HUMA 1301: Exploration of the Humanities
Fall 2013

Course Information

HUMA 1301.002
MC 2.410 MWF 9:00 – 9:50



Professor/TA Contact Information

Dr. Ingrao
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TA contact information for this course is as follows:

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

This course requires no pre-requisite.

Course Description

From the Jewish legend of the golem three thousand years ago to Hanson Robotics' "Jules," who can realistically mimic human facial expressions, and beyond, we have an enduring fascination with creating in our own image. But from where does this fascination derive, and why do we find ourselves, sometimes simultaneously, as fearful pilgrims in the "uncanny valley" and celebrants of posthumanist potential? Intended to introduce students to the connections between various fields of studies in the humanities, this section of HUMA 1301 will apply an interdisciplinary approach to viewpoints concerning the creation and implications of mimetic human technology: automatons, robots, and androids. During this semester this theme will be discussed by examining the rich dialogue between myth, drama, fiction, film, and pop culture.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

This course seeks to offer students the potential to: 1) Learn to examine a variety of texts from the humanities: fictional, dramatic, cinematic, and critical; 2) Analyze connections between multiple texts (for example: fictional, dramatic, cinematic, and critical) and draw informed conclusions from said connections; 3) Apply considered analysis and respond to works in the humanities as examples of human expression and aesthetic and ideological principles.

Required Textbooks and Materials

Textbooks are available at the UTD Bookstore, Off Campus Books, and commercially. Please use only the following editions:

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Penguin, ISBN: 9780141439471)
Isaac Asimov, *I, Robot* (Bantam, ISBN: 9780553382563)
Karel Čapek, *Rossum's Universal Robots, R.U.R* (Penguin, ISBN: 9780141182087)
Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (Random House, ISBN: 0345404475)

Note the edition of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is the revised Penguin 2003 edition. Copies of Asimov's *I,Robot* and Čapek's *R.U.R.* have been placed on two-hour library reserve.

An excerpt from Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, and selections from golem legend, such as Rosenberg's *The Golem and the Wondrous Deeds of the Maharal of Prague*, will be available through e-reserve.

Students who would like to read beyond the required selections may check out Neugroschel's *The Golem* via two-hour library reserve. Rosenberg's complete book is available electronically through the library.

Note e-reserve is accessed separately from eLearning. Pages 3 and 4 of this syllabus include information for accessing e-reserve and eLearning.

Films, such as *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, *Wall-E*, and *A.I.*, and selections from other films such as *Blade Runner*, *Iron Man 2*, and *Doomsday Book* will be incorporated in the course; the course will consider excerpts from such television shows as *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *The Simpsons*; additionally we will discuss excerpts from lectures such as Robert Sawyer's "Forget About Killer Robots" sponsored by the University's Center for Values in Medicine, Science, and Technology.

For interested students, Sawyer's complete lecture, as well as other lectures including Andy Clark's "Natural Born Cyborgs?" and Jonathan Tippett's "Expanding the Human Experience through Machines," have been archived at the following URL:
http://www.utdallas.edu/c4v/lectures/

Links to items of interest related to the course, such as a website explaining how to create your own golem, will be posted to eLearning. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor concerning video, articles, short stories, or other works related to the course theme for potential inclusion on eLearning.

How to Access E-Reserve Materials

An excerpt from McCloud's *Understanding Comics* to be read for August 28th, as well as the selections from golem legend to be read for September 4th and 6th, will be accessed through e-reserve. To access e-reserve:

1. Go to the following URL:

http://utdallas.docutek.com/eres/courseindex.aspx?page=instr

2. Search by instructor's last name: "Ingrao."

3. Click on the link for "HUMA 1301."

4. Next, you will be asked for a password. The password is "golem." After you enter the password, click "Accept."

A list of readings placed on e-reserve should appear. Click the reading's title for a PDF version. Please contact the instructor at jingrao@utdallas.edu if you experience problems opening material placed on e-reserve.

To facilitate in-class discussion of material placed on e-reserve, students should please either print the material to bring to class, or bring a computer to enable them access to specific passages.

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eLearning

eLearning offers students a repository for class announcements, media, recommended readings, tools to facilitate communication in completion of the course project, completed course projects, and learning module notes.

