

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

English 217 – Fantasy and Science Fiction

3 hours lecture, 3 units

Catalog Description

An introductory survey of the genres of fantasy and science fiction, ranging from Gothic literature to Afrofuturism, and from Frankenstein to works being published right now. The course will examine the historical and socio-cultural contexts which informed and continue to influence this literature, and it will explore the place of fantasy and science fiction in popular culture past and present.

Prerequisite

None

Recommended Preparation

"C" grade or higher or "Pass" in ENGL C1000 (formerly ENGL 120) or ESL 122 or equivalent

Entrance Skills

Without the following skills, competencies and/or knowledge, students entering this course will be highly unlikely to succeed:

- 1) Critically read and analyze college-level texts.
- 2) Write college level essays which include an introduction, conclusion, thesis statement, support and information taken from sources; MLA format.

Course Content

- 1) Short fiction and/or novels representing a broad sampling of sub-genres, themes, authors, and periods in the canon of fantasy and science fiction literature, such as:
 - a. Gothic
 - b. Science fiction before 1900
 - c. Early 20th century science fiction
 - d. Pulp fantasy
 - e. Pulp science fiction
 - f. The first Golden Age of fantasy and science fiction
 - g. The second Golden Age of fantasy and science fiction
 - h. Hard science fiction
 - i. Epic (high) fantasy
 - j. Magical realism
 - k. Dark fantasy
 - l. The New Wave of Science Fiction
 - m. Cyberpunk
 - n. Apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction
 - o. Afrofuturism and Afropessimism
 - p. Steampunk
 - q. Clockpunk
 - r. Urban fantasy
- 2) Theoretical key concepts central to the analysis of fantasy and science fiction, such as:
 - a. Power structures and relationships
 - b. Colonialism
 - c. Exploration

- d. Ability and disability
 - e. Race and ethnicity
 - f. Gender, including social constructions of gender, non-binary gender, femininity and masculinity, etc.
 - g. Feminisms, including eco-feminism, radical feminism, Black feminism, etc.
 - h. Government, nationhood, and nationalism
 - i. Sovereignty
 - j. Identity
 - k. Morality
 - l. Environmentalism
 - m. Equality, equity, and inequity
 - n. Humanism
 - o. Futurism
- 3) Terminology related to fiction writing, and rhetorical and literary devices, such as character development, plot, setting, tone, imagery, theme, etc., within the genres of fantasy and science fiction, and including how authors use language, form, structure, and other tools to reinforce, resist, interrogate, or otherwise critically engage with ideologies related to the content of their texts
 - 4) Sociohistorical, political, and cultural artifacts, such as articles, essays, music, photography, art, advertisements, and short videos, to provide enrichment and context for primary texts and their authors
 - 5) Introduction to literary theory (such as New Historicism, Queer Theory, Postcolonial Theory, and Critical Race Theory) in application to fantasy and science fiction

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Utilize literary terminology to discuss and write about fantasy and science fiction.
- 2) Recognize, define, and apply major themes and key concepts related to fantasy and science fiction in literary analysis.
- 3) Identify and discuss the relationships between science and fantasy/science fiction.
- 4) Identify and discuss the relationships between culture and fantasy/science fiction.
- 5) Analyze the impact of the elements of fiction writing, including literary and rhetorical devices, within the genres of fantasy and science fiction, within subsets of those genres, and within individual works.
- 6) Interpret how sociohistorical, political, and cultural events and artifacts (i.e., articles, photography, art, etc.) provide enrichment and context for primary texts and their authors.
- 7) Evaluate and synthesize the relationship between fantasy and science fiction literatures and their representations in writing, as well as in popular media such as film, television, video games, and the internet.
- 8) Apply academic discourse and the conventions of evidence-based literary analysis, including the integration of secondary and/or theoretical material, documented in MLA format.
- 9) Summarize and apply assigned literary theory to original analysis of primary and/or secondary texts
- 10) Situate literary texts in various historical, political, literary, psychological, and cultural contexts and discuss how those contexts inform their meanings, values, and roles in larger debates about fantasy and science fiction.
- 11) Discuss how authors of fantasy and science fiction use, resist, and alter conventions of genre to inform representations and their meanings.
- 12) Identify and evaluate how fantasy and science fiction literature informs, reinforces, challenges, alters, resists, or otherwise influences social constructions of fantasy, reality, gender, the future, and other key concepts.

