The construction of a clearly articulated thesis statement supported by a careful analysis of textual evidence demonstrates critical thinking and communication skills. The development of a well-organized essay that demonstrates the correct use of grammar and other writing mechanics and demonstrates an awareness of the how to appeal convincingly to an audience further addresses the communication objective. The critical analysis of the way the selected text engages a significant issue of social responsibility addresses the social responsibility outcome.

Specific Requirements:

Write a well-organized, effectively developed, **5-page analysis of at least one of the course texts**. The paper should critically analyze the way **the text engages a significant issue of social responsibility**. Students should anchor the paper's argument with a clearly articulated thesis statement and use careful analysis of textual evidence to support their claims. Papers must be formatted according to MLA guidelines and should include a Works Cited page.

Possible Areas of Focus:

Race; class and/or economic oppression; war; cultural difference and/or cultural discrimination; national identity controversies; sexual orientation; disability; globalization; the way the work of literature itself is a rhetorical attempt to engage effectively in significant regional, national, or global issues.

Responsible Integration of Sources:

Students must **properly integrate material from two secondary sources** into their analysis in a way that gives credit to the authors whose ideas and language they are incorporating. This is not a research paper or a summary of the work of literature, but a paper in which you draw on secondary sources to communicate an interpretive argument about your chosen text through the lens of social responsibility.

Here is a list of credible sources:

- National newspapers (e.g., New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today, Dallas Morning News, Fort Worth Star Telegram)
- Print magazines (e.g., The Atlantic, Harper's, New Yorker, Time, Newsweek)
- Online magazines (e.g., Slate, Salon)
- Scholarly articles (e.g., academic articles published in peer-reviewed journals; you can find citations for these articles by using the MLA International Bibliography database, JSTOR, or Project Muse—all which UTA's library gives you access to online)
- Scholarly books or book chapters (it's a good bet a book is scholarly if it's published by an academic press, such as Duke University Press; if you're not sure, ask your instructor)
- Historical documents (e.g., old newspaper articles, letters, speeches, journal entries) from academic databases (see the History subject guide on the library website for ideas)

Grading:

The course grade will be determined as follows:

Responses	10%
Quizzes	10%
Essay #1	20%
Essay #2	20%
Midterm	20%
Final exam	20%

Please Note: **All papers and exams** must be completed to receive credit for the course.

In accordance with the UTA undergraduate catalogue, final grades are as follows:

90-100%:	A
80-89%:	B
70-79%:	C
60-69%:	D

Below 60%:

F (I do NOT round up AT ALL to the next letter grade)

Participation/Attendance:

This is a discussion course, not a lecture, so all students are required to actively participate in class discussion. I expect you to be prepared for **every** class period. This means not only that you've read the required reading but that you have thought about it and have ideas that you want to discuss.

Obviously, if you are not in class, you cannot participate in the discussion. I do not check roll, but keep in mind that according to research, the more that you miss these discussions the lower that your grade will most likely be since you are missing important information on the texts, as well as announcements, and so forth, and not to mention occasional quizzes (quizzes CANNOT be made up if you are absent). And since you are college students, I should not have to remind you to show up for class on time. Therefore, excessive tardiness will not be tolerated.

Syllabus and Schedule Changes:

I have tried to make this document as complete as possible. However, during the course of the semester I may be required to alter, add, or abandon certain policies/assignments. I reserve the right to make such changes as they become necessary. You will be informed of any changes in writing.

Additional Info:

Please keep all of your returned papers until you have received your final grade from the University. Also, please note, I will not accept **late exams nor do I give make-up quizzes**. You may **not** email papers/responses to me (they MUST be turned in via Blackboard); you will not receive credit for the assignment. Also, a letter grade will be deducted for each day that the papers are late; after three days they will not be accepted at all.

Drop Policy:

UTA instructors may not drop students for any reason. According to the drop policy, students who are dropping an English class may no longer go to the English department to do so (unless they are English majors). Instead, students must first bring their instructors a form that they will sign indicating that they have discussed the reason(s) for dropping. The students then take this form to their major advisors. Students who are undeclared must go to the University Advising Center.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:

It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

"Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusions, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts." (Regent' Rules and Regulations, part One, Chapter VI, Section 2, Subsection 3.2 Subdivision 3.22).

Papers submitted to this class must be the student's original work composed during the semester for this specific course. If a student uses passages from a paper that he or she has prepared for a previous class, then those passages must be quoted, cited, and documented in MLA style.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation: reference Public Law 93112—"The Rehabilitation Act of 1973" as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. As a faculty member, I am required to provide "reasonable accommodation" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty at the beginning of the semester and in

providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. If you require reasonable accommodations because of a physical, mental, or learning disability, please notify me as soon as possible to arrange for these accommodations.

Behavior:

Offensive behavior is unacceptable in any academic environment, and students are expected to maintain an acceptable level of professional decorum at all times. This means sexual harassment, civil rights violations, or public rudeness will not be tolerated. Students are also expected to support the learning purposes of this classroom by listening attentively to whoever is speaking, providing helpful and respectful feedback, and devoting time to speaking and writing on topics and issues that promote collective learning goals.

Library:

I highly recommend using the library for your research needs. You will find online databases for English among the Arts & Humanities databases at <http://www2.uta.edu/library/subguides/dbEnglish.asp>.

Student Support:

The Writing Center is located on the 4th floor of the central library. This is a service you have already paid for, so please take advantage of this opportunity. They operate on a walk-in basis. (817) 272 – 2601 <http://www.uta.edu/owl/>.

Class Schedule

BB = Readings found on Blackboard

Aug 23 Introduction to the class; syllabus

Postcolonialism and Science Fiction Overview and Theory

Aug 28	In-class discussion/writing; Read Lee Chapter 1
Aug 30	Reflections; Read Lee Chapter 2
Sept 4	Read Lee Chapter 3
Sept 6	Read “How Does the Subaltern Speak?” (on BB)
Sept 11	Read Introduction to <i>Orientalism</i> (on BB)
Sept 13	Read Chapters 1 and 2 of <i>Seven Beauties</i>
Sept 18	Read Chapters 3 and 4 of <i>Seven Beauties</i>
Sept 20	Read Chapters 5 and 6 of <i>Seven Beauties</i>
Sept 25	Read Chapter 7 of <i>Seven Beauties</i>
Sept 27	Read Chapters 1 and 2 of <i>Colonialism and the Emergence...</i>
Oct 2	Read Chapter 3 and 4 of <i>Colonialism and the Emergence...</i>
Oct 4	Read Chapter 5 of <i>Colonialism and the Emergence...</i>
Oct 9	Review for Midterm
Oct 11	Midterm Exam

Early Science Fiction from the West

Oct 16	Read <i>The Great Romance</i>
Oct 18	Read <i>A Voyage to the Moon</i>

20th Century Western Science Fiction

Oct 23	Read the first half of <i>War of the Worlds</i>
Oct 25	Read the second half of <i>War of the Worlds</i>
Oct 30	Read Arthur C. Clarke (readings TBD)
Nov 1	Read Arthur C. Clarke (readings TBD)
Nov 6	Read the first half of <i>Foundation</i>
Nov 8	Read the second half of <i>Foundation</i>

Science Fiction from the (former) Colonies

Nov 13	Read first half of <i>So Long Been Dreaming</i>
Nov 15	Read second half of <i>So Long Been Dreaming</i>
Nov 20	No Class—Optional Conferences
Nov 22	Thanksgiving Holiday
Nov 27	Film TBD
Nov 29	Film TBD
Dec 4	Essay #2 Due ; Review for Final Exam; course evaluations
Dec 6	Final Exam