Concerning learning modules, note that among other pedagogical methods--such as in-class discussion and group exercises--this course utilizes lecture. Students are, of course, encouraged to ask questions concerning lectures during class. Students may also contact the instructor and TA, and are urged to take advantage of office hours. Though neither the TA nor the instructor will re-teach material presented during a specific date in its entirety as was originally presented in class, specific questions concerning material presented in class are welcome in order to promote the potential for student success in the course.

Though learning module notes posted to eLearning are intended to help students review such material as names, dates, and key terms mentioned during a lecture, they will not mention all the specifics of content covered during a given lecture. Learning module notes should not be taken as a substitute for attending class.

Some learning modules will include, or focus upon, discussion questions. Students do not necessarily have to write answers for discussion questions, but should review these questions before class as they may provide a rubric for in-class discussion and/or the viewing of films and media excerpts.

Material from eLearning will be utilized in the instructor's composition of the two semester exams. The instructor and TA expect that students will be able to provide answers on exams specific to material posted on eLearning.

To access learning module notes and discussion questions:

1. Go to the following URL:

http://elearningpilot.utdallas.edu

2. Enter UTD NetID and password.

3. A list of all courses in which a student has enrolled should appear. Click on the course title.

4. Click “Learning Modules" at the left of the screen on the "Course Content" page.

5. Learning modules are dated chronologically.

Please contact the instructor at jingrao@utdallas.edu concerning problems accessing materials placed on eLearning.

Note that a copy of this syllabus is also available through eLearning in the event a printed copy is misplaced. To access the syllabus, click on "Syllabus" at the left of the "Course Content" page.



Daily Academic Calendar

Thematic unit	Date	Assignment to be completed by class meeting	Activity in class
Course introduction	Aug. 26		1. Distribute and discuss course syllabus and goals 2. Introduce and define "Humanities"
Seeing ourselves in robots	Aug. 28	Selection from *Understanding Comics* (**required reading**)	
Artificial Intelligence (I): Is Data alive?	Aug. 30		1. View selections from *A.I.*, *I, Robot*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and *The Simpsons* 2. Discussion of clips
	Sept. 2	**NO CLASS: LABOR DAY**	
A 3,000 year old "robot": The golem in folklore and literature	Sept. 4	Selection from *Yiddish Folktales and Legends of Old Prague* (**required reading**)	Introduction to the golem
	Sept. 6	Selection from *The Golem and the Wondrous Deeds of the Maharal of Prague* (**required reading**)	**First quiz**
The golem in cinema	Sept. 9	Look over learning module notes related to the film before class	View selections from *The Golem*
From magic to science: *Frankenstein*	Sept. 11		1. Introduction to *Frankenstein* 2. View selection from *Young Frankenstein*
	Sept. 13	1. *Frankenstein*, pages 11-50 2. *Rime of the Ancyent Mariner* (recommended reading)	

Thematic unit	Date	Assignment to be completed by class meeting	Activity in class
From magic to science: *Frankenstein*	Sept. 16	*Frankenstein*, pages 51-90	
	Sept. 18	1. *Frankenstein*, pages 93-151 2. Selection from Book Four of *Paradise Lost* (recommended reading)	1. View selection from *The Simpsons* 2. **Second quiz**
	Sept. 20	*Frankenstein*, pages 155-225	
Begin construction of your own robot	Sept. 23		**Course project assigned**
Application of the golem and *Frankenstein*	Sept. 25		Group exercise to begin design of your robot
	Sept. 27		1. Discussion of exercise from previous class 2. First exam review
	Sept. 30	Prepare for first exam	**First exam**
Artificial Intelligence (II): "It's Alive!"	Oct. 2	Look over learning module notes related to the film before class	View selections from *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*
	Oct. 4		View selections from *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*
	Oct. 7	Look over learning module notes related to the film before class	View selections from *Frankenstein* (1931)
Posthumanist potential	Oct. 9		View selections from *Iron Man 2* and the *Terminator* franchise
Defining the Frankenstein Complex: *I, Robot*	Oct. 11	*I, Robot*, "Introduction" and pages 1-24	1. Introduction to *I,Robot* 2. View selections from *Bicentennial Man*
	Oct. 14	*I, Robot*, pages 25-90	
	Oct. 16	*I, Robot*, pages 91-143	
	Oct. 18	*I, Robot*, pages 144-224	View selection from "Forget About Killer Robots"

