

## *Course Syllabus*

---

### **Course Information**

#### *Literature of Science Fiction and Fantasy: Cyborgs and Robots*

LIT 3316

Fall 2014

Monday, 7:00-9:45pm

JO 4.614

---

### **Professor Contact Information**

Instructor: Sabrina Starnaman, PhD

Email: [sabrina.starnaman@utdallas.edu](mailto:sabrina.starnaman@utdallas.edu)

Office: JO 5.514

Office Hours: Wednesday, 11:00-1:00pm

*(and by appointment)*

Teaching Assistant (TA): Addison Shierry

Email: TBA

Office: TBA

Office Hours: TBA

*(and by appointment)*

---

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

HUMA 1301 or equivalent

---

### **Course Description**

This course explores the relationship between humans and technology. We will examine how mankind envisions robots and their place within human society. In particular we will look to representations of humanoid machines, as well as human enhancement that blurs the lines among human, machine, and cyborg. We will read and discuss novels, short stories, and drama; and we will view and discuss films and video.

- What makes us human? At what point does a technologically augmented person become something other than human? Are we already cyborgs or is there some future threshold that will constitute our transformation?
- Can humans and machines have meaningful relationships? Can humans and machines be partners? Lovers?
- How does gender figure in the depiction of android robots? Are there clichés that writers revert to when writing about human-robot relationships? What do such clichés tell us about society?
- What do we fear about the proliferation of robots and androids? Have these fears changed over time?
- How do robots or androids stand in for other entities in stories of political criticism? For example, do robots represent the power of the law or government when authors want to make a particularly pointed critique?
- How do writers use fictional robots to tell us about how we treat people in service roles? Do robots represent humans that we consider less than full citizens?

- What models of human enhancement do we imagine for our own future? Will enhancement alienate us from human experience or social relations?

**This course can be applied to the Medical and Scientific Humanities minor.**

Learn more at: [http://provost.utdallas.edu/oueminors/medical\\_and\\_scientific\\_humanities#info](http://provost.utdallas.edu/oueminors/medical_and_scientific_humanities#info)

---

### Required Textbooks and Materials:

#### Texts, Film, and Video Include:

“A Wife Manufactured to Order,” Alice Fuller. (1895) (.pdf on eLearning)

R.U.R., Karel Čapek. (1920)

“Helen O’Loy,” Lester del Rey (1938) (.pdf on eLearning)

*With Folded Hands*, Jack Williamson. (1947) (.pdf on eLearning)

*The Caves of Steel*, Isaac Asimov (1953)

*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Philip K. Dick. (1968)

*The Ship Who Sang*, Anne McCaffrey (1985)

“Fade to White,” Catherynne Valente (2012) (.pdf on eLearning)

“The Girl-Thing Who Went Out for Sushi,” Pat Cardigan. (2012) (.pdf on eLearning)

*Humanity’s End: Why We Should Reject Radical Enhancement*, Nicholas Agar. (2010)

*Metropolis (Metropolis Restored)* (1927) (Available on Netflix)

*The Stepford Wives* (1975)

*Bladerunner* (1982)

*RoboCop* (2014)

*Black Mirror*: “The Entire History of You.” Season 1, ep. 3. BBC (2011)

*Black Mirror*: “Be Right Back.” Season 2, ep. 1. BBC (2013)

Copies of the texts are available at Off Campus Books.

Off Campus Books (located behind Fuzzy’s Tacos)

561 W. Campbell Road, #201

Richardson, TX 75080

---

**Grading Policy**
**Assignments will include:**

Reading quizzes 20 pts each ( <i>unannounced, can be and cannot be made up if missed!</i> )	160 pts.
Short Analytical Response Papers you may submit <i>up to 4 @</i> 40 pts. each Submitted via eLearning by 6:00pm the day of class 300-500 words total—put word count at the top of the first page	120-160 pts.
Final paper or Creative project and Critical Reflection	<u>120 pts.</u>
Total	400-440 pts.