Method of Evaluation

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on student achievement of the course objectives and outcomes, as determined by multiple measurements of evaluation and/or student self-assessment.

- 1) Reader responses, journals, and/or notes
- 2) Quizzes on assigned texts and on relevant contextual material and concepts
- 3) Analysis, interpretation, and discussion of literature
- 4) Student reports and/or presentations on selected topics or authors
- 5) Contributions to group activities and/or workshops
- 6) Group and individual projects
- 7) Reviews of literary arts activities
- 8) Evidence-based analytical essays (in standard MLA format) that may require research
- 9) Metacognitive reflections and/or self-assessments regarding learning experiences
- 10) Creative analytical interactions with the text
- 11) Final project implementing elements of fantasy and science fiction

Special Materials Required of Student

None

Minimum Instructional Facilities

Smart classroom

Method of Instruction

- 1) Lectures and presentations by the instructor, visiting writers, and/or speakers
- 2) Facilitation of student analysis, interpretation, and discussion of literature
- 3) Student-led inquiry into relevant literature and theoretical frameworks via discussion groups, presentations, and other projects
- 4) Collaborative small group activities
- 5) Whole class discussion of sample writing (student and/or professional), peer workshops, and instructor-student conferences to help students successfully complete assignments
- 6) Multi-modal texts (i.e., films, short video content, podcasts, social media, and audio clips), including culturally relevant and diverse interpretations

Out-of-Class Assignments

- 1) Read and take notes on assigned texts.
- 2) Maintain journals or other types of informal writing.
- 3) Research various assigned texts and/or authors.
- 4) Create content for presentations, projects, or other assignments.
- 5) Participate in workshops, peer reviews, or other collaborative assignments.
- 6) Write evidence-based analytical essays, annotated bibliographies, and other shorter assignments.
- 7) Attend literary arts events and readings on campus, online, and in the greater literary community.

Texts and References

- 1) Required (representative examples):
 - a. Evans, Arthur B. *The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*. Wesleyan, 2010.
 - b. Strahan, Jonathan, Ed. *The Year's Best Science Fiction, Volume 1*. Saga Press, 2020.
 - c. Strahan, Jonathan, Ed. *The Year's Best Science Fiction, Volume 2*. Saga Press, 2021.
 - d. Individual works:
 1. Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*. Mariner Books, 2012.
 2. Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Arthur A. Levine Books, 1999.
 3. Butler, Octavia E. *Parable of the Sower*. Grand Central, 2019.

4. Givson, William. *Neuromancer*. HarperVoyager, 2015.
 5. Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (Uncensored 1818 Edition). Wisehouse Classics, 2015.
 6. Jemisin, N. K. *Broken Earth* (series). Orbit, 2015-2017 (various).
 7. Delany, Samuel R. *The Fall of the Towers*. Ace Books, 1970.
- 2) Supplemental: Novels, short stories, and supplementary texts as selected by instructor

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Use literary terminology and critical theory to interpret, discuss, analyze, and synthesize representations of key concepts like power, race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability in fantasy and science fiction literature.
- 2) Evaluate how fantasy and science fiction literature informs, reinforces, challenges, alters, resists, or otherwise influences social constructions of power, race, class, gender, sexuality, and/or ability.
- 3) Situate literary texts within various historical, regional, political, literary, psychological, and cultural contexts and discuss how those contexts inform their meanings, values, and roles.