Thematic unit	Date	Assignment to be completed by class meeting	Activity in class
Filming the Frankenstein Complex: *Wall-E*	Oct. 21	Look over learning module notes related to the film before class	View *Wall-E*
	Oct. 23		View *Wall-E*
Application of *Frankenstein* (films), *I,Robot*, and *Wall-E*	Oct. 25		Group exercise to continue design of your robot
	Oct. 28		1. Discussion of exercise from previous class 2. Second exam review
	Oct. 30	Prepare for second exam	**Second exam**
From robot to human (I): *Rossum's Universal Robots*	Nov. 1		1. Introduction to *R.U.R.* 2. View selections from *Japan: Robot Nation* and *Metropolis* 3. **Short essay assigned**
	Nov. 4	*R.U.R.*, pages 1-49	
	Nov. 6	*R.U.R.*, pages 51-84	
From robot to human (II): *Do Androids Dream?*	Nov. 8		1. Introduction to *Do Androids Dream?* 2. View selections from *Japan: Robot Nation* and Hanson Robotics
	Nov. 11	*Do Androids Dream?*, pages 3-83	Voight-Kampff Replicant Test
	Nov. 13	*Do Androids Dream?*, pages 84-128	View selections of robot art and music
	Nov. 15	*Do Androids Dream?*, pages 129-183	
	Nov. 18	*Do Androids Dream?*, pages 184-244	
"Like tears in the rain": *Blade Runner*	Nov. 20	Look over learning module notes related to the film before class	View selections from *Blade Runner*

Thematic unit	Date	Assignment to be completed by class meeting	Activity in class
Application of *Rossum's Universal Robots, Do Androids Dream?,* and *Blade Runner*	Nov. 22		1. Group exercise to continue design of your robot 2. **Short essay due**
	Nov. 25 - Nov. 29	**NO CLASS: FALL BREAK**	
Artificial Intelligence (III): Androids do dream	Dec. 2	Look over learning module notes related to the film before class	View *A.I.*
	Dec. 4		View *A.I.*
	Dec. 6		View *A.I.*
Artificial Intelligence (IV): The robot sutra	Dec. 9	Look over learning module notes related to the film before class	1. View selection from *Doomsday Book* 2. **Course project checked**
	Dec. 11		1. Discussion of *A.I.* and selection from *Doomsday Book* 2. **Course project due**
	Dec. 18	Review completed course projects for discussion	**Class begins at 9:00 AM**

Grading Policy

Semester grades will be calculated in accordance with the following percentages:

First exam	25%
Second exam	25%
Short essay	25%
Course project	25%

Assignment letter grades correspond to the following numerical GPA values in calculating a student's semester grade:

A+	4.00	C+	2.33	F	0.00
A	4.00	C	2.00		
A-	3.67	C-	1.67		
B+	3.33	D+	1.33		
B	3.00	D	1.00		
B-	2.67	D-	0.67		

For each of the four major assignments (first exam, second exam, short essay, and course project), the numerical GPA value of the letter grade is multiplied by 25% (0.25). The four resulting numerical values are then added to determine the semester grade. Any applicable extra credit will be added to the lowest assignment grade of the semester **before** the numerical GPA value of the letter grade is multiplied by 25%. Quiz results will determine borderline grades. Students should note that quizzes will be given during the course of the semester. Quizzes are intended to provide the potential to introduce students to the types of questions on exams and refine a student's ability to analyze class concepts in relation to specific examples that communicate ideas in an organized manner.

Two quizzes have been announced on the "Daily Academic Calendar" prior to the first exam; these quizzes seek to provide the potential for preparedness for the first exam. Additional quizzes following the first exam may be either announced or unannounced at the instructor's discretion.

Quizzes will be graded on a check + (exceeds expectations), check (meets expectations), check - (does not meet expectations) basis, and will be instrumental in the determination of borderline grades at the end of the semester. Said determination will be made by weighing the cumulative total of earned check pluses and checks against the cumulative total of check minuses and missed quizzes.