**How to Calculate your Grade:**

401+ points = A+
380-400 pts. = A
367-379 pts. = A-
330-366 pts. = B+
300-329 pts. = B
267-299 pts. = B-
233-266 pts. = C+
200-232 pts. = C
167-199 pts. = C-
123-166 pts. = D
< 124 pts. = F

This is a reading-intensive course. Please make sure that you are prepared to invest a lot of time in reading outside of class.

This course is run as a discussion intensive seminar, so attendance and participation is *very important*. If you want to do well in, or just pass, this class you must attend all the classes. There will be **NO** make-ups or late submissions for missed assignments, but there will be opportunities to earn extra points toward your overall grade. You make the decisions about how many points you wish to earn and therefore what grade you get in this class. The responsibility is in your hands.

Midterm Grades are based on quizzes and Paper 1.

---

**Course Calendar**

Day	Date	In Class—Have Read & Prepared for Discussion	Assignments Due & PRO TIPS
M	8/25	Introduction, syllabus, etc. Discussion of Cyborgs and Robots, guiding questions, etc.	
M	9/1	<b>Labor Day—NO CLASS</b>	
M	9/8	“A Wife Manufactured to Order,” “Helen O’Loy,”	<b>PRO TIP:</b> Begin reading ahead if you

		Discuss Paper 1 Overview of Creative and Final Projects	haven't already.
<b>Wednesday, 9/10—Last Day to Drop Without a “W”</b>			
M	9/15	“What is Radical Enhancement,” Chapter 1 from <i>Humanity’s End</i> <i>The Stepford Wives</i> (view in class) 115 minutes & discuss “A Wife Manufactured to Order,” “Helen O’Loy,”	<b>PRO TIP 1:</b> Begin reading ahead if you haven’t already.  <b>PRO TIP 2:</b> If I decided to do Final Analytical Project I would plan to do papers 1-3 or 1-4 in order to be best prepared for Final Project AND to spread the workload out more evenly.
M	9/22	<i>Metropolis</i> (view in class) 148 minutes  Discuss Papers 1 & 2	<b>Paper 1 due (REQUIRED)</b> submitted via eLearning by 6:00pm the day of class  Decide on Creative Project or Final Analytical Project
M	9/29	<i>R.U.R. &amp; Metropolis</i>  Creative Project Workshop - 9 p.m.	<b>PRO TIP:</b> Begin reading ahead if you haven’t already.
M	10/6	<i>With Folded Hands</i> “Radical Enhancement and Post Humanity” Chapter 2 from <i>Humanity’s End</i> (have read all of both by today’s class)	<b>Paper 2 due</b> submitted via eLearning by 6:00pm the day of class  <b>PRO TIP:</b> Begin reading <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> if you haven’t already.
Thursday 10/9-Sunday 10/12 Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts (SLSA) Conference in Dallas			

