

Spring 2019

HSS 403-104: Science Fiction Film

Nancy Steffen-Fluhr

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HSS 403-104 SCIENCE FICTION FILM Spring, 2019

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Nancy Steffen-Fluhr, Associate Professor, Humanities (Science, Technology & Society Division)

OFFICE: Murray Center (265 CC) OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays, 3 to 5 pm, by appointment.

PHONE: Murray Center: x4885 Cell: 201-919-4018

EMAIL: steffen@njit.edu

MOODLE: <http://moodle.njit.edu/> Please visit our course Moodle & update your profile before our first class.

CLASS MEETINGS: Tuesdays, 6-9 pm Kupfrian 104

BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION: In this course, we will analyze a set of science fiction novels, stories, and films in order to better understand the underlying cultural assumptions that drive the real-life US technological enterprise. In the second half of the course especially, we will take a closer look at how these assumptions are critiqued in the films of several major directors, with special attention to the idiosyncrasies of visual style.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

H.G. Wells. *The War of the Worlds* (1898)

NOTE: The complete (free) E-Text of *War of the Worlds* is available at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/36>

Stanislaw Lem. *Solaris* (1961).

Online Course Pack (CP) of short stories and essays [Available on our course MOODLE]

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: "Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>. Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu"

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/ GRADING:

Two analytical essays on assigned topics.

Essay #1: March 26	20 points
Essay #2: May 7	20
Midterm exam: March 12	20
Final exam: May 14	30
Weekly Quizzes	5 [10 quizzes @ 0.5 point each]
Class participation	5
TOTAL	100 points

READING/ DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

NOTE ON READINGS & FILMS: You should have completed the assigned reading and/or seen the assigned film by the date on which it is scheduled for discussion. That is, you should have finished the novel *War of the Worlds* and have seen the 2005 Spielberg film version of *War* by next week, January 29. With a couple of exceptions, you are expected to rent and screen the assigned films on your own, at home or in your dorm. The films are widely available at Netflix and Amazon/ Amazon Instant Video, among other sources. If you have trouble finding a given film, please see me.

J22	Unit 1	What is SF? The Things We Carry In-Class Film: Stanton. <i>WALL-E</i> (2008) (Part 1)
J29	Unit 2	Them! (Aliens and the War within H.G. Wells) Reading: Wells. <i>War of the Worlds</i> (1898) Film to Rent: Spielberg. <i>War of the Worlds</i> (2005) (excerpts) [See the complete film prior to class] In-Class Film: Pal. <i>War of the Worlds</i> (1953) [excerpts]
F5	Unit 3	Alien Transformations Part 1 Films to Rent: <i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i> (1956) [See the complete film prior to class] <i>Annihilation</i> (2018) [See the complete film prior to class]

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- In-Class Films: *Body Snatchers* (1993) [Excerpts]
Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978) [excerpts]
The Invasion (2007) [excerpts]
- F12 Unit 4 Alien Transformations Part 2**
Readings: CP #1 Nussbaum (on Disgust) from *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge UP, 2003).
CP #2 Van Vogt. "The Enchanted Village"
Film to rent: *District 9* (2009) [See the complete film prior to class]
- F19 Unit 5 Alien Transformations Part 3**
Reading : CP #3 LeGuin. "Vaster Than Empires and More Slow"
Film to Rent: Cameron. *Avatar* (2009) [See the complete film prior to class]
- F26 Unit 6 Aliens and Female Embodiment**
Film to rent: Scott. *Alien* (1979) [See the complete film prior to class]
Scott. *Prometheus* (2012) [Extra Credit]
- M5 Unit 7 Alien Conversations**
Films to Rent: Villeneuve. *Arrival* (2016) [See the complete film prior to class]
Del Toro. *The Shape of Water* (2017) [See the complete film prior to class]
- M12 Unit 8 Welcome to Dystopia**
MIDTERM EXAM [1.5 hour]
In-class film: *Max Headroom* (1985 British TV series pilot)
- M19 NO CLASS SPRING BREAK**
- M26 Unit 9 ESSAY #1 DUE**
Dystopia, Take One: Metro as Metaphor
In-class film: Saleh. *Metropia* (2009)
- A2 Unit 10 Dystopia, Take Two: Aliens as Immigrants**
Film to rent: Cuarón. *The Children of Men* (2006) [See the complete film prior to class]
- A9 Unit 11 Dystopia, Take Three: Inside Outside**
Film to rent: Winterbottom. *Code 46* [See the complete film prior to class]
- A16 Unit 12 Dystopia, Take Four: The World of Terry Gilliam**
Films to rent: Gilliam. *Brazil* (1985) [See the complete film prior to class]
Gilliam. *Zero Theorem* (2014) [See the complete film prior to class]
In-class film: *The Making of Brazil* (documentary--excerpts)
- A23 Unit 13 Dystopia, Take Five: The World of Stanley Kubrick**
Films to rent: Kubrick. *2001* (1968) [See the complete film prior to class]
Kubrick. *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) [See the complete film prior to class]
Stanton, *WALL-E* (2008) [See the complete film prior to class]
- A30 Unit 14 Alien, Ocean, Self (3 Snapshots) LAST CLASS Review for Final Exam**
Reading: Lem. *Solaris* (1961)
Film to rent: Soderbergh. *Solaris* (2002) [See the complete film prior to class]
In-Class Film: Tarkovsky. *Solaris* (1972) [excerpts]
- May7 ESSAY #2 DUE [No class on May 7: Tuesday is a Friday that week]**
- May14 FINAL EXAM**