

The literary genre called Science Fiction enables us to explore our nature, and that of the universe we inhabit, by postulating worlds, cultures and technologies that do not (yet) exist, but could, and the consequences thereof. This course focuses on the sub-genre called hard science fiction, in which the science/technology is more or less plausible. Students should be prepared to address the genre from both its scientific and literary sides. Covers the Genre / Media topic for the English major. *3 credits.*

Prerequisite(s): WRT 102; one D.E.C. B or HUM course; one D.E.C. E or SNW course

Offered: This course is offered as both AST 389 and EGL 389. **N.B.** Those who want EGL credit should check that this is correct!

Satisfies: DEC: H, SBC: CER, STAS

Instructor: Prof. Alan Calder
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IACS (Laufer) L164
(631)2-1176

Class Meeting: Tuesdays 6:30 – 9:20 PM, Frey 328.

Office Hours: T 2:00 PM–3:30 PM, Th 10:30 AM–12:00 PM IACS (Laufer) L164. Other times by appointment.

Text: Readings will consist of stories and novels. The instructor will provide copies of stories, but students will be responsible for obtaining copies of novels. A recommended general astronomy text is *Cosmic Perspective* by Bennett et al.

Evaluation: 33% Report I, 33% Story or Report II, and 34% Class participation. Grades will be posted on

Brightspace. The instructor will discuss grades during office hours but for privacy reasons will not report or discuss grades via email.

Final letter grades will be assigned on a standard scale (values in percents): $100 < A \geq 93$, $93 < A- \geq 90$, $90 < B+ \geq 87$, $87 < B \geq 83$, $83 < B- \geq 80$, $80 < C+ \geq 77$, $77 < C \geq 73$, $73 < C- \geq 70$, $70 < D+ \geq 67$, $67 < D \geq 60$, $60 < F \geq 70$.

At the discretion of the instructor, a curve of additional points added to raw scores or a similar adjustment may be applied prior to assessing letter grades.

Homework: Students are expected to read the assigned material before each class and participate in discussion during class. The assignments will be a report on a novel of the student's choice and an original story composed by the student (or a second report if a student insists). Each homework assignment will have the approximately the same weight in the total grade, and will apply to a total of homework points earned during the semester. Students are welcome to discuss the material, but written work should be produced solely by the student. Copying or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in addressing assignments should be treated as discussion as described above. AI is a tool and should be treated as such and used constructively. Work produced by AI is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Please see the section on academic integrity below.

Final Exam: May 14 8:30 AM - 11:00 PM as scheduled by the University Registrar. Nota Bene: The ultimate authority on the date and time of the final is the University Registrar. Students should monitor the exam schedule on the Registrar's web page (<https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/registrar/registration/exams.php>) during the semester as changes have happened in past semesters. Please also note the student responsibility statement on the Registrar's exam schedule page.

Student Accessibility Support Center Statement: If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Student Accessibility Support Center, Stony Brook Union Suite 107, (631) 632-6748, or at sasc@stonybrook.edu. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Student Accessibility Support Services. Information might be found on the website <https://ehs.stonybrook.edu/programs/fire-and-emergency-services/alarms-evacuations.php?accordion=content-d19e489>.

Academic Integrity: Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Professions, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html

Critical Incident Management: Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

Electronic Communication: Email to University email accounts is an important way of communicating for this course. For most students the email address is 'firstname.lastname@stonybrook.edu', and the account can be accessed here: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/mycloud>. ***It is your responsibility to read your email received at this account.*** For instructions about how to verify a University email address see this: <http://it.stonybrook.edu/help/kb/checking-or-changing-your-mail-forwarding-address-in-the-epo>. You can set up email forwarding using instructions here: <http://it.stonybrook.edu/help/kb/setting-up-mail-forwarding-in-google-mail>. If you choose to forward your University email to another account, the University is not responsible for any undeliverable messages.

Religious Observances: See the University policy statement regarding religious holidays at https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/registrar/calendars/religious_holidays.php#2025. Students are expected to notify the course professors by email of their intention to take time out for religious observance. This should be done as soon as possible but definitely before the end of the 'add/drop' period. At that time they can discuss with the instructor(s) how they will be able to make up the work covered.

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Note that the lecture topics and dates are subject to change depending on progress of the class. Exam dates will not change.

class #	Date	topic ^a
1	Jan. 27	Organization, Intro to SciFi/Astronomy, Writing <i>On Writing Science Fiction</i> Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. <i>Colossus: The Forbin Project</i> (Movie)
2	Feb. 3	Literary Analysis of Science Fiction, Writing Fiction <i>The Little Prince</i> by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry <i>The Cold Equations</i> by Tom Goodman <i>Colossus: The Forbin Project</i> (Movie)
3	Feb. 10	Hard Science Fiction <i>The Martian</i> by Andy Weir TBA <i>Neutron Star</i> by Larry Niven
4	Feb. 17	Space and Time Travel TBA TBA TBA
5	Feb. 24	History of SciFi <i>The Time Machine</i> by H. G. Wells <i>Le Micromégas</i> by Voltaire TBA
6	Mar. 3	Apocalypse Fiction <i>A Canticle for Leibowitz</i> by Walter Miller <i>By the Waters of Babylon</i> by Stephen Vincent Benét. TBA
7	Mar. 10	The Near Future <i>Harrison Bergeron</i> Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. TBA TBA
	Mar. 17	SPRING BREAK

^aBe sure to read the assigned reading before each class! Movies and other video presentations will be shown during class time but you are welcome to watch in advance.

class #	Date	topic ^a
8	Mar. 24	The Far Future TBA TBA TBA
9	Mar. 31	Aliens and Contact <i>Rendezvous with Rama</i> by Arthur C. Clarke TBA TBA
10	Apr. 7	Distopias TBA <i>With Folded Hands</i> by Jack Williamson TBA
11	Apr. 14	Speculation <i>Nightfall</i> by Isaac Asimov. <i>The Star</i> by Arthur C. Clarke.
12	Apr. 21	Robots and AI TBA TBA TBA
13	Apr. 28	TBA TBA TBA TBA
14	May 5	TBA TBA TBA TBA
Final	May 11	Final exam 11:15 AM - 1:45 PM (Comprehensive)

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Note that the schedule above will evolve according to progress and class interest. Here is a list of readings we most likely will cover at some point:

Stories:

Nightfall by Isaac Asimov.

Freedom by Sensurround (Aran Shamash?)

The Star by Arthur C. Clarke.

By the Waters of Babylon by Stephen Vincent Benét.

Neutron Star by Larry Niven

Novels:

The Forever War by Joe Haldeman

A Canticle for Leibowitz by Walter Miller

The Time Machine by H. G. Wells

Rendezvous with Rama by Arthur C. Clarke

Dragon's Egg by Robert Forward