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ENG 5061D-600: Topics in Literature and Literary Theory

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English 5061D: SF Vanguards: New Wave and Cyberpunk
Section 600, Spring 2020, CRN 34766

Jad Smith
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 Office Hours: TR 10:45-12:15, W 1-2, by appointment

Texts

J. G. Ballard, *Crash* (Picador, 2001)
 Alfred Bester, *The Stars My Destination* (iPicturebooks, 2011)
 Thomas M. Disch, *Camp Concentration* (Vintage, 1999)
 William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (Ace Trade, 2000)
 Ursula K. Le Guin, *Norton Book of Science Fiction* (Norton 1993)
 Heather Masri, *Science Fiction: Stories and Contexts* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008)
 Joanna Russ, *We Who Are About To . . .* (Wesleyan, 2005)
 Bruce Sterling, *Schismatrix Plus* (Ace Trade, 1996)

Additional readings will be available in D2L or provided via links to external resources.

Catalog Description

In this seminar, we will examine the complex histories of two SF vanguards, New Wave and cyberpunk. The New Wave took shape in the U.K. during the mid-1960s, largely after Michael Moorcock assumed the editorship of *New Worlds* and pushed the magazine in avant-garde directions. Cyberpunk emerged in the U.S. in the early 1980s, after Bruce Sterling and other writers associated with what was then called "The Movement" declared genre SF a "backwater anachronism" and aimed to turn it into a "cultural force" instead (*Cheap Truth* 4). Both of these vanguards fostered literary experimentation, shook up the genre at large, and left a lasting impact on the field. We will consider the work of a germinal influence on both New Wave and cyberpunk—Alfred Bester—and discuss a range of representative texts and writers related to both movements.

Please see the "Syllabus" module under "Content" in D2L for a list of the **course learning objectives**.

Assignments

Short Writing Assignments (25%): various short essays, the proposal for the final project, the research project peer review, and so on.

Paratext Analysis (15%): a presentation examining an SF text's paratexts and how they have changed over time.

Final Project (20%): a 10- to 12-page research or creative project focused on a topic related to New Wave or cyberpunk. The range of possible genres includes craft analysis, adaptation, transmedia analysis, literary analysis, or another appropriate genre that you propose.

Final Project Presentation (10%): a presentation focused on the results of your final project.

Discussion (15%/15%): weekly online discussions will be central to this seminar. All discussions will be asynchronous. You will post and reply to threads every week. Contributions to the discussion boards should be prepared in accordance with the participation guidelines below and should demonstrate that you have

read course materials and others' posts closely. Please try to be reflective, insightful, and precise in your posts, using specific examples to support your points.

You will receive 15% of the discussion grade for submitting assigned posts according to the guidelines. 15% of your discussion grade will be based on the overall quality and frequency of your posts over the course of the semester. This portion of the grade will be assigned *in toto* at the end of the semester. For expectations regarding discussion posts, please see the "**Rubric for Evaluating Participation in Discussion**" included in the Syllabus module in D2L.

Participation: in a graduate seminar such as this one, good citizenship involves careful preparation of the reading and measured, analytical contributions to class discussions (that is, comments that introduce, advance, contextualize, or usefully complicate a specific line of inquiry into the subject matter).

Please review **EIU's netiquette guidelines**, which appear in the "Syllabus" module in D2L. Differing viewpoints are inevitable, but let's all do our best to maintain an atmosphere of professionalism and sensitivity in our interactions.

Final grades will be calculated on a ten-point scale (i.e., 100 to 90 = A, 89.99 to 80 = B, and so on).

Late Work: extensions on assignments will be granted at my discretion and only in the case of extenuating circumstances. Contributions to discussion boards must be submitted in a timely fashion (that is, within the designated time frame or "window").

Course Policies and Statements

Online Access: This course will be conducted asynchronously through D2L. At minimum, you will need a stable internet connection, an EIU user ID, password, and email account, and a computer with audio and a microphone. Necessary applications, such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, are available through Microsoft Office 365, which EIU currently provides to all students and faculty.

Email: I will direct all correspondence related to the class to your EIU email address unless I am replying to a message you have sent from a non-EIU email account.

