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ENG 4300/4390-001, 099: Science Fiction by Women

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ENG4300/4390: SCIENCE FICTION BY WOMEN

Professor: Dr. Marjorie Worthington
Office: Coleman Hall 3321
Email: mgworthington@eiu.edu
Class: Coleman Hall 3159, MWF, 12:00-12:50pm
Office Hours: MWF 10:00am-12:00pm or by appt.

Texts:

Margaret Atwood, 2009, THE YEAR OF THE FLOOD
Octavia Butler 1984, BLOODCHILD
Angela Carter 1977, PASSION OF NEW EVE
Charlotte Perkins Gilman 1915, HERLAND: A LOST FEMINIST UTOPIAN NOVEL
Ursula Leguin 1969, THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS, 1976
Ursula Leguin, Editor, 1993, THE NORTON BOOK OF SCIENCE FICTION
Marge Piercy 1976, WOMAN ON THE EDGE OF TIME

Objectives:

- To read, discuss and analyze representative texts.
- To familiarize ourselves with differing critical stances on some of these works.
- To learn about and engage in literary research.
- To hone skills related to writing literary analyses with strong thesis arguments.
- To complete a substantial final project as part of this “capstone course.”

Welcome to your Senior Seminar. This class provides an opportunity for us to delve deeply and widely into a particular topic, to end your college course of study by implementing your analytical, writing and research skills in a small and intense classroom atmosphere.

Course Description: Science Fiction is fiction that imagines a future world, new technological advances and the social implications that follow. But Science Fiction is just for guys, right? Wrong. Despite the fact that some women sci-fi writers have been accused of destroying science fiction, others argue that women actually invented it (Frankenstein by Mary Shelley was published in 1818 and is often considered the first published work of science fiction). From the middle of the twentieth century on, female writers have emerged as some of the strongest—if not most well known—writers in this genre. In this course, we will study works of science fiction written by and often about women. Works will include novels and short stories by authors like Joanna Russ, Angela Carter, Ursula LeGuin, James L. Tiptree, Jr., Marge Piercy, Margaret Atwood, Octavia Butler, Karen Joy Fowler, Pat Murphy, C.L. Moore. We will also look at the role women play in science fiction films and television shows like Terminator, Aliens, Serenity (Firefly), Gravity and Futurama. Students will help choose course texts on the first day of class.

REQUIREMENTS:

YOU MUST COMPLETE ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS TO PASS THIS COURSE.

Five short essays: Over the course of the semester, you will write five one-page *single-spaced* essays. They should cover the reading assigned for the particular day on which they are due. Although short, these essays should be focused and **thesis-driven**. It is my hope that these papers will: 1) help you keep up with the reading; and 2) generate interesting ideas for discussion. For that reason, you **must be in class** and **must contribute to class discussion that day** (in other words, speak up) in order to get credit for the response. As this is a seminar course, you should be

contributing to class discussion every day (see Participation below), but you should be even more contribute-y on the days these essays are due. See below for when your essays are due.

- Group A: Caitlin Danforth, Erin Deason, McKenzie Dial, Bailey Doty
- Group B: Brad Ellis, Kara Finlon, Abraham Haile, Shayna Hamm
- Group C: Heather Lamb, Derick Ledermann, Helen Plevka, Ashley Samoska
- Group D: Kelsie Schaefer, Michael Skasick, Lauren Stucker, Jaclyn Sweeney

Recovery/English Day Project: With a partner, you will “recover” a female sci-fi writer from the 20th century whose work is not commonly read, or even available. You will research this writer, find and read (and even distribute) some of her work and analyze her contribution to the science fiction canon. You will put all this information into an individual essay and a poster done with your partner (more discussion on that later). The poster will be presented to the class AND at the First Annual English Studies Day which will take place on April 10 (more on that later, as well). Mark your calendar for April 10th for absences will NOT be excused on that day.

Essays: Throughout the semester, we’ll be analyzing and categorizing these texts in an attempt to chronicle the classic themes of science fiction to determine if there is a particular female perspective brought to bear. You will write two essays that delve more deeply into those themes: one will be a pure literary analysis (you may use research if you like but you are not required to do so) and the other will ask you to relate one of the themes or images in the literature to the contemporary ACTUAL world we live in.