M	10/13	<i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> (have read all of it by today's class)  Creative Project Workshop	
M	10/20	<i>Bladerunner</i> (view in class) 117 minutes & <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i> (bring book-will continue discussion)  Discuss Paper 3	<b>PRO TIP:</b> I recommend having completed Chapters 3 & 4 of Agar before coming to class since we will be discussing Paper 3.
W	10/22	No Office Hours this day. Email for an appointment	
M	10/27	“The Technologist—Ray Kurzweil and the Law of Accelerating Returns,” and “Is Uploading Ourselves into Machines a Good Bet?” Chapters 3 & 4 from <i>Humanity's End</i> , <i>Bladerunner</i> & <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i>  Creative Project Workshop-9 p.m. Sign-up for Creative Project Workshops (Must be present) Bring seven (7) hard copies of your story to class. No copies? Analytical paper for you.	<b>Paper 3 due</b> submitted via eLearning by 6:00pm the day of class  Creative Project people: Bring seven (7) hard copies of your story to class.  <b>PRO TIP:</b> Begin reading <i>The Ship Who Sang</i> if you haven't already.
<b>Sunday 11/2 Daylight Savings—Change Your Clocks, Come to Class on Time.</b>			
M	11/3	<i>RoboCop</i> (2014) (view in class) 117 minutes Discuss <i>RoboCop</i> , <i>Bladerunner</i> & <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i>	Creative Project Workshop #1 this week
M	11/10	“The Therapist—Aubrey deGrey's Strategies for Engineered Senescence,” and “The Philosopher—on the Morality of Enhancement” Chapter 5 & 7 from <i>Humanity's End</i> <i>Black Mirror</i> : “The Entire History of You,” (view in class) 44 minutes  Discuss Paper 4	<b>PRO TIP:</b> I recommend having completed <i>The Ship Who Sang</i> before coming to class since we will be discussing Paper 4.
M	11/17	<i>The Ship Who Sang</i> (have read all of it by today's class)	<b>Paper 4 due</b> submitted via

		Final Analytical Project Workshop	eLearning by 6:00pm the day of class  Creative Project people: Bring seven (7) hard copies of your story to class.  <b>PRO TIP: A quiz over the book is very likely.</b>
M	11/24	<b>Fall Break—NO CLASS</b>	
M	12/1	“Who Wants to Live Forever?” Chapter 6 <i>Humanity’s End</i> <i>Black Mirror</i> : “Be Right Back,” (view in class) 44 minutes & <i>The Ship Who Sang</i> (bring book-may continue discussion)  Discuss Paper 5	Creative Project Workshop #2 this week
M	12/8	“Fade to White” & “The Girl-Thing Who Went Out for Sushi” Overview Discussion of Entire Class	<b>Paper 5 due</b> submitted via eLearning by 6:00pm the day of class  <b>PRO TIP: Expect a quiz over stories.</b>
<b>Friday 12/12 – Thursday 12/18 FINAL EXAM WEEK</b>			

---

### Course and Instructor Policies

As an upper-division literature course, LIT 3316 is a discussion-intensive seminar. Thus, whole group discussions will dominate our class periods, though there will be some lecture and small group discussions. Active class participation is very important to the success of the course and to the quality of your experience in this class. If you are present and engaged, our class will be productive and enjoyable. That means everyone needs to come to class **on time and be prepared.**

Anyone who uses a laptop, tablet computer, electronic reader, or cell phone for activities not related to our work in class (activities like checking Facebook, sending texts, watching a ballgame, IMing, etc.) will have their behavior identified publicly, recorded, and their grade lowered accordingly. This behavior is disrespectful to your classmates and professor.

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.

**No late assignments are accepted. You may turn in assignments early though. You cannot make up missed quizzes. There are opportunities to earn points to offset points missed.**

Extensive note taking in class is 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.

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. [Feel free to check the research: e.g., <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1078740> or any of the vast literature on the detriments of multitasking for performance.] Laptops and other electronic devices can also be a distraction for other students. You may read texts on computers, tablets, Kindles, etc., but I don't recommend it. Taking notes on digital texts is generally less effective than taking notes on paper texts.

We will use our full course time. (FYI: Packing up early is a pet peeve of mine).

