

ENGLISH 300: SHORT STORY: SCIENCE FICTION SPRING 2015

DR. CHRISTOPHER L. MORROW

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OFFICE HOURS:
T: 10:00 am – 11:00 am
W: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
R: 10:00 am – 11:00 am
and by appointment.

COURSE MEETING TIMES: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays, Simpkins 014

A person may sleep many years at the fountain of learning, and yet awake no physician.
Mary Trye, *Medicatrix*, (1675)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This general education course focuses on the literary form of the short story. Therefore, we will read and analyze these stories both in terms of their formal fictional elements (plot, points of view, symbolism, authorial and narrative strategies, etc.) as well as their conceptual content. We will examine how the form of the short story contributes to the meaning. Because short stories are obviously short, what is unsaid or only implied often plays a more prominent role than in longer forms. Short stories, like poetry, often require the reader to fill in more details. These qualities make it an ideal form for science fiction. In fact, the short story is the dominant form of science fiction. This course examines the science fiction short story as a specific form of narrative fiction, asking questions about the significance of length and its impact on the formal and thematic elements of the stories themselves. We will examine short stories both individually and in the context of single author collections, asking how our understanding and appreciation of short stories shift in these different contexts.

As a general education course, this course will also provide students the opportunity to continue to develop and practice critical reading and writing skills. No previous knowledge of science fiction, short stories, or literary analysis is expected.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bacigalupi, Paolo. *Pump Six and Other Stories*. San Francisco: Night Shade Books, 2010. Print.

Butler, Octavia. *Bloodchild and Other Stories*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005. Print.

Delany, Samuel. *Aye, and Gomorrah: And Other Stories*. New York: Vintage Books, 2003. Print.

Evans, Arthur B. et. al. *The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*. Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2010. Print.

Le Guin, Ursula K. *A Fisherman of the Inland Sea: Stories*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2005. Print.

Bring relevant text to every class

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENTS

Participation (10%): Discussion in this course relies on strong, nuanced, and consistent participation from each student in the class. Therefore, I expect students to have read and reflected on the assignment in advance and to come to class prepared to discuss it. Students are required to participate in discussion regularly by answering questions, posing questions, and making analytical comments. I will generally (but not always) rely on voluntary participation. Participation will be evaluated using the following general criteria:

- A: Student contributes *daily* and *significantly* and always actively focuses on class discussion.
- B: Student contributes *regularly* and always actively focuses on class discussion.
- C: Student contributes *sporadically* and/or always actively focuses on class discussion.
- D: Student contributes *rarely* and/or frequently does not stay actively focused on the discussion.
- F: Student does not contribute and does not stay actively focused on the discussion.

I do not expect nor require students to have the “right” answer or to provide ground-breaking analysis but merely to engage in the process of discussing and analyzing the literature. Remember that quality is better than quantity but quantity is better than no quantity.

Quizzes (10%): There will be a series of objective quizzes covering the reading assigned for that particular day. Quizzes will consist mostly of objective questions. Because some quizzes will be announced in advance and some will not, keeping up with the reading is essential. Quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class. Being tardy will result in either getting less time to complete the quiz or missed altogether. Quizzes missed due to tardiness or absence cannot be made up. However, students will be allowed to drop their lowest quiz grade. Occasionally, I might assign other minor assignments (less than a page of writing) that will count as quizzes. These assignments will be announced in class.

Reading Responses (2.5% each; 10% total): Students will write 4 short (75-125 word) reading responses. For each response, the student will critically reflect on and analyze one story. Students may utilize one of the questions from the readings about fiction or science fiction. This analysis may also include discussing a formal element and its contribution to the concepts of the work, starting to unpack the theme of the work, or exploring the unstated assumptions or hidden complications in the work. While it does not need a thesis as such, the reflection should be unified, contestable and should ground the analysis in one significant quote (which does not count in your word count). These will be submitted to WesternOnline. See prompt for details.

DUE: Varies

Essays (15% each; 30% total): Students will write 2 short literary analysis/argument essays. Each essay must be 4-5 typed, double-spaced pages and must conform to MLA guidelines for format, in-text citation, and Works Cited page. I will distribute more specific information regarding these assignments as they approach.

Essay Policies:

Pre-writing: There may be pre-writing assignments (such as topic paragraph, thesis sentence, outline, etc.) for each essay. Failure to complete these assignments will result in a penalty to the final paper grade.

Rough Drafts: You must bring to class a complete typed rough draft that meets the minimum length requirements for the assignment. If you fail to do so, the highest grade the final draft can receive is a D.

Late: Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date, after which they will be late. Papers will be submitted in hard copy and electronically (via WesternOnline). Late papers incur a 5% penalty for every calendar day. If you need an extension, send a written request via email stating the reason for the extension request. In the event that you submit your paper outside of class (i.e. email, under my door, etc.), it is your responsibility to confirm that I received it.

