

Course Syllabus

Course Information

Literature of Science Fiction and Fantasy: Bodies and Identity

LIT 3311.501

Fall 2011, JO 4.614

Monday, 7:00-9:45 pm

Professor Contact Information

Instructor:

Email: sabrina.starnaman@utdallas.edu

Office: JO 5.608B

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11:00am-12:45pm

(and by appointment)

TA: Jacob Vaughan, jacobv@utdallas.edu

Office Hours: / Office: 5.310

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

HUMA 1301 or equivalent

Course Description

This course explores questions of body and identity in science fiction and fantasy literature as it has developed over the past century. Science fiction and fantasy stories are uniquely situated for exploring the nature of corporeal embodiment, because they push the human form beyond the limits of reality and incorporate non-human entities. We will critically examine the reasons why an author, or even a literary zeitgeist, chooses to use a specific kind of materiality when and as they did. Is there a socio-historical relationship between the use of body snatchers and the understanding of the world at that moment? Why vampires in the nineteenth century? Why vampires now? Can monsters stand in for the “othered” bodies of individuals in our own society in order to convey a message too dangerous to be stated outright?

Examinations of body also naturally give rise to critical questions about race, gender, sex, identity, able-bodiedness, etc. Thus, our readings and discussion will explore a broad swath of issues central to the current study of literature. Not only will this course focus on primary literary texts, but we will incorporate short excerpts and ideas from critical analyses of the works, philosophy, religion, critical theory, and so on. These supplemental works will bring a depth to our discussions and allow for more nuanced explorations.

Required Textbooks and Materials

Dracula. (1897) Bram Stoker. Norton Critical Edition (1997) ISBN#: 0393970124

Fifty Degrees Below. (2005) Kim Stanley Robinson. ISBN#: 0553585819

Kindred. (1980) Octavia Butler. ISBN#: 0807083690

Kraken. (2010) China Miéville. ISBN#: 0345497503

Lavinia. (2008) Ursula Le Guin. ISBN#: 9780156033688

The Night Watch. (2006) Sergei Lukyanenko. ISBN#: 1401359795

Runaways, Vol. 8: Dead End Kids. (2009) Joss Whedon. ISBN#: 9780785134596

R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots). (1920) Karel Čapek. ISBN#: 0486419266

Science Fiction Hall of Fame: Volume 2. ISBN#: 0765305356

The short stories listed below are available through online reserves (**Password: Starburst**)

<http://utdallas.docutek.com/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=1146>

"A Wife Manufactured to Order." (1895) Alice Fuller.

"Robbie." (1939) Isaac Azimov.

"The Father-Thing." (1954) Philip K. Dick.

"Mars Is Heaven." (1948) Ray Bradbury.

Copies of the texts are available at the on-campus bookstore and at Off Campus Books.

Off Campus Books (located behind Fuzzy's Taco)

561 W. Campbell Road, #201

Richardson, TX 75080

Many of these books can be found cheaply at Half Priced Books or used via Amazon.com.

Suggested Course Materials

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Seventh Edition. ISBN#: 1603290249

There are many respectable online sources the bulk of the information you may need from the *MLA Handbook*. For instance,

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

<http://library.williams.edu/citing/styles/mla.php>

Assignments (*All papers and essays must be formatted in MLA style*)

Response Essays (X2)

Final Response Essay OR Short Story

Final Paper Portfolio

Reading Quizzes

Event of Interest:

Kim Stanley Robinson lecture: Wednesday, November 16th 7:30pm, Jonsson Performance Hall, Free.

