Description
Science fiction has become more than just a genre of fiction or film. Instead, it’s now a rich collection of stories, symbols, ideas, images, and practices that help us think about how technology shapes our everyday lives. We use these imaginative tools to create alternative worlds, to redefine what it means to be human, to place ourselves in deep time or space, and to imagine bleak futures as well as hopeful utopias. Although often oriented toward the future, the past, or alien worlds, these works are actually about the environmental, ethical, technological, racial, and cultural challenges we face here and now. In this seminar, we will both survey contemporary science fiction and experiment with its creative tools, narratives, and communities. This will be different than some other English classes you’ve taken since you’ll be asked to do creative as well as critical assignments. You’ll also go into both real and digital communities to explore how people bring science fiction into their lives; and you’ll even be asked to learn about today’s cutting-edge technology in order to create a speculative near-future of your own. Our work will range across literature, film, television, comics, and music, as well as labs, bookstores, gaming conventions, and movie theatres.
Learning Objectives
Program Learning Objectives for BA in English:
Students will
1. Gain and demonstrate knowledge of an historically varied range of Anglophone literary texts by reading them and writing about them;
2. Gain and exercise skills necessary to write and present effectively in styles appropriate to the discipline;
3. Analyze, interpret, and contextualize diverse cultural texts critically in ways that offer a creative synthesis.

Student Learning Objectives for this Course:
By successfully completing courses, students will:
1. Demonstrate knowledge of the recent history of science fiction literature and cinema as well as key theories about its development, structure, and cultural impact. (PLO 1, tested by final exam)
2. Write effective critical essays on works of film and literature that engage their historical, formal, ethical, and creative import and structure. (PLO 2&3, tested by short papers and final essay)
3. Write clear, concise critical arguments about works of literature and film in which a clear thesis is supported by internal and external evidence. (PLO 3, tested by short papers)
4. Engage with the larger community and create new work that synthesizes (PLO 3, tested by creative and experiential assignments)

Graded Assignments
One-Page Essays (25%)
You will write two one-page essays over the course of the semester. These papers must be no more (and not much less) than 500 words and fit on a single page. They should begin with a clear, concise thesis that responds to the prompt and each paragraph should advance that argument by providing clear evidence, analysis, and/or critical context.

Experiential and Creative Assignments (20%)
This course will require you to engage directly not just with the SF lit and film, but with the cultures of fandom and creation around it. You will be asked to explore and speculate about current technology, craft a piece of fan fiction, and deliver a brief oral and written report on your active participation in some aspect of SF culture (a convention, a movie premier, a collective gaming experience, etc.)
Long Essay or Short Story (25%)
You will have the option of producing either an 8-10-page critical essay on a topic you choose in consultation with me or a creative piece of speculative/SF fiction (also 8-10 pages) accompanied by a 2-3-page critical commentary that links it to a key idea we have explored. Both options will require you to cite and engage directly with scholarly research appropriate to the topic.

Final Exam (20%)
You will complete the semester with a comprehensive final exam that will cover all of the material on the syllabus and will include multiple-choice, short answer, and essay sections.

Active Participation and Attendance (10%)
This is a seminar-style course and thus you are expected to participate actively both in class: both in required presentations and in our ongoing discussions. This means listening actively to me and to your colleagues, posing questions, and communicating your own ideas clearly and concisely. Attendance is mandatory. Three missed classes will lower your grade and five missed sessions will be treated as a drop.

Submitting Papers
All papers are due by 5:00pm on the date indicated. You should submit them both through Harvey and as an email attachment to me. All papers will be run through SafeAssign, which tests your papers for plagiarism and helps assure that your work will not be plagiarized in the future.

Late Papers and Revisions
Late papers will be penalized 5% per day for the first two days and 10% per day thereafter with a maximum deduction of 50% (with weekends counting as one day). If submitted on time, assignments can be revised and the final grade will be an average of the two marks weighted toward the revision. Late papers cannot be revised.

