COURSE SYLLABUS

School/College: JOHN HAZEN WHITE SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES
Department Name: HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT
Term: Spring, 2015
Course Title: Science Fiction
Course Number: LIT 4010
Quarter Credit Hours: 4.5
Contact Hours: 45
Prerequisite(s): ENG 1021 or ENG 1921

Professor Name: Kenneth L. Schneyer
Office Location: Taco 322
Office Phone: 598-2570
Office Fax: 598-1821 (Do not communicate with me by fax.)
E-mail Address: kschneyer@jwu.edu (this is the method I prefer).
LibGuide Location: jwu-ri.libguides.com/lit4010_schneyer

Important note concerning ULearn: To save time and paper, documents needed for class will be posted on ULearn rather than being distributed in class. You will need to have these documents for in-class discussions and exercises and it is your responsibility to obtain them from ULearn.

Office Hours: Mondays, 1:45 - 2:45 p.m.
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
and also by appointment.

Course Description:

This course presents an analysis of the evolution of science fiction from its early origins to the present. Fantastic and futuristic elements of plot will be examined as social commentary. Students will be exposed to a variety of form styles in several genres, including traditional science fiction, fantasy, horror, and cyberpunk. This course fulfills part of the literature concentration.

Course Objectives:

Through discussion, written assignments, and exams, the student should be able to:
1. Recognize and define the various forms and subgenres (space opera, cyberpunk, heroic fantasy) of science fiction and explain what makes science fiction a unique form of literature.
2. Recognize the works of some of the leading science fiction authors and be able to describe their contributions to the genre.
3. Define and employ literary terms and elements associated with each genre in order to analyze a variety of works.
4. Trace and explain the history and development of science fiction, and its major themes.
5. Respond personally and critically to assigned readings according to course requisites.
6. Discuss ethical dilemmas posed by science fiction in its exploration of science and its role in society.

Content Outline & Schedule:
(All page numbers refer to the Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction, except where otherwise noted)

I. Starting off.
   a. March 10:
      i. Introductions.
      ii. What is science fiction?
   b. March 12:
      i. Elements of fiction.
      ii. Different critical approaches.

II. Warning: This is your wake-up call.
   a. March 17: Kaboom!
      i. Judith Merrill, "That Only a Mother" (1948), pp. 212-220.
   b. March 19: You think things are bad now…
   c. Optional workshop on the writing of comparison papers: Thursday, March 19, 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., in White 307 (not our usual classroom).

III. Is this a funhouse mirror, or just a mirror?
      i. Joanna Russ, "When It Changed" (1972), pp. 508-515.
   b. First Comparison Paper due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, March 25.
   c. March 26: We have met the alien, and he is us.
   d. March 31: Special event: lecture by Alice Sebold, Schneider Auditorium
e. April 2: Humans through a microscope.

f. April 7: First two-part examination.
   i. Part One: Identification (closed book, closed note)
   ii. Part Two: Essay (open book, closed note)


g. April 9: Guest speaker: Matthew Kressel.

IV. Who are we?

a. April 14: Is your intelligence artificial, or the other kind?

b. April 16: What have you done to me?
   i. Charles Stross, "Rogue Farm" (2003), pp.728-741.

c. Second Comparison Paper due by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, April 20.

d. April 21: Who will we be tomorrow?

e. April 23:

f. April 28: Second two-part examination.
   i. Part One: Identification (closed book, closed note)
   ii. Part Two: Essay (open book, closed note)

V. Are we limitless?

a. April 30: Time travel means knowing too much.

b. May 5: What did you do after the end of the world?

c. Third Comparison Paper due by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6.

VI. Post-term:

   a. May 14: Reading Day
   
   b. May 19: **Two-part final examination**

Additional Special Events:

**On Tuesday, March 24, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.,** there will be a **Law and Technology Forum** in Schneider Auditorium. Students can earn extra credit in this course for attending the forum and writing a brief report (details to follow).

**On Wednesday, April 22, 11:35 a.m. to 1:25 p.m.,** tissue engineer and entrepreneur Nina Tandon will speak in Pepsi Forum. Students can earn extra credit in this course for attending the lecture and writing a brief report (details to follow).

**Required Text(s)/Software to be purchased by students:**


A document called **Extra Readings**, which can be found on ULearn, contains two additional stories that are required for the course. I have obtained permission of the authors to provide you with copies of the stories. Please print out the document and bring it to class on the appropriate days.

**Additional Reading:**

There are several volumes of short stories on reserve at the University Library. You will need stories from those anthologies in order to write your papers for this course.

The film *Gattaca* is also on reserve at the University Library. You will need to see it before we discuss it in class.

**Evaluative Criteria:**

Your course grade comes from several different factors:

- **Three in-class examinations (including a Final Exam):** Each of these examinations will have two parts:
Part One (closed book): In this part of the examination, you will be given a series of quotations from stories we have read and discussed in class. You will be asked to identify (a) the story from which the quotation came, (b) the author of the story, and (c) the reason the quotation is important to the story.