Participation: The small size of this class will allow (and require) you to be an active *daily* participant in class discussion. In other words, I will expect you to be able and willing to keep up with the reading and speak up in class several times *every day*. If you don’t volunteer, I will call on you. If you aren’t regularly prepared, this portion of your grade will go down. If you don’t contribute in a meaningful way to class discussion, the *highest* grade you can earn in this course will be a B (and there is no guarantee that you’ll earn that). **NOTE: If you are an Honors student, this applies in particular to you!**

Grade Breakdown:

5 Short Essays	25% (5% each)
Recovery/English Day Poster Project	25%
Two Essays	40% (20% each)
Participation	10%

POLICIES:

Attendance: Your consistent attendance and participation are necessary to make this class the vibrant exchange of ideas it should be and I take attendance every day (even if you do not see me doing it). You are permitted no more than three unexcused absences. Each unexcused absence after three will lower your final grade by thirty points (3%). Excused absences are accompanied by appropriate legal or medical documentation.

Office Hours: The hours listed above are times when I will be in my office ready to meet with students. You can also make a special appointment to see me if you are unable to come during office hours. I encourage you to come and talk to me about your work as often as you like.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as de-fined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be re-reported to the Office of Student Standards.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined as appropriating words or ideas that are not your own without giving proper credit. The temptation to plagiarize can be great, particularly in the advent of extensive computer technology and the collaborative nature of our class. However, the consequences of plagiarism are dire and can result in a grade of F for the assignment and even for the course. It will also result in a report to the Judicial Affairs Office.

Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

The Student Success Center: Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, text taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

Official Course Description: Major topics in British, American, and world literature and language, with topics varying each semester. Topics to be announced. Required of and enrollment limited to English majors.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

M Jan. 12	Introduction
W Jan. 14	Gilman, <i>Herland</i> , pp. 1-50
F Jan. 16	Gilman, pp. 50-100
M Jan. 19	NO CLASS MLK DAY
W Jan. 21	Gilman, pp. 100-end and Russ “When It Changed”
F Jan. 23	Tiptree “Houston, Do You Read” (A)
M Jan. 26	LeGuin, <i>Left Hand of Darkness</i> , Chaps. 1-10 (B)
W Jan. 28	LeGuin, Chaps. 11-15
F Jan. 30	LeGuin, Chaps 16-end (C)
M Feb. 2	Tiptree, “Screwfly Solution” (D)
W Feb. 4	Butler, “Bloodchild” (A)
F Feb. 6	Haraway, “The Cyborg Manifesto”
M Feb. 9	Piercy, <i>Woman on the Edge of Time</i> , pp. 1-100 (B)
W Feb. 11	Piercy, pp. 100-150 (C)
F Feb. 13	NO CLASS LINCOLN’S BIRTHDAY
M Feb. 16	Piercy, pp. 150-250
W Feb. 18	Piercy, pp. 250-end (D)
F Feb. 20	Bradley, “Elbow Room” (A)
M Feb. 23	Tiptree, “The Girl Who Was Plugged In” (B)
W Feb. 25	Murphy, “His Vegetable Wife”
F Feb. 27	Recovery Project Presentations
M March 2	Carter, <i>The Passion of the New Eve</i> , pp. 1-100 (C)
W March 4	Carter, pp. 100-end (D)

- F March 6 NO CLASS
- M March 9 **Recovery Project Presentations**
- W March 11 Cadigan, "After the Days of Dead-Eye Dee" (A)
- F March 13 Fechner (heather reports) **Essay 1 due**
- March 16-20 SPRING BREAK
- M March 23 Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*, Chaps 1-7 (B)
- W March 25 Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*, Chaps. 8-9
- F March 27 **Recovery Project Presentations**
- M March 30 Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*, Chaps 10-end (C)
- W April 1 Butler, "Speech Sounds" (D)
- F April 3 **Recovery Project Presentations**
- M April 6 Triptree, "The Women Men Don't See" (A)
- W April 8 Hopkinson, "Something to Hitch Meat To"
- F April 10 ENGLISH STUDIES DAY
- M April 13 Gloss, "Interlocking Pieces" (B)
- W April 15 Dorsey, "Machine Sex" (C)
- F April 17 Fowler, "The Lake Was Full of Artificial Things"
- M April 20 Gunn, "Middle Management" (D)
- W April 22 Glancy, "Aunt Parnetta"
- F April 24 Sargent, "Gather Blue Roses"
- M April 27 Gotlieb, "Tauf Aleph" **Essay 2 due**
- W April 29 Arnason, "The Warlord of Saturn's Moons"
- F May 1 Emshwiller, "The Start of the End of the World"
- FINAL EXAM - Wed., May 6, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.**