Kim Stanley Robinson Q&A: Thursday, November 17th (daytime—time & location TBD)

Course Schedule

| Week | Date | In Class | Due | N.B. |
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| Body Snatchers | | | | |
| Week 1 | August 29 th | Course Introduction Video: <i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i> (1978) [80 minutes] Essay A Assigned: Body Snatchers – 450-600 words | | Start reading <i>Kraken</i> NOW! |
| Week 2 | September 5 th | No Class. Labor Day Holiday | | |
| | Friday, September 9 th | | Last Day to drop a class without a "W" | |

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| Week 3 | September 12 th | Video: "Ice," (1993) <i>X-Files</i> , Season 1, Episode 7 [46 minutes] Quiz? Essay B Assigned: <i>Kraken</i> 450-600 words | <i>Who Goes There?</i> (1938) John W. Campbell, Jr. from <i>SF HoF</i> "The Father-Thing." (1954) Philip K. Dick (eReserves) Essay A Due |
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| Week | Date | In Class | Due | N.B. |
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Fantastic Bodies

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| Week 4 | September 19 th | Quiz? Essay C Assigned: <i>Lavinia</i> – 450-600 words In case you are interested (not required) – Interview with China Miéville: http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/interviews/mievilleinterview.htm Interview re: <i>Kraken</i> with Miéville: http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/art.php?id=21233 | <i>Kraken</i> . (2010) China Miéville [N.B: 400 pages] Essay B Due |
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| Week 5 | September 26 th | Quiz? Final Paper assignment reviewed: Essay D Assigned: <i>Robots</i> – 450-600 words In case you are interested (not required) - <i>The Inkwell Review</i> interview with Le Guin: http://inkwellreview.blogspot.com/2008/06/sing-muse-of-woman-unsung.html <i>NPR</i> Interview with Le Guin: http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89698554 | <i>Lavinia</i> . (2008) Ursula Le Guin [288 pages] Essay C Due |
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Robots

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| Week 6 | October 3 rd | Quiz? | <i>R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)</i> . (1920) Karel Čapek. [112 pages] <i>With Folded Hands</i> (1947) Jack Williamson from <i>SF HoF</i> -- Essay D Due |
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Wednesday,
October 5th

No office hours this week.

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| Week 7 | October 7 th | Guest Speaker: Nick Gans, PhD (Roboticist) Quiz? | "A Wife Manufactured to Order." (1895) Alice Fuller "Robbie." (1939) Isaac Azimov. Both on eReserves. | Draft due in 1 week! Begin <i>Night Watch</i> NOW! |
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| Week | Date | In Class | Due | N.B. |
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| Week 8 | October 17 th | <i>Blade Runner: The Final Cut</i> (1982) [157 minutes] | Rough draft due – minimum of 1200 words | |
| | Friday, October 21 st | Midterm grades due. Midterm grade will be based on all quizzes to date, two essays, and completion of draft (turned in on time & meets word count minimum). | | |

Creatures of the Night (and Twilight)

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| Week 9 | October 24 th | Quiz? | <i>Night Watch</i> . (2006) Sergei Lukyanenko. [N.B.: 464 pages] | |
| | | In case you are interested (not required) – Author Website: http://rusf.ru/lukian/english/ | | |

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| Week 10 | October 31 st | Quiz? | <i>Dracula</i> . (1897) Bram Stoker. Norton Critical Edition (1997) [300 pages] | Start <i>Fifty Degrees Below</i> NOW! |
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Monstrous Bodies

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| Week 11 | November 7 th | Discussion of Monstrous Bodies: also bring <i>Dracula</i> , <i>Night Watch</i> , and <i>Kraken</i> . Quiz? | "Mars Is Heaven." (1948) Ray Bradbury. | |
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Scientists and Politicians (The Real Boogeymen?)

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| Week 12 | November 14 th | Quiz? Response Essay E / Short Story Writing Assignment Explained (Short Story workshops required with this option) In case you are interested (not required) – Interview with Robinson: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAu5PD4OS-w&feature=related <i>Wired</i> interview with Robinson: http://www.wired.com/science/planetearth/news/2007/07/stanley_robinson_qa Robinson on Science, Religion, and Ideology at Duke U: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYdJhZS3bml | <i>Fifty Degrees Below</i> . (2005) Kim Stanley Robinson [N.B.: 603 pages] | |
| | Wednesday, November 16 th | Kim Stanley Robinson lecture: 7:30pm, Jonsson Performance Hall, Free. | | |