---

## PRO TIPS

### You want to do well in this class?

- Read the syllabus carefully and refer to it often.
- Write in your books and/or take notes while you read! Pose questions and make observations as you read and write them down.
- Come to *every* class *prepared*. Read the stories and books carefully and take time to skim them before class to refresh details that you may have forgotten or details that you may have overlooked the first read-through. Reflect upon the discussion questions and jot down notes and page numbers that you think are relevant to the questions.
- Consider using an audiobook version of the texts alongside the print texts if you think it would help you.
- Come to class with questions, sections of texts you want to discuss already flagged, and comments to make.
- Listen and contribute actively to the conversation.
- Know where my office is. Know where the TA's office is. Know when we have our office hours.
- Visit us in Office Hours, especially if you have a question or observation that you did not get to make in class. Visit us in Office Hours even if you don't have questions.
- Complete every assignment on time.
- If you have concerns or questions about your work or performance (at any stage in the process), come see us. We are happy to work with you.
- Get the email addresses or phone numbers of a couple of students in case you need to find out what you missed. Consider discussing your project or the readings with each other before they are due.
- Take your papers to the Writing Center or find a quality proofreader to edit your project.
- Come to class on time and do not pack up early. If something comes up and you have to be absent or leave early, please talk to me about it. Life happens.

- If you are having difficulties (in life, class, etc.) talk to me before you get too far in a hole. Everyone has a tough semester.

---

## UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

### Disability Services

It is the policy and practice of The University of Texas at Dallas to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. However, written notification from the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA) is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for a course, please discuss it with an OSA staff member and allow at least one week's advanced notice. Students who have questions about receiving accommodations, or those who have, or think they may have, a disability (mobility, sensory, health, psychological, learning, etc.) are invited to contact the Office of Student AccessAbility for a confidential discussion.

The primary functions of the Office of Student AccessAbility are to provide:

- academic accommodations for students with a documented permanent physical, mental or sensory disability
- non-academic accommodations
- resource and referral information and advocacy support as necessary and appropriate.

OSA is located in the Student Services Building, suite 3.200. They can be reached by phone at (972) 883-2098, or by email at [disabilityservice@utdallas.edu](mailto:disabilityservice@utdallas.edu).

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

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

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

## Directions for Creative Project

---

Write a complete, polished science fiction or fantasy short story of 1000-2500+/- words that explores some question or theme that we have discussed this semester. Your final project may be a collection of flash fiction stories.

We will spend time in class discussing how authors create characters, settings, and plots. We will examine and analyze a variety of approaches and practices that apply to creating fiction.

- You must present your workshop group members with hard copies of your stories in class on the days noted on the syllabus.
- You must attend all of the creative writing workshops.
- You must provide complete and specific feedback on your group members' stories. We will discuss how to give constructive feedback in class. You will have handouts to guide your feedback.
- You must provide your workshop leader (Addison or me) with a hard copy of your feedback to each person's story at the beginning of the workshop.
- You must revise your story. Everyone's work can be improved over the course of the semester. I do not expect everyone to write ground-breaking fiction—I do expect everyone to meet deadlines, experiment with writing, be constructive and helpful to their groupmates, and turn in final texts that are polished and free of errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, formatting, etc.
- You will turn in a portfolio of your final draft and earlier drafts of your story, as well as your group members' feedback on your story.
- You will include a 300-500 word reflection on the way in which your story is situated within the readings, questions, and discussions from this course.
- I strongly encourage workshop groups/group members to arrange additional meetings to discuss their work.
- I strongly discourage students from trying to use a novel in progress as the starting point for their story.
- Portfolio is due at the Final Exam meeting. (We do not have a final exam in this class, but will have a final meeting during the assigned final exam period).
- No fan fiction.

You may create an additional aspect to the story if you wish. Additions could include:

Sound file  
Game  
Illustrations  
Animation

**Creative Project Grading**

1. Submitting your drafts to your group members on time (0-5 points X 2 – 10 total points)
2. Quality of feedback to group members (0-10 points X 2 – 20 total points)
3. Attendance at workshops (0-5 points X 2 – 10 total points)
4. Final story quality (1-60 points – 60 total points)
5. Final reflection (1-20 points – 20 total points)

Here is a graphic that shows how the grading will be broken down:

Drafts submitted	Meeting 1 _____ 0-5 points		Meeting 2 _____ 0-5 points	
Quality Feedback provided to group members on time	Meeting 1 _____ 0-10 points		Meeting 2 _____ 0-10 points	
Workshop Attendance	Meeting 1 _____ 0-5 points		Meeting 2 _____ 0-5 points	
Final Story Quality Final story portfolio <i>must</i> show that changes were made to the story over the course of the semester	Excellent-Very Good _____ 60-45 points	Good-Satisfactory _____ 31-44 points	Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory _____ 15-30 points	Unsatisfactory-Failing _____ 14-0 points
Final Reflection	Excellent-Very Good _____ 20-15 points	Good-Satisfactory _____ 14-10 points	Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory _____ 9-5 points	Unsatisfactory-Failing _____ 4-0 points

120 points possible for Creative Project.

## Directions for Final Project

---

Write a complete, polished analytical paper that incorporates ideas from Nicholas Agar's *Humanity's End: Why We Should Reject Radical Enhancement* to explore some aspect of one or two texts from the course. This paper should be 1500-2000 words long.

We will spend time in class discussing critical questions just like the one you will want to guide your final paper. Take notes on ideas that you find particularly interesting—perhaps you can use an idea or comment that you hear in class as a starting point for your paper topic. You will submit three or four short papers that will be similar in structure to the longer final paper. I strongly recommend that you expand one of your earlier papers into the more developed final paper.

- You must have a clear thesis.
- You must craft a well-supported and logical argument in your paper.
- You must use examples from the fiction that we have read in class to support points that you make. Examples from the text should be introduced and fully explicated. Using an example from the text requires quite a bit of text to frame it properly.
- You must incorporate an idea or two from the Nicholas Agar's *Humanity's End: Why We Should Reject Radical Enhancement*. This book explores the ideas of many philosophers, futurists and thinkers, so you are not just locked into one writers point of view. Also consider that you need not just use the book to support your own points you can use a section or thinker to frame a counter argument.
- You must revise your paper. There are aspects of your paper, perhaps major ones, which can be improved with revision. I recommend that you have an outside reader look at your paper and give you comments.
- I encourage you to come and speak with the TA and me about your paper at any point. We are happy to read drafts in our offices before the final paper is due and give you feedback and suggestions.
- You will turn in a portfolio of your final draft and earlier drafts of your story, as well as your group members' feedback on your story.
- You will include a 300-500 word reflection on the way in which your paper is situated within the readings, questions, and discussions from this course. You may also include reflections on your experience writing it or working through the critical questions at the heart of your paper.
- I strongly encourage you to meet with other students to discuss your ideas, the books, and workshop your paper during the semester.
- The paper is due by 5pm on Friday, December 12th. (We do not have a final exam in this class, but will have a final optional meeting during the assigned final exam period).

### Final Analytical Paper Grading

1. Clarity and sophistication of thesis (up to 10 points)
2. Effectiveness and appropriateness of examples used (up to 20 points)
3. Use of outside text—Nicholas Agar's *Humanity's End: Why We Should Reject Radical Enhancement* (up to 10 points)
4. Quality of paper as a whole (up to 60 points)
5. Final reflection (up to 20 total points)

Here is a graphic that shows how the grading will be broken down:

<b>Thesis</b> Clarity and sophistication of thesis	Excellent-Very Good _____ 10-8 points	Good-Satisfactory _____ 7-6 points	Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory _____ 5-3 points	Unsatisfactory-Failing _____ 2-0 points
<b>Examples</b> Effectiveness and appropriateness of examples used	Excellent-Very Good _____ 20-15 points	Good-Satisfactory _____ 14-10 points	Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory _____ 9-5 points	Unsatisfactory-Failing _____ 4-0 points
<b>Support Materials</b> Use of outside text—Nicholas Agar's <i>Humanity's End: Why We Should Reject Radical Enhancement</i>	Excellent-Very Good _____ 10-8 points	Good-Satisfactory _____ 7-6 points	Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory _____ 5-3 points	Unsatisfactory-Failing _____ 2-0 points
<b>Final Paper Quality</b> Quality of paper as a whole	Excellent-Very Good _____ 60-45 points	Good-Satisfactory _____ 31-44 points	Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory _____ 15-30 points	Unsatisfactory-Failing _____ 14-0 points
<b>Final Reflection</b>	Excellent-Very Good _____ 20-15 points	Good-Satisfactory _____ 14-10 points	Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory _____ 9-5 points	Unsatisfactory-Failing _____ 4-0 points

120 points possible for Final Analytical Project.

## FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) for LIT 3316 Literature of Science Fiction

---

### Missing Class

**Q:** I am . . . standing up in my sister's wedding / taking my parent/partner/pet to the doctor / scheduled for a Caesarian Section / picking up The Pope/President Obama/my kid at the airport / bound to some obligation that will keep me from attending class . . . can I take the quiz before class?

**A:** No. Everyone takes the quiz in class at the same time. This is why there are extra points built into the course.

**Q:** I missed the quiz earlier because I . . . got into a car accident / was abducted by aliens for 35 Earth minutes (4 days in alien time) / birthed a baby at 6:30pm this evening, but rushed to class immediately afterwards / was trying to submit my paper on eLearning but my computer crashed and I had to stay there and keep trying / some other unexpected event that made me miss part of class . . . can I take the quiz during break?

**A:** No. Everyone takes the quiz in class at the same time. This is why there are extra points built into the course.

**Q:** I work full time . . . so I will be late for class a lot / and will be traveling out of town on 4 Mondays during the semester / so I won't give your class much attention . . . what advice do you have for me?

**A:** Maybe you shouldn't take this class this semester. If this class is really important to you maybe you can change your work schedule.

**Q:** What if I bring you a note that proves that my absence is valid then can I make up the quiz?

**A:** No. This is why there are extra points built into the course.

**Q:** I am super sick and am . . . running a fever / vomiting / in the hospital . . . should I come to class?

**A:** No. This is why there are extra points built into the course.

**Q:** Should I tell you why I missed class?

**A:** Not unless you really want to. If there is some unexpected, ongoing reason that arises during the semester that will make you miss more than one class come speak with me/contact me.

**Q:** Are you mad at me because I had to miss class?

**A:** No. This is why there are extra points built into the course.

### Fear & Insecurity

**Q:** I am . . . an ATEC major not a Literary Studies Major / a Literary Studies major not some freaky Science Fiction nerd / a Computer Science/Neuroscience/Performing Arts major / a person enrolled at UTD and in this class . . . and I am worried that I won't do well because I don't have the required skill set for LIT 3316 Literature of Science Fiction.

**A:** I know. This course does not expect that you already 1. know how to do upper-division literary studies analysis (like those advanced Literary Studies majors) or 2. already have an encyclopedic knowledge of science fiction (like those awesome SF nerds). In this class we will build a set of critical skills (reading and thinking) and technical skills (discussing and writing) from the ground up, while simultaneously developing a common set of texts that we can all talk about. This course is

designed so that you can fail an assignment early in the semester and then get better at the task (with effort) and still do well in the class. This is not my first rodeo—don't worry. After a couple of weeks we will all be on common ground. The TA and I are here to help you. Don't fret in isolation, come fret with us. We can help you improve.

**Q:** I am returning to school after . . . 25 years in the work force / being a theoretical physicist/surgical nurse/hermit in the desert / some set of events that mean I am not a 20-year old college junior . . . and I am worried that I don't know how to be a successful student.

**A:** If you are worried about this you will likely work much harder than the 20-year old college junior who is smug about their mastery of university. Consider asking someone in this class who seems really good at college to be your study partner. Put together a small group of interested students who will meet for coffee/wine/ice cream each week and discuss the readings and paper assignments before class (It isn't cheating. It is fulfilling your professor's greatest dream in life—the creation of a self-motivated student discussion group based on the professor's course. \*a beam of light breaks through the clouds, somewhere a choir sings\*). The TA and I are here to help you. Don't fret in isolation, come fret with us. We can help you improve.