Part Two (open book, closed notebook): In this part of the examination, you will be posed one or more analysis questions based on the stories we have read and discussed in class. A thorough understanding of the stories, and serious attention to and participation in class discussion, will be essential.

- Three comparison papers, 800-1,500 words each. In these papers, you will read a new story from the readings on reserve, and compare and contrast it to a pair of stories we read in class. In your papers you will employ the elements of fiction (plot, character, language, rhetoric, theme, etc.) to support an argument about what makes the new story significant and important. If the student receives a grade of C or below (score of 79 or below) on the first or second comparison paper, then the student may rewrite the paper according to the instructor's comments in order to receive a higher grade.

- Daily preparation quizzes. At the beginning of each class session, you will take a short (4-5 question) multiple-choice quiz on major facts in one or both of the stories read for that day. Please make sure that you bring a #2 pencil to class each day. Students arriving late will not be permitted to submit these daily preparation quizzes, and will receive a score of 0. Since there will be 15-20 of these quizzes in total, I will drop the lowest two scores. There are no make-up tests for the daily preparation quizzes.

- Class participation. Because this is a discussion-based class, class participation is essential. A student may earn class participation credit by asking meaningful questions or making significant comments during class discussion. During a single meeting of a day class, a student can earn class participation credit up to six (6) times. Your class participation score for the term is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of questions/comments during term</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49+</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 - 48</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 - 42</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 - 36</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 - 30</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>29 - 24</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>13 - 18</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 - 12</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 - 6</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The default weight given to each of these different grading factors is as follows:
Factor | Weight  
---|---  
First in-class examination | 12%  
Second in-class examination | 12%  
Final examination | 12%  
First comparison paper | 14%  
Second comparison paper | 14%  
Third comparison paper | 14%  
Average of daily preparation quizzes | 8%  
Class participation | 14%  
**Total** | **100%**  

However, if the student wishes, s/he may submit an **Alternative Grading Contract** to the instructor on or before March 19. In the Alternative Grading Contract, the student can choose his or her own weights for the different items on the Syllabus, subject to the following restrictions:

| Factor | Weight  
---|---  
First in-class examination | Between 5% and 25%  
Second in-class examination | Between 5% and 25%  
Final examination | Between 5% and 25%  
First comparison paper | Between 5% and 25%  
Second comparison paper | Between 5% and 25%  
Third comparison paper | Between 5% and 25%  
Average of daily preparation quizzes | Between 5% and 15%  
Class participation | Between 10% and 20%  
**Total** | **100%**  

There is a form for the Alternative Grading Contract on the Public Folder. Note: Once the Alternative Grading Contract has been submitted, it is **fixed** and may not be changed.

**Extra Credit Opportunities:**

As noted above, there are two special events scheduled during the term that are not part of the class. If you attend one of these events and write a report based on it (details to follow), I will award up to **2 points** of extra credit on your overall average for each of these reports.

This class is attending the Alice Sebold lecture on March 13 (see above). If they so desire, students can earn up to 2 points of extra credit on their overall average by writing a brief report (details to follow).

**Attendance Policy:**

For University policy on this subject, see the following link, using the key search words "attendance" and tardiness" in the catalog, and "attendance" in the student handbook:  Providence Campus: Catalogs and Student Handbook
Because this is a discussion-based class, any student's nonattendance directly impacts the quality of the discussion and the ability of other students to get full value from the course. Please attend every session if humanly possible.

As mentioned above, students who arrive late, or are absent, will not be permitted to submit Daily Preparation Quizzes. Also, obviously students who are not in class will be unable to earn class participation points.

Further, the exams and papers will all rely heavily on our class discussions. Consequently, a student who misses more than a few classes is unlikely to pass those exams. By way of illustration, here is an accurate representation of average test scores achieved by my students who had different numbers of absences:

![Graph showing the effect of absences on exam scores]

At all times, it is the responsibility of the student to make sure that the instructor knows of the student's presence in class.

- If attendance is being taken by roll-call, then you are absent unless you make sure the instructor hears your response when he calls your name.
- If attendance is being taken by log sheet, then you are absent unless you initial your own name on the list on the appropriate day. (Signing a student’s name other than your own be treated a fraud and basis for withdrawal and other disciplinary action.)

Although I don't like late arrivals, I would rather have you arrive late than miss the class altogether. If you do arrive late, please enter in such a way as to minimize the disruption that your late entry will cause.

