

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND WRITING STUDIES
WESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**ENGLISH 2071F/G (SPECULATIVE FICTION: SCIENCE FICTION)
ONLINE--2014--Section 650**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The science fiction course explores a selection of science fiction short stories and novels by

fiction as a literary genre in the Twentieth century and to explore the critical themes that define this literature. In the course of reading through the materials, students should remember that the texts are not simply sites for imaginative speculation, but rather reflect and respond to very specific historical conditions. This means that when H.G. Wells describes the conflict between the Eloi and the Morlocks as representing the future development of English society, he is metaphorically discussing the oppressive class structure of late Victorian England. Similarly, when the literary and cultural critic Fredric Jameson identifies *Neuromancer* as a crucial expression of the contemporary era, he is referring to the recent development of Cyberpunk as an expression of transnational corporate realities and global paranoia. What these references should remind students as they read is that science fiction constitutes a literature of social criticism anchored in its historical context.

Frankenstein and ending with two contemporary novels-- *Neuromancer* and *He, She and It*--that offer a dialogue on the possible effects and changes brought about by the technological advancements in what many define as the present age of information or the postmod (*The Time Machine* and *The War of the Worlds*) that are preoccupied with and embodied a synthesis of evolutionism, pragmatism, and strands of socialism. Next, we examine *A Canticle For Leibowitz*, a Cold War novel that reflects both the apocalyptic sensibility of the era of nuclear confrontation in the sixties and the feelings of *The Left Hand of Darkness* that explores the possibilities of an androgynous society unmarked by the divisions of gender. And after *Forever Peace* that

WEEK 8— *The Left Hand of Darkness*..

WEEK 9— Alien Encounters. Begin *Forever Peace*.

WEEK 10— *Forever Peace* and The Body.

WEEK 11— William Gibson, *Neuromancer*.

WEEK 12— Marge Piercy, *He, She and It* and Conclusion.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Essay # 1 (1,500 words / 6 pages)	25%
Essay # 2 (2,000 words / 8 pages)	35%
Discussion bonus points	1.5%
Final Exam	40%

PLAGIARISM

There is **ZERO** tolerance for plagiarism in this course.

Please read the official University of Western Ontario notice below. A first offence will result in a mark of **zero** on the assignment, and the Department of English as well as your Faculty will be notified (this is the minimum penalty); a second, or very blatant, offence will result in **failure** of the course and debarment from all further Department of English courses. The Department of English also takes seriously internal plagiarism; you should be aware that the department keeps a database of all internet essay sites. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to consult with the instructor or the English Undergraduate Office.

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

Students must pass the course work and final exam to pass the course.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.