**Q:** I am . . . shy /quiet / not a shameless participator like the person sitting behind me . . . and therefore I don't feel comfortable speaking up in class, but I want to participate actively. What should I do?

**A:** Talk to me directly, perhaps after one of the first days of class. Come to my office hours or the TA's office hours and speak to us one-on-one. Write down your thoughts and share them with us. Make an appointment to see one of us. Make good use of the small group discussions that is why we have them.

### eLearning

**Q:** I am . . . technophobic / positive that eLearning doesn't work on my computer / sure that I cannot figure out how to get to the online readings/submit my papers / technoaggressive . . . and therefore have trouble with eLearning. What should I do?

**A:** 1. You should have faith that you will make it work and 2. do not give up until you have made eLearning submit to you. There are links to online tutorials all over the eLearning page to help you. Use them. You should go explore eLearning before the eleventh hour when you need it to work perfectly for you. There is a virtual helpdesk on eLearning, if you have trouble ask them for help. However if it is 25 minutes before your paper is due and you want them to help you submit it before it is late, your expectations are unreasonable.

**Q:** I just finished my paper, it is 5:57pm on the day it is due at 6:00pm, I am trying to submit my paper via the eLearning/Turnitin.com link, but it isn't uploading! What do I do!

**A:** Build a time machine. If you wait until the last minute to submit your paper the odds of being thwarted by technology skyrocket. This is a big class and many other people have waited until the last minute. Instead submit your paper on Sunday afternoon or some other time well before the due date. This is your warning. I don't accept late work. This is why there are extra points built into the course. On the off chance that you are trying to turn it in early and it is still not uploading, send the TA an email explaining your distressing state of affairs with a .pdf attachment of your paper EXACTLY AS IT WILL BE UPLOADED to the eLearning/Turnitin.com site and keep trying to upload it before it is late. Obviously if you have evidence that you tried to submit your paper well before the 6:00pm cut off and you sent the TA an email with a .pdf of your paper in it well before

the 6:00pm cut off, then I will work with you about the late submission of your paper.<sup>1</sup> I am not a monster, . . . probably.

### Quizzes

**Q:** Will there be a quiz . . . today / next week / on the Monday after break?

**A:** Quizzes are unannounced and cannot be made up.

**Q:** Will the quiz be at the beginning of class because I . . . have to pick up my kid at the airport / am in labor / am bound to some obligation that will keep me from staying in class?

**A:** Quizzes may be given at the beginning, middle, or end of class. If you are not in the classroom when the other students complete the quiz then you have missed it and it cannot be made up.

**Q:** What material will the quiz cover?

**A:** Most likely the texts that you were supposed to read for class that day, plus text or films from the previous class if we did not have a quiz on them.

### Miscellaneous

**Q:** If a book or story is listed on the syllabus calendar next to a certain date does that mean I should be reading it that week or that I should have finished reading by class that day?

**A:** You should have read the book in its entirety before you come to class that day.

**Q:** If a book, story, or book chapter is listed on the syllabus calendar on two sequential days does that mean that I should read the first half for the first date and have it finished for the next class?

**A:** No. You should have read the book, story, or book chapter in its entirety before you come to the first class. If a book is listed next to two sequential dates it means we will likely discuss the book over two class meetings.

**Q:** I am . . . claustrophobic and the size and intensity of this class is freaking me out / pregnant and about to hurl / a person who needs to get out of class in a hurry. What should I do?

**A:** Plan ahead if possible. Choose a seat at or near the end of the aisle. If you need to step out do so as quietly as possible and reenter as quickly and quietly as possible. Everyone here is human, . . . probably.

---

<sup>1</sup> a screenshot or email exchange with the helpdesk are excellent evidence.