At the end of the semester a student with a borderline grade and a cumulative total of more earned check pluses and checks than a cumulative total of check minuses and missed quizzes will be rounded up. For example, a student finishes the semester with a 3.41. This falls between a grade of A- at 3.67 and a grade of B+ at 3.33. If the student has a cumulative total of more earned check pluses and checks, the grade will be A-. If the student, in contrast, has a cumulative total of more earned check minuses and missed quizzes, the grade will be B+.

Quizzes are applied to the semester grade only in those cases that a semester grade is borderline. A student who earns a B at 3.00 exactly will neither be rounded up to a B+ nor down to a B- in light of the cumulative result of quizzes.

Even in this scenario, quizzes remain important in their potential to refine a student's ability to harness class concepts and respond using specific examples in an analytical manner. The ability to analyze class concepts, use specific examples, and connect these to ideas will be important for exams and assignments throughout the semester; in this way, quizzes offer the potential to help students prepare for exams and assignments.

Exams, Short Essay, and Course Project

In-class exams will not be cumulative. Both exams will consist of a series of short answer questions that require specific responses to questions concerning course content, as well as to more analytical questions. To this end, both exams will consist of two sections. Both sections are to be completed during the same class period: one section for questions concerning content, and one section for analytical questions.

Students should not bring notes or books for use during exams. Students are expected to take responsibility for bringing blue books to all examination periods. Blue books are available through the UTD Bookstore, Off Campus Books, and the SGA.

In addition to the exams and quizzes (see "Grading Policy" for more information concerning quizzes), students will be assigned a short essay of approximately three to four pages. This essay takes the place of a third exam, and affords students the potential to develop ideas and discuss examples in a non-timed environment. Building upon the style for the shorter analytical questions answered in class, the essay will be graded in a similar manner but calls for sustained analysis with a clear argument. Using specific examples as the subject for analysis, students should argue how both *R.U.R.* and *Do Androids Dream?* confirm or respond to the concept of the "Frankenstein complex" defined in *I, Robot*. Students may also use *Blade Runner* in tandem with their analysis of *Do Androids Dream?*, but may not substitute Scott's film for Dick's novel. A detailed assignment sheet for the essay will be distributed in class and posted to eLearning on November 1st.

The course project is creative rather than analytical in nature and gives students the potential to work in small groups to design their own humanoid robot. Note that there are two parts to this.

Part I: First, students should consider the following points:

1) The robot should be humanoid.
2) By extension, the robot's humanoid design should reflect its function to perform a specific task among or in interaction with humans within a world designed for humans. For example, the robot might be a doctor in a bustling metropolitan hospital, but should not work alone absent of interaction with humans within the heart of a volcano.

Part II: The initial design of the robot may be for either a sentient or non-sentient being. With this in mind, the second part of the project requires the robot to extend or develop sentience. If the robot is not already sentient, it must become so and, in gaining sentience, become curious about understanding humankind much like Frankenstein's creature. If the robot is already sentient it should express this same curiosity about understanding humankind. "Understanding humankind" should be read in terms of the central precept of a humanities class: not necessarily what it means to be biologically human, but rather what it means to be a "person."

Though students do not need to reference Spielberg's *A.I.* directly in the project, they should respond to the following questions inspired by the film that we will discuss in class. The questions will come from the robot designed by students so that students should direct their answers as if speaking with their robot.

1) Why did you create me?
2) What does it mean to be a person?
3) Do you consider me to be a person? If not, then is there any way that I can become a person?
4) What does the way you see me mean to the way you think about yourself?

Students will develop their projects as a wiki on eLearning and should plan to incorporate media with their designs and their responses to their robot. A detailed assignment sheet for the course project will be distributed and discussed in class on September 23rd, and posted to eLearning. Students will also have the potential to introduce themselves to their groups and begin work on this date.

Students will be given the opportunity several times throughout the semester to work with their group members in class; nevertheless, students will also need to work on the project outside of class in order to engage the potential to successfully complete it, and may revise any ideas

generated in class prior to the final due date for the project. A short assignment will accompany each class period devoted to work on the project, and failure of students to participate in these assignments will result in a deduction from the final course project grade as explained below.