Writing Center
I urge you to take early drafts of all your critical papers (and especially your research paper) to the Wallace Writing Center, located in McFarlin Library. The tutors in the center can help you refine your ideas, sharpen your arguments, and improve the clarity of your prose. They are not proofreaders, but they will help you strengthen your writing. To make an appointment, book online at https://utulsa.mywconline.com/.
**Academic Honesty**
In keeping with the intellectual ideals, standards for community, and educational mission of the University, students are expected to adhere to all academic policies. Cheating on examinations, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty violate both individual honor and the life of the community, and may subject students to penalties including failing grades, dismissal, and other disciplinary actions. Plagiarism consists of the unacknowledged use of the work of another and will cause you to fail the course and be reported to the Dean for further review and possible sanctions.

**Academic Misconduct**
The Academic Misconduct Policy of the College of Arts and Sciences is linked here: [https://artsandsciences.utulsa.edu/advising/academic-misconduct-policy/](https://artsandsciences.utulsa.edu/advising/academic-misconduct-policy/)
All students should become familiar with this policy and note that cheating, plagiarism, and all other forms of academic misconduct come with serious consequences.

**Electronic Device Policy**
You are welcome to use electronic devices for taking notes as well as for active learning in the classroom (e.g. looking up references, images, intertexts, etc). They may not be used for non-class related activities and at times you will be asked to close them entirely for focused exercises. I reserve the right to ban the use of electronics for both individuals and the class as a whole at any time.

**Classroom Standards**
Collaboration, interaction, debate, and respectful disagreement are fundamental to this course. This means you need to come prepared to each session by having read or viewed the material on the syllabus and thought about issues it raises. I expect you to venture tentative ideas, see if they work, learn about their limits, and negotiate their various strengths and weaknesses. In such an environment, it is essential that you listen respectfully, focus on ideas (not on individuals), and make space for everyone to participate in our conversations.

**Center for Student Academic Support**
Students with disabilities should contact the Center for Student Academic Support to self-identify their need in order to exercise their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Center for Student Academic Support is located in (old) Lorton Hall 210 and the phone number is 918-631-2315. All students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with and take advantage of services provided by the Center for Student Academic Support, such as tutoring, academic counseling, and developing study skills. The Center for Student Academic Support provides confidential consultations to any student with academic concerns as well as to students with disabilities.
Mature Content
In this course we will read, view, and discuss sensitive materials including sometimes graphic representations of violence and sexuality. Our discussions will be scholarly and critical in nature, but some students may find the topics offensive, upsetting, or distasteful. If you object to such materials then please speak with me so I can help you find another course.

Required Books and Films
Atwood, The Handmaid’s Tale
Butler, Parable of the Sower
Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?
Kavan, Ice
Moore and Gibbons, Watchmen

Critical Watching
We will view several films in this course, all of which are available through Harvey. You should plan to watch these works critically, which means that you should keep either paper or digital notes as you watch, making note of key shots, events, scenes etc by noting the time stamp and indicating what questions, problems, or thoughts they invoke. Plan to watch the entire film at least once, then return again to a few of the key moments you indicated, re-watch then, then come prepared to share your ideas with the seminar.

Office Hours and Meetings
My regular office hours are Monday from 2:00-4:00pm and Tuesday from 11:00am-12:00pm. I am, however, on campus every weekday from 8:30am to 5:30pm and am happy to make an appointment that fits your schedule. To schedule a meeting, talk to me after class, email, or send me a message on Twitter. In addition, I’m happy to consult with you by email and I respond to all messages with 24 hours (excluding the weekends). You will be required to meet with me at least twice during the semester: once to set some goals for the course and then again to plan your final project.