Time Travelers

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| Week 13 | November 21 st | Quiz? | <i>Kindred</i> . (1980) Octavia Butler [287 pages] | Arrange to watch <i>Planet of the Apes</i> . |
| <p>In case you are interested (not required) - Octavia Butler on <i>Charlie Rose</i>: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66pu-Miq4tk Butler on <i>NPR</i>: http://www.npr.org/programs/specials/racism/010830.octaviabutler.html <i>Locus</i> interview with Butler: http://www.locusmag.com/2000/Issues/06/Butler.html</p> | | | | |

Thanksgiving Weekend

| Week | Date | In Class | Due | N.B. |
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| Week 14 | November 28 th | Quiz? Hand out Response Essay E Assignment | <i>The Time Machine</i> . (1895) H.G. Wells from <i>SF HoF</i> <i>Planet of the Apes</i> (1968) [112 minutes] **Watch this on your own. Be prepared for a quiz & discussion over both the novella and the film. | Final portfolio due on Wednesday! |
| | Wednesday, November 30 th | Final Paper Portfolio Due Wednesday, November 30 th between 9:00am-12:00pm in my office, JO 5.608B. Portfolio must include: final paper (1500-2100 words) & rough draft with comments in manila file folder with your name on it. | | |
| Week 15 | December 5 th | Video: "Blink." <i>Dr. Who</i> (2007) Season 3, Episode 11 [42 minutes] | <i>Runaways</i> , Vol. 8: <i>Dead End Kids</i> . (2009) Joss Whedon Response Essay E OR Short Story Due | |

Grading Policy

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| Response Essays: Must complete 2 of 4 assigned essays | 25% |
| Response Essay #3 OR Short Story | 10% |
| Choice: Response essay (300-600) words on <i>The Runaways</i> OR Creative Writing assignment (600-1500 words) | |
| Final Paper Portfolio | 40% |
| Portfolio will include draft with comments, final version of paper, turned in on time in a manila file folder with your name on it. Grade for portfolio is inclusive. (1500-2100 words) | |
| Reading Quizzes | 25% |
| Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class. If you are late you have missed the quiz. Make-up quizzes will NOT be given. Best 5 quiz grades will count toward final grade (All quizzes taken before midterm grades will be counted toward midterm grade) | |
| Grades will be posted on eLearning. | |

Course & Instructor Policies

While this is a large course that might be handled solely as a lecture course, it is also a literature course, which I like to conduct as seminars with discussion. Thus, in this course there will be lectures, small group discussions, and whole group discussions. I expect your participation in making this a productive and enjoyable course. That means everyone needs to come to class on time and be prepared. You must bring your texts to class. This class may ask you to read more than you are used to reading in other courses. You may find that you need to reread passages multiple times in order to understand them. Start early and give yourself time to enjoy these books and stories. I wholeheartedly recommend taking notes in your books, flagging important passages, and coming to class with questions or comments about the texts.

Extensive note-taking in class is strongly discouraged, especially in those parts of class meetings that are not primarily lecture-based. Taking good notes is no guarantee of good performance in the course, and taking extensive notes can interfere with activities that make a greater contribution to your performance: listening, consulting the text, and participating in class discussion.

For this reason, there should be no reason to bring laptop or handheld computers to class.

Extensive laptop use in any particular class session will count as an absence. If you need a laptop as part of an educational accommodation related to an impairment. Please bring the appropriate documentation from the Office of Accessibility and we will be happy to comply. Recent studies suggest that students who bring laptops to class perform worse (on average) than their non-laptop using peers, and are much less likely to pay attention in class.[e.g., <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1078740> or any of the vast literature on the detriments of multitasking for performance.] Laptops can also be a distraction for other students.

We will use our full course time.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. **Scholastic Dishonesty:** Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting for credit any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source, is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details).

Please see the section about **Avoiding Plagiarism** on the UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures page: <http://coursebook.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/>

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.