COURSE OUTLINE

English 130
Science Fiction Literature

I. Catalog Statement

English 130 is a survey of science fiction from the late 19th Century to the present, concentrating on 20th Century writers. The student will read, analyze, and discuss the history of science fiction, major themes, genres (short story, novels, drama, poetry), media (radio, cinema, television), fandom (clubs, fan publications, conventions), and the function of science fiction as a literary form that reflects human concern with solving or escaping problems in an increasingly scientific and technological age.

Units – 3.0
Lecture Hours – 3.0

Prerequisite: None.

II. Course Entry Expectations

Skills Level Ranges: Reading 6; Writing 6; Listening/Speaking 6; Math 1

Prior to enrolling in this course, the student should be able to:
1. organize and write thesis-based essays
2. use detailed examples, facts, logical explanations, and other appropriate support for thesis statements
3. critically analyze selected prose works dealing with important contemporary issues
4. summarize, analyze, and synthesize information, express and apply standards for judgment, compare and contrast, and evaluate evidence in order to form and state reasoned opinions
5. gather and organize information through library research
   demonstrate a command of grammar, diction, syntax, and mechanics sufficient for college level work as specified by the English 120 rubric.

III. Course Exit Standards

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:
1. define, recognize, and distinguish between science fiction and fantasy, and recognize that the former emphasizes scientific and literary understanding and problem solving in the contemporary world,
2. analyze how the major thematic statements of science fiction explain the technological, scientific, and social problems, and how their science fiction solutions

prepare the student to perceive, adjust, explain, and solve these problems via literature in a scientific world,

3. gain an understanding of how science fiction literature fits in the general purview of English Literature, recognize techniques of style, characterization, and plotting, and evaluate these within the works read,
4. gain critical insights within science fiction's universality. He or she will recognize, explain, and evaluate the relevance of science fiction to the scientific and literary concerns of the present and future.

IV. Course Content

Each unit of study requires that students critically read and discuss the assignments. Writing requirements emphasize demonstration of rhetorical skills, critical thinking, extrapolation, and problem solving.

A. History of Science Fiction — 5 hours
   1. Definition of Science Fiction
   2. Ancient Science Fiction (Greek, Roman, Medieval)
   3. 14th to 18th Century Science Fiction (Voltaire, Swift, More)
   4. Nineteenth Century Science Fiction (Poe, Bellamy, Verne)
   5. Early 20th Century Science Fiction (Wells)

B. Science Fiction in America — 4 hours
   1. Editors who influenced Science Fiction (Gernsback, Campbell, Boucher, Gold, McComas, Wolheim, Merrill, Ellison)
   2. The pulps and "The Golden Years" (1945-1960)
   3. Popular Culture and Science Fiction (drama, television, radio, motion pictures, comic books)
   4. Science Fiction fans (clubs, conventions, "fanzines")
   5. Utopias and anti-scientific dystopias
   6. The New Wave

C. Short Story Anthology — 9 hours
   1. "Bug-eyed Monsters" and sympathetic extraterrestrials
   2. Mutations
   3. Extra-sensory powers
   4. Pulp heroes and heroines
   5. The sciences (physical, social, and pseudo-)
   6. Space exploration and beyond
   7. "Space Opera" and the destruction of the universe
   8. The growth of literary values

D. H. G. Wells (time travel, invasions, alternate worlds, socially conscious novels) — 3 hours

E. Asimov (golems, robots, androids, cyborgs, bionics) — 3 hours

F. Simak (animals, empathy, the future of earth) — 3 hours

G. Heinlein (satire, politics, characterization, anthropology, sex) — 4 hours

H. Herbert (ecology, narcotics, environment) — 4 hours

I. Vonnegut (style, philosophy, satire, humor) — 4 hours

J. Miller (history, religion, atomic warfare) 4 hours
K. Zelazny (mythology, archetypes, gender, longevity) 4 hours

V. Methods of Presentation

1. Lectures will be supplemented with tapes by authors discussing their works and ideas in the field, slides from motion pictures and television, and select recordings and motion pictures.

VI. Assignments and Methods of Evaluation

1. There will be five written essays of sufficient length and complexity to require students to independently select and order their ideas as well as to express them clearly and with originality,
2. a multiple-choice Midterm examination,
3. a two-and-one-half hour comprehensive final examination (essay and multiple-choice). These tests should show the student's ability to understand the material, evaluate critical thought and solve or extrapolate ideas from the texts.

VII. Textbooks

Silverberg, R., Science Fiction Hall of Fame, 0765305372, Orb Books, 2005
Wells G., The Time Machine, and The War of the Worlds, Deodand Publishing, 2002
Asimov, I., I Robot, Fawcett Crest, New York, 1970bv
City, Clifford Simak, Ace Books, New York, 1976
Stranger In a Strange Land, Robert Heinlein, Berkeley Medallion Book, New York, 1968
Dune, Frank Herbert, Berkeley Medallion Book, New York, 1977
The Sirens of Titan, Kurt Vonnegut, Dell, New York, 1972
A Canticle for Leobowitz, Walter M. Miller, Bantam Books, New York, 1976
Lord of Light, Roger Zelazny, Avon, New York, 1969

VIII. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, the student will be able to:
1. understand the development of Science Fiction; identify the major elements and the cultural, social, and historical developments of Science Fiction.
2. read critically in order to analyze literary works for themes and other literary elements.
3. write thesis-centered essays which analyze and interpret literary, cultural, social, and historical themes and other elements of Science Fiction.