Know Your Title IX
Sexual misconduct is prohibited by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX") and will not be tolerated within the TU community. Sexual misconduct encompasses all forms of sex and gender-based discrimination, harassment, violence, and assault, as well as dating violence, domestic violence, interpersonal violence, stalking and sexual exploitation. If you or someone you know has been harassed,
assaulted, or stalked, or if you have questions about violence prevention resources available to you, please contact any of the following campus and community resources:

- Title IX Coordinator 918-631-4602
- Office of Violence Prevention 918-631-2324
- TU Counseling and Psychological Services 918-631-2241
- Campus Security 918-631-5555
- Domestic Violence Intervention Services 918-585-3163 or 918-743-5763
- Tulsa Police Department 918-596-9222 or 911 (emergency situations)

For more information about your rights under Title IX, please visit our Policies and Laws page on the TU website or contact the Title IX Coordinator. **Every student on our campus has the right to resources.** Please come forward and ask questions, report, and help us eradicate sexual misconduct and interpersonal violence by stopping the silence surrounding it.
Course Schedule
<all films and readings marked “*” are in Harvey >

Introduction: What Is SF
1/8
Introductions: Defining Science Fiction

1/10
Watch: Star Wars
Read: from Telotte, Science Fiction Film (*)
Explore: Shelley, A History of Science Fiction (map)

Imagining Otherwise
1/15
Watch: Metropolis
Read: Marinetti, “Futurist Manifesto” (*)

1/17
Read: Bradbury, “There Will Come Soft Rains” (*)
Read: Miéville, “Covehithe” (*)
Read: Gill, “The Uses of Genre and the Classification of Speculative Fiction” (*)
Listen: Daft Punk, Human After All (esp. “Robot Rock,” “Technologic,” and “Human After All”)

1/22
Read: Parable of the Sower
Watch: Interview with Octavia Butler (*)

1/24
Read: Parable of the Sower
Read: Sontag, “Imagination of Disaster” (*)

1/25 Experiential Plan Due

1/29
Read: Parable of the Sower
Read: Baccolini, “The Persistence of Hope in Dystopian Science Fiction” (*)
Watch, David Christian, “The History of our World in 18 Minutes”
1/31
Watch: *THX-1138*
Read: from Harari, *Homo Deus* (*)

2/1  **One-Page Paper Due**

2/5
Read: *Do Androids Dream*

2/7
Read: *Do Androids Dream*
Read: Baudrillard, from *Simulacra and Simulations*

2/12
Read: *Do Androids Dream*

2/14
Watch: *Blade Runner* (director's cut)
Watch: Black Mirror: “USS Callister”

2/15  **Technology Report Due**

2/19
Read: *Watchmen*
Do: Tech Lightning Round

2/21
Read: *Watchmen*
Read: McCloud, from *Understanding Comics* (*)

2/26
Read: *Watchmen*
Read: Jenkins, from *Textual Poachers*
Explore: *Watchmen* Fan Culture

2/28
Watch: *Black Panther*
Watch: from *Space is the Place* (*)
Watch: Janelle Monae, *Many Moons*
3/1  Speculative Fiction Due

3/5
FX
Read: Bukatman, “The Artificial Infinite” (*)
Watch: Inception

3/7
Read: Class Anthology
Do: Editing and Review

Bio-Fictions

3/12
Read: The Handmaid’s Tale

3/14
Read: The Handmaid’s Tale

3/15  One-Page Paper Due

Spring Break

3/26
Read: The Handmaid’s Tale
Watch: Ex Machina

3/28
Watch: Ex Machina
Watch: Black Mirror “Be Right Back”

3/29  Fan Fiction Due

Contact

4/2
Read: Chiang, “Story of Your Life”

4/4
Read: Chiang, “Story of Your Life”  
Watch: *Arrival*  

4/9  
Watch: *Annihilation*  

**The Journey In**  

4/11  
Watch: *A Scanner Darkly* (guest lecture)  

4/15 **Long Essay Due**  

4/16  
Read: Kavan, *Ice*  
Visit: McFarlin Special Collections (in class)  

4/18  
Read: Kavan, *Ice*  

4/29 **Final Exam (9:00am-11:25am)**