Make-up exams for students who were absent on the day of an examination will be given only when the absence was due to illness, emergency or employment obligation. I do not need notes from other people to explain the reason for an absence, but I will require you, at the time of the make-up exam, to sign a document explaining the reason for the absence. Make-up exams will not employ the same questions that are in the regular exams. There will be no more than one make-up exam available to any student, regardless of reason.
**Outcomes Assessment:**

For University policy on this subject, see the following link, using the key search words "outcomes assessment": Providence Campus: Catalogs and Student Handbook

**Students with Disabilities:**

For University policy on this subject, see the following link, using the key search words "Center for Academic Support": Providence Campus: Catalogs and Student Handbook

I *strongly advise* students in this class to take advantage of all accommodations to which they are entitled, following the procedure above. **Permission is hereby granted** for any student who wishes to tape record lectures; however, all such tapes must be erased before the end of the term, and must not be shared with anyone outside of this class.

**Turnitin Notification:**

Students agree that by taking this course, required assignments may be subject to submission to Turnitin (via ULearn) for detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

For University policy on this subject, see the following link, using the key search word "plagiarism" in the student handbook: Providence Campus: Catalogs and Student Handbook

**Academic Integrity:**

If a student is found responsible for cheating, plagiarizing or in any way compromising academic integrity, the student may be subject to both academic disciplinary action (including dismissal from class) and student conduct review action (up to and including dismissal from the university). For additional information refer to the *Academic Misconduct* section of the current student handbook.

For University policy on this subject, see the following link, using the key search word "Academic Misconduct" in the student handbook: Providence Campus: Catalogs and Student Handbook

**Student Email:**  Welcome to jwuLink! Email Account

Each student at Johnson & Wales receives an email account and uses Microsoft Outlook Web Access, a Web-based e-mail program that allows students to access their e-mail through their web browsers. **Students are required to use their Johnson & Wales email account for all university-specific communication.**

**Occupancy in Class:**

Occupancy in class is limited to faculty, officially registered students, aides authorized by the Center for Academic Support, and invited guests approved by the vice president of academic affairs or the dean of
the respective school, college or campus. No grade will be issued to any non-registered student in any course.

For University policy on this subject, see the following link, using the key search word "occupancy in class" in the student handbook: Providence Campus: Catalogs and Student Handbook

**Food & Beverages in Class:**

In academic buildings, food and beverage consumption is limited to designated eating areas only. Under no circumstances are food and beverages to be consumed in classrooms.

Prof. Schneyer allows water bottles in his classes, but otherwise the above rule will be enforced strictly.

**Mobile Phones and Communication Devices in Class:**

Communication devices such as mobile telephones must be silenced (set to vibrate) during class time. For safety purposes, including emergency communication, devices such as mobile telephones may be left on during class time but disruptions to class due to communication devices will not be tolerated. Mobile communication devices should not be used during class time unless for emergency purposes.

For University policy on this subject, see the following link, using the key search word "dress and manners" in the student handbook: Providence Campus: Catalogs and Student Handbook

Students engaged in "texting" or similar activities during this class will be dismissed for the day; they will be treated as absent for that day. Students are permitted to use laptop computers in this class for note taking purposes only: e-mail, instant messaging, chatting or any other electronic communication in class will be treated as "texting," above.

**Unit of Credit:**

For University policy on this subject, see the following link, using the key search word "unit of credit" in the catalog: Providence Campus: Catalogs and Student Handbook

**System of Record for Academic Grades:**

Note that official academic grades can be accessed via jwuLink. Grades maintained in the ulearn course management system are for tracking purposes only and may not reflect all of the criteria considered when calculating a student’s final grade.

**Additional Policies & Procedures:**

**On the taking of class notes:**

Examinations in this class rely heavily on your understanding of material covered in class discussions. This requires that you take thorough notes. The things I write on the board are not "thorough notes;" they are sketchy and rarely cover the important details; further, much of the important things you learn will come from your fellow students. You must take detailed notes of your own if you are to succeed.
If you have trouble taking notes because the class goes too fast for you, then I urge you to bring a tape recorder to class, tape the lectures and discussions, and play them back at your leisure in order to ensure that you understand everything (see the note under Special Needs, above). Also you can visit me during my office hours to help you clarify specific points that you have not understood.

**Philosophy of Teaching:**

Regardless of what the formal Evaluation Form may say, and regardless of what you may have heard elsewhere, the following eleven questions summarize what I think you ought to ask yourself about a college instructor. These are the standards I shall try to meet.

1. Does the instructor make students think?
2. Does the instructor challenge students' assumptions?
3. Does the instructor make students see the complexity of issues?
4. Does the instructor appear to be committed to the truth?
5. Does the instructor inspire students to use their imaginations?
6. Does the instructor make students express themselves orally?
7. Does the instructor make students express themselves in writing?
8. Does the instructor encourage student teamwork?
9. Does the instructor encourage students to respect *each other*?
10. Does the instructor help students develop as moral, ethical, thinking beings?
11. Does the instructor make students perform at their maximum capacity, and accomplish things of which they did not know they were capable?