Moreover, course projects will be checked on December 9th, and the majority of work on the project, including the inclusion of media, should be completed by the beginning of class on this date. Final course projects are due December 11th, and no changes to wikis will be allowed after 8:30 the morning of the 11th. Students should review the findings of their own and other groups for the final exam period. Instead of a final exam, this time will be devoted to discussion of students' completed projects.

Students will be graded as a group, and all group members are expected to contribute at each stage of the process of completing the project. Failure of any individual group member to contribute at any stage of completing the project will result in a penalty to that student's project grade of ten points for each instance that the student fails to participate. For example, a student fails to participate in the first stage of completing the project, but participates in all other stages. Though the group receives a grade of A on the project, the student will receive a grade of B.

Course projects should be near completion by December 9th. Groups that have failed to incorporate media or respond to the assignment in a thoughtful manner by this date will be penalized ten points from the final project grade as a group.

In this case only, student grades will be posted on eLearning. This grade will be posted between the project due date of December 11th and December 18th.

Be sure to check dates for exams, the short essay, and the course project in the "Daily Academic Calendar."

This course will be conducted according to strict codes of academic honesty. All cases of cheating will be fully investigated. Penalties for cheating may include failing an exam, failing the course, or suspension and expulsion from the University. Students are expected to know the University's policies and procedures on such matters, as well as those governing student services, conduct, and obligations.

Attendance

To facilitate the accuracy of the attendance record, the course will observe assigned seating. The instructor and TA expect that students will be present, seated, and ready to participate in class at the beginning of each scheduled class day. **Remember that all exams will ask short answer questions that require specific answers to specific material presented during class time and on eLearning. Moreover, the short essay will require thoughtful response to course content and discussion.**

Students who arrive to class after the TA takes attendance will be counted absent for the day. Students who disrupt the classroom will be counted as absent for the day of the disruption. Students who leave before the end of class will also be counted as absent.

Students who miss class must provide documentation of one of the following legitimate excuses to earn an excused absence:

1) Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their instructor in writing within the first two weeks of the semester (by September 9th) and should discuss with him, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.

2) Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity will be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. Said participation must be documented with a note from a University official involved in the event. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed assignment for making up the work. Students who must travel in association with a University athletic function should plan on completing any work prior to travel.

3) A documented illness. Documentation should clearly state that the student was instructed by a physician not to attend class on a specific date(s) for his or her health and/or for the health of others. The date(s) missed should be specifically stated in the note, as should physician contact information. Non-documented illness will not constitute a valid excuse for missing class.

Students must first present documentation of a legitimate excuse to both the TA (copy) and instructor (original) before a make-up assignment can be scheduled.

Students will have a maximum of one week (seven days; this does include weekends) from the original assignment date to complete the make-up assignment. Students should be aware that a make-up exam will differ from the in-class exam in content. Though the format of the exam will be the same, students seeking to make up the first exam, for example, should expect to be asked different short answer questions than those presented on the in-class exam.

Though missed quizzes can be made up with a valid excuse, students should remember that any individual quiz grade is less important than an overall pattern of participation at a level that exceeds (check +) or meets (check) course expectations.

In the majority of cases, the course TA will proctor make-up exams and quizzes.

At the conclusion of the semester, students who have three or fewer unexcused absences will receive ten points of extra credit towards their lowest semester grade: first exam, second exam, short essay, or course project.

Computers in the Classroom

Students are welcome to use computers during class to take notes, to access course materials on e-reserve, or to check notes or discussion questions posted by the instructor to eLearning.

Any student discovered to be using a computer for any purpose not related to taking notes or accessing course materials will be banned from using a computer in class for the remainder of the semester. This ban may be imposed by either the instructor or TA.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, the professor cannot drop or withdraw any student. Students must do the proper paperwork to ensure that they will not receive a final grade of F in a course if they choose not to attend the class once they are enrolled.

Note: September 11th is the last day to drop this course without incurring a "W."

Additional Important Policies

It is the student's responsibility to review additional University policies concerning disability services, avoiding plagiarism, resources to aid in the potential for success, incomplete grades, student conduct and discipline, academic integrity, technical support, email use, copyright notice, grievance procedures, and religious holy days at http://provost.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