Essay #1 **Rough Draft Due: February 26th**
 Essay #2 **Rough Draft Due: April 30th**

Final Draft: March 5th
Final Draft: May 7th

Exams (20% each; 40% total): There will be a midterm and a final exam, each covering approximately one half of the course. The exams will be derived directly from the readings as well as class lecture and discussion. Each exam will consist of objective and analytical sections. Therefore, I recommend students take careful notes and pay close attention in class.

Midterm Exam: March 12th

Final Exam: Thursday, May 14th, 10:00 am – 11:50 am

DISTRIBUTION AND GRADING SCALE

Quizzes	10%
Participation	10%
Reading Responses	10%
Essay #1	15%
Essay #2	15%
Midterm	20%
Final	20%

A	93-100%	B+	87-89 %	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%	F	0%-59%
A-	90-92%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	63-66%		
		B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	D-	60-62%		

**Failure to complete all major assignments will result in a failing grade.*

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Regular attendance is not only mandatory but essential for success in this course. Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis and will be held accountable for any material covered in class, including class discussion, announcements, and any changes to reading schedule and assignments. Students are responsible for getting information and class notes from a fellow classmate. Preparation is a crucial part of attendance. Therefore, students are required to bring the appropriate text to every class meeting.

Each student is allowed *four* absences for any reason – “legitimate” or otherwise -- ranging from illness to oversleeping. I do not require students to explain or document these absences, nor does documentation “excuse” the absence. Allowances may be made in extreme circumstances (i.e. serious prolonged illness). These circumstances will need to be documented, and the student must contact me as soon as possible.

Possible Attendance/Preparation Penalties:

- Failure to bring the anthology to class will result in a 5% penalty to the participation grade.
- After five, each subsequent absence will result in a 3% penalty to the final grade.
- Students who miss 9 or more total classes will receive an automatic F for the course.

Tardiness: I am not bothered by individuals who are occasionally late for class or must occasionally leave class early – the key word being *occasionally*. However, if you anticipate that you must consistently arrive late or leave early, you need to replace this course with another.

If you arrive after I take roll, it is your responsibility to speak with me after class to ensure I record your attendance. If you do not speak with me, you may be inadvertently counted absent. If you miss more than half of the class due to tardiness, it will count as an absence.

Scholastic Dishonesty: Scholastic dishonesty of any kind on any assignment undermines the quality of education at WIU and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This includes cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submissions, and plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty of any kind will result in an F in the course and will be reported to CAGAS. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes scholastic dishonesty. I will also be happy to answer any questions you may have. You should also consult the University policy at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>.

Americans with Disabilities Act: “In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s), you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through the Disability Resource Center and provide it to the instructor. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor’s attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Resource Center at 298-2512 for additional services.” These accommodations will be gladly given. Please contact me ASAP.

University Writing Center: The UWC is available to assist you with general and specific questions on any of the writing assignments for this course. Consultants can add another voice to your writing at any stage in the writing process from brainstorming to polishing the final product. Please call for an appointment (298-2815) and be sure to bring a copy of your assignment to your session. A visit to the UWC should be a supplement to rather than a replacement for talking about your paper with me.

Classroom Behavior: Students are expected to behave with respect toward the course, their fellow students, and the instructor. We will be reading a variety of pieces that contain subject matter that may be deemed offensive to some people, including, for instance, profanity, depictions of sex, and depictions of violence. I expect students to be able to read and discuss this material in a mature way and maintain an appropriate deportment during class. Private conversations and other disruptive behaviors – such as texting -- interfere with teaching and learning and will not be tolerated. Continued disruptive behavior can result in an assigned classroom seat, penalty to final grade, and/or expulsion from the class for the day or the semester.

Cell Phones: Texting or any other non-approved cell phone use during class is strictly prohibited. After an initial warning, violation of this policy will result in dismissal from the class and a 15% penalty to your participation grade per instance.

For information on Students’ Rights and Responsibilities, visit www.wiu.edu/provost/student/

Email: Email correspondence is a quick and easy way to communicate during this semester. I will use it frequently to communicate with the class, and I encourage you to use it to contact me to set up an appointment, ask questions, make comments, etc. I do consider email to be formal communication so I expect emails to be properly addressed, to maintain a professional tone, and to be grammatically correct. If your question or request is too large to be handily resolved over email, I will ask you to set an appointment to discuss it in an individual conference.

Office Hours: Students are encouraged to visit during office hours. These are available to use without setting an appointment. Additionally, if I am in my office, feel free to drop in to see if I am available to meet. If you are not able to meet during office hours, please email me, and we can set an appointment.

I always enjoy speaking with students about their writing, the readings for the course, or literary topics large or small! Additionally, if you are working on a paper and have questions or would like feedback, I am happy to work with you on your paper at any stage of the writing process.

