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Spring 2019

# LIT 386-102-HM2: Science Fiction

Nancy Steffen-Fluhr

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## LIT 386-102/HM2 SCIENCE FICTION Spring, 2019

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Nancy Steffen-Fluhr, Associate Professor, Humanities Department (STS Division)  
**OFFICE:** Murray Center (265 CC) **OFFICE HOURS:** Thursdays, 3-5 pm by appointment  
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**EMAIL:** [steffen@njit.edu](mailto:steffen@njit.edu)  
**MOODLE:** <http://moodle.njit.edu> Please visit our course Moodle & update your profile before our first class.

**CLASS MEETINGS:** Thursdays, 6-9pm Kupfrian 207

**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.

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

Mary Shelley FRANKENSTEIN  
Ursula LeGuin LATHE OF HEAVEN  
+ Online Course Pack (CP) of short stories

**NOTE:** The complete (free) E-Text of Shelley's Frankenstein is available at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/84/84-h/84-h.htm>

**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](mailto:dos@njit.edu)"

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS/ GRADING:

Two analytical essays on assigned topics.

<b>Essay #1: due March 7</b>	20 points
<b>Essay #2: due May 9</b>	20
<b>Midterm exam: March 14</b>	20
<b>Final exam: May 16</b>	30
Weekly Quizzes	5 [10 quizzes @ 0.5 point each]
Class participation	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 points</b>

### 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 *Frankenstein* by next week, January 31.** 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.

- J24 Unit 1 What is SF?**  
In-Class Film: "Frankenstein" (1931)
- J31 Unit 2 The "Mad Scientist Plot": Creators & Creations Part I**  
Reading: Shelley. FRANKENSTEIN  
In-class film: Excerpts from "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein" (1994)
- F7 Unit 3 Creators & Creations Part II**  
Film to rent: "Blade Runner" [See the complete film prior to class]  
In-class film: "Metropolis" [excerpts]
- F14 Unit 4 Creators & Creations Part III**  
**Reading: CP #1 DelRey. "Helen O'Loy"**  
**In-Class Film: "Android" (1982)**

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### F21 Unit 5 Creators & Creations Part IV

Films to rent: "A.I.--Artificial Intelligence" (Spielberg, 2001) [See the complete film prior to class]  
"Robot and Frank" (2012) [See the complete film prior to class]  
Reading: CP #2 Turtle. "In Good Company"

### F28 Unit 6 Creators & Creations Part V

Films to rent: "Her" (2013) [See the complete film prior to class]  
"Ex Machina" (2014) [See the complete film prior to class]

### M7 ESSAY #1 DUE

#### Unit 7 Creators & Creations Part VI

In-Class Films: "The Original" (Westworld TV Pilot, 2016)  
"Be Right Back" (Black Mirror TV Series 2)

NOTE: Begin reading LATHE OF HEAVEN [due March 28]

### M14 MIDTERM EXAM [1.5 hours]

In-Class film excerpts and discussion: "Blade Runner 2049" (2017)

### M21 SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

### M28 Unit 8 Daoism & the Sustainable Planet

Reading: LeGuin. LATHE OF HEAVEN

### A4 Unit 9 "White" Worlds: Dystopia, Part I

Readings: CP #3 Zamyatin. WE (excerpt)  
CP #4 Forster. "The Machine Stops"  
CP #5 Gibson. "Johnny Mnemonic"  
Film to rent: Lucas. "THX 1138" (1971)

### A11 Unit 10 Them and Us: Dystopia, Part II

Film to rent: "Gattaca" (1997) [See the complete film prior to class]

### A18 Unit 11 The Fortress World: Dystopia, Part III

Film to rent: "Code 46" [See the complete film prior to class]

### A25 Unit 12 Animal, Machine, Alien: The Nature of Human Nature, Part I

Reading: CP # 6 Clarke. "The Sentinel"  
Films to rent: 2001 (Discussion of Parts 1-3) [See the complete film prior to class]  
"Arrival" (2016). [See the complete film prior to class]

### May2 LAST CLASS

#### Unit13 Animal, Machine, Alien: The Nature of Human Nature, Part II

Film to rent: "WALL-E" (2008) [See the complete film prior to class]  
Reading: CP #7 Minsky. "Will Robots Inherit the Earth?" (essay)

### Review for final exam

### May 9 ESSAY #2 DUE

### May16 FINAL EXAM