Response Time: Email is the best way to get in touch with me. I try to answer emails as quickly as possible, but please do not depend on an immediate response to an email. My goal is to respond to all emails within 24 hours.

Online Office Hours: If you feel you need to meet with me about a course-related matter, I would be glad to confer via Collaborate Ultra (available in D2L) or by some other available means (such as Skype or telephone). We will need to work together to schedule a time convenient to both of us. In other words, online office hours are available by appointment.

Technical Assistance: A D2L/technical support widget ("Help for Students") is included on the course homepage. For D2L support, call 1.877.325.7778 (toll free and available 24/7), or use email support on the D2L welcome page. If you are experiencing issues with D2L, review the "D2L Performance Checklist" in the "Help for Students" widget. If you have technical questions about software, hardware, network issues, EIU Net ID and password, or Panthermail, contact EIU Technology Support at 217.581.4357, or submit a help request at <https://techsupport.eiu.edu/>. If you have questions regarding course content, contact me.

Academic Integrity: submit only original work in this class, and document all sources according to the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook* or a recent edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Please review EIU's Code of Conduct using the link in the "Academic Integrity" widget on the course homepage.

Statements: please review the statements in the "Student Success Center" and "Students with Disabilities" widgets on the course homepage.

Provisional Schedule

Additional readings are available in D2L or provided via external links

NBSF = *Norton Book of Science Fiction*

SFSC = *Science Fiction: Stories and Contexts*

Week 1 (Jan. 13-19)

Syllabus

Science Fiction Research Methods

Week 2 (Jan. 20-26)

Beyond the Golden Age

Suvin, "Estrangement and Cognition" (1979), provided

Dick, "Second Variety" (1953), SFSC 296

Godwin, "The Cold Equations" (1954), provided

Week 3 (Jan. 27-Feb. 2)

Alfred Bester: *The Stars My Destination*

Bester, *The Stars My Destination* (1957), including Gaiman's preface

Week 4 (Feb. 3-9)

Introduction to New Wave SF

Latham, from "Cyberpunk and the New Wave" (2007), provided

Disch, *Camp Concentration* (1968)

Week 5 (Feb. 10-16)

New Wave SF and Gender

Delany, "Aye, and Gomorrah . . ." (1967), provided

Russ, *We Who Are About To . . .* (1977)

Week 6 (Feb. 17-23)

New Wave and Technology

Haraway, from "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1985), SFSC 456-67

Tiptree, Jr./Sheldon, "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" (1973), SFSC 342

Yamamoto, "A Romance in Virtual Space" from *The Stories of Ibis* (2010), provided

Week 7 (Feb. 24-Mar. 1)

Introduction to Paratexts

Genette, from "Introduction to the Paratext" (1987), provided

Week 8 (Mar. 2-8)

J. G. Ballard: *Crash*

Ballard, *Crash* (1973)

Week 9 (Mar. 9-15)

Introduction to Cyberpunk

Latham, from "Cyberpunk and the New Wave" (2007), part two, provided
Sterling, et al., selections from *Cheap Truth* (1983-1986), provided
Gibson, "Johnny Mnemonic" (1981), provided
Dorsey, "(Learning About) Machine Sex" (1988), NBSF 746

Spring Recess (Mar. 16-22)

Week 10 (Mar. 23-29)

***Neuromancer*: A Cyberpunk Touchstone**

Gibson, *Neuromancer* (1984)

Week 11 (Mar. 30-Apr. 5)

Paratext Presentations

Due: Paratext Presentations

Week 12 (Apr. 6-12)

Cyberpunk and Posthumanism

Sterling, "Swarm" (1982) and "Spider Rose" (1982) from *Schismatrix Plus* 239-71

Week 13 (Apr. 13-19)

The Humanist Response to Cyberpunk

Kelleghan, from "A Definition of Savage Humanism" (2008)
Butler, "Bloodchild" (1984), SFSC 119
Kessel, "Invaders" (1990), NBSF 830

Week 14 (Apr. 20-26)

Research Project, Peer Reviews

Due: Draft of the Research Project, Peer Review

Week 15 (Apr. 27-May 3)

Research Project Presentations

Due: Final Project Presentation

Due: Research Project