COURSE CALENDAR AND READING SCHEDULE

The following schedule is tentative. It WILL change as the semester progresses. I will add a couple of short contextual essays and articles as appropriate and relevant, and I may occasionally switch out stories. All changes will be announced in class, and I will try to announce them at least a week in advance. I encourage students to establish reliable contacts in the class to stay informed of any information or changes missed due to absence.

All readings must be **completed** on the day they are to be discussed. Please note that the reading load for this class will be heavy and we will read more than we discuss. Reading for this class cannot be completed easily the night before class. You should read and contemplate the readings throughout the week.

Readings located in *Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction* will be marked (WASF); readings available as PDFs on WesternOnline will be marked as (WO). All other readings will be in the individual author collections: Bacigalupi, Butler, Delany, and Le Guin.

Organization: We are going to meander around through science fiction in the 20th century. While most of the readings will be post 1950-, we will occasionally venture back to early 20th century. I have tried to group readings with similar thematic concerns and to mix the diversity of voices and perspectives. We will read four (or most of) collections by prominent SF authors in order to consider short stories in the context of a collection.

- January 20th:** Introduction to ENG 300: Syllabus, Policies and the Course.
- January 22nd:** “Introduction” (WASF)
E. M. Forster, “The Machine Stops” (WASF)
Le Guin “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” (WO)
Atwood, “Aliens Have Taken the Place of Angels” (WO)
- January 27th:** Lafferty, “Slow Tuesday Night” (WASF)
Ellison, “‘Repent, Harlequin!’ Said the Ticktockman” (WASF)
“Writing About Fiction” (WO)
“A Short Guide to Reading Short Stories” (WO)
- January 29th:** Ryman, “Everywhere” (WASF)
Rojo, “Gray Noise” (WO)
SF Reading TBD
- February 3rd:** Delaney, *Aye, and Gomorrah and Other Stories*, specific stories TBA
SF Reading TBD
- February 5th:** Delaney, *Aye, and Gomorrah and Other Stories*, specific stories TBA
- February 10th:** Delaney, *Aye, and Gomorrah and Other Stories*, specific stories TBA
- February 12th:** **Lincoln’s Birthday – No Class**
- February 17th:** Le Guin, *A Fisherman of the Inland Sea: Stories* [“The First Contact with the Gorgonids,” “Newton’s Sleep,” “The Ascent of the North Face,” and “The Rock That Changed Things” (13-73)
- February 19th:** Le Guin, *A Fisherman of the Inland Sea: Stories* [“The Kerastion” and “The Shobies’ Story”] (75-113)
- February 24th:** Le Guin, *A Fisherman of the Inland Sea: Stories* [“Dancing to Ganam” and “Another Story or A Fisherman of the Inland Sea”] (115-207).
- February 26th:** **Rough Draft of Essay #1 Due**

March 3rd: Dick, "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" (WASF)
Gibson, "Burning Chrome" (WASF)
Cadigan, "Pretty Boy Crossover" (WASF)

March 5th: Gunn, "Computer Friendly" (WASF)
Final Draft of Essay #1 Due

March 10th: Midterm Review

March 12th: MIDTERM EXAM

SPRING BREAK: March 16th through March 20th - No Classes

March 24th: Simak, "Desertion" (WASF)
Herbert, "Seed Stock" (WASF)
Valentine, "Semiramis" (WO)

March 26th: Bradbury, "There Will Come Soft Rains" (WASF)
Nogha, "Chippoke Na Gomi" (WASF)
Okorafor, "Spider the Artist" (WO)

March 31st: Bacigalupi, *Pump Six and Other Stories*: specific stories TBA

April 2nd: Bacigalupi, *Pump Six and Other Stories*: specific stories TBA

April 7th: Bacigalupi, *Pump Six and Other Stories*: specific stories TBA

April 9th: Asimov, "Reason" (WASF)
Aldiss, "Super-Toys Last All Summer Long" (WASF)
Chiang, "Exhalation" (WASF)

April 14th: Moore, "Shambleau" (WASF)
Kress, "Out of All Them Bright Stars" (WASF)
Wolfe, "Useful Phrases" (WASF)

April 16th: Pohl, "Day Million" (WASF)
Russ, "When It Changed" (WASF)
Tiptree, "And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side" (WASF)
Emshwiller, "Abominable" (WASF)

April 21st: Butler, *Bloodchild and Other Stories*: specific stories TBA

April 23rd: Butler, *Bloodchild and Other Stories*: specific stories TBA

April 28th: Butler, *Bloodchild and Other Stories*: specific stories TBA

April 30th: **Rough Draft of Essay #1 Due**

May 5th: Link, "The Wrong Grave" (WO)
Stross, "The Ball Room" (WO)
Stross, "Entry Taken" (WO)

May 7th: Final Exam Review
Final Draft of Essay #1 Due

Thursday, May 14th, 10:00 am - 11:50 am: FINAL EXAM