

English 2225: How Other Things Become Science Fiction

Spencer K. Wall

office location: LNCO 3850

e-mail: spencer.wall@utah.edu;

swall1138@yahoo.com

office hours: TH 10:45-11:45

and by appointment

Required Texts:

– Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest* (Pelican Shakespeare Series). New York: Penguin, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-0143128632

– Verne, Jules. *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. Trans. William Butcher. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992. ISBN-13: 978-0199538072

– *Visions of Heaven & Hell Before Dante*. Ed. Eileen Gardiner. New York: Italica Press, 1989. ISBN-13: 978-0934977142

– Wells, H. G. *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. New York: Penguin, 2005. ISBN-13: 978-0141441023

– Yamamoto, Hiroshi. *MM9*. San Francisco: Haikasoru, 2012. ISBN-13: 9781421540894

– Yamamoto, Hiroshi. *The Stories of Ibis*. San Francisco: Haikasoru, 2010. ISBN-13: 9781421534404

Please purchase copies of the above books. I will assign additional, shorter readings throughout the semester and make them available on Canvas. To access this course's Canvas website, go to www.utah.edu/students/ and select "My Classes" from the right-hand menu. Please talk to me if you have any questions about accessing or using the Canvas site.

Course Description:

When you encounter a fictional character gazing from space at an Earth below that grows smaller and smaller, you can make a pretty safe bet that you are reading science fiction—or medieval vision literature. Science fiction (like other popular "genre" fictions) is often considered in a competition—or else in a qualitative continuum—with traditional literature. By contrast, this course examines the conversations between science fiction and older literature. We'll read classic and contemporary science fiction and boldly seek out its origins and influences in other, older stories. After all, H. G. Well's mad scientist Doctor Moreau is a modern update of Shakespeare's (mad?) natural philosopher Prospero, as is Doctor Morbius from the film *Forbidden Planet*. For his novel about artificial intelligence, Hiroshi Yamamoto adopted and adapted more than

Course Description: (continued)

one story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Are you a traveler unsure whether you have moored your ship to dry land or to an immense creature? Then you might be a character out of *Star Wars* or Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*—but you might also be a character out of the medieval monastic *St. Brendan's Voyage*, or perhaps a character from a medieval bestiary (which is a sort of moralized encyclopedia of animals).

Each of our readings will offer its own particular rewards, but we can also use this kind of course to rethink some of our assumptions about what makes literature, what makes science fiction and how the two relate. These broader considerations should remind us of a truth that encompasses and transcends science-fictional appropriation of literature: all old texts have surprising afterlives when turned over to new generations of readers.

Grading and Assignments:

100-93% – A	89-88% – B+	79-78% – C+	69-68% – D+	59-0% – E
92-90% – A-	87-83% – B	77-73% – C	67-63% – D	
	82-80% – B-	72-70% – C-	62-60% – D-	

short (1 page) papers (7 total)	– 60% of total course grade
weekly quizzes and participation	– 30%
final exam	– 10%

You will receive writing prompts for short (1 page) papers regularly throughout the semester (I'll usually assign the prompts the day we begin discussing a novel, and the papers will usually be due the day we finish reading it). There will be at least one quiz a week, but when I determine your weekly quiz and participation grade, I will also take other positive contributions to the class (such as participation in class discussions) into account. The final exam will be an in-class essay question that covers reading material from throughout the semester.

Late Work:

I will not allow you to make up missed papers or quizzes because these brief, regular assignments are intended to encourage your regular attendance and engagement with the course. (In appropriate cases, I will grant extensions of a few days for the papers, if you discuss the situation with me in advance.) However, emergencies do come up, so I will drop every student's lowest paper grade and lowest quiz grade.

Course Policies:

ADA Notice:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

Course Policies: (continued)

Plagiarism:

The University of Utah Student Code classifies plagiarism as “academic misconduct.” Plagiarism is defined in Part I.B.2.c of the Code as “the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person's work in, or as a basis for, one's own work offered for academic consideration or credit or for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one's own, without attribution, any other individual's words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression.” Part V.B of the Code stipulates that students guilty of plagiarism “may be subject to academic sanctions including but not limited to a grade reduction, failing grade, probation, suspension or dismissal from the program or the University, or revocation of the student's degree or certificate. Sanctions may also include community service, a written reprimand, and/or a written statement of misconduct that can be put into an appropriate record maintained for purposes of the profession or discipline for which the student is preparing.”

(www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html)

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, talk to me. Simply put, don't cheat. It's not worth it.

Content Accommodation Policy

“It is the student's obligation to determine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with the student's sincerely-held core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class.” (<http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.html>)

For more information, please consult the University of Utah Regulations web site.

Course Schedule:

Come to class having read the assignment for the day and prepared to discuss it (bring the assigned text). We will view the film *Forbidden Planet* in class, as well as the *Doctor Who* episode “The Unquiet Dead” and the *Star Trek* episode “Who Mourns for Adonais?” You are not required to view any films or television episodes outside of class. But if you want to review *Forbidden Planet* on your own, it is available for purchase at Amazon on DVD (ASIN: B00004RF9B) and Blu-ray (ASIN: B0019NB9A2).

I may make changes to this schedule, including reading assignments and paper deadlines, as the course progresses and our needs as a class evolve. Any changes will be announced in class.

Weeks 1-3: How Old Stories Survive

T 8/21	introduction; Michael Crichton, from <i>Eaters of the Dead</i> (read in class)
H 8/23	Charles Dickens, “The Signal-man” (Canvas); <i>Doctor Who</i> , “The Unquiet Dead” (view in class)
T 8/28	Hiroshi Yamamoto, <i>MM9</i> , Parts One, Two (pages 9-79)
H 8/30	Yamamoto, <i>MM9</i> , Part Three (pages 81-132)
T 9/4	Yamamoto, <i>MM9</i> , Part Four (pages 133-178)
H 9/6	Yamamoto, <i>MM9</i> , Part Five (pages 179-251); <u>PAPER #1 DUE</u>

Weeks 4-6: Extraordinary Journeys

- T 9/11 *St. Brendan's Voyage* (in *Visions of Heaven & Hell Before Dante*),
pages 81-101
- H 9/13 *St. Brendan's Voyage*, pages 101-127; *Physiologus* (Canvas)
- T 9/18 Jules Verne, *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, pages 1-55
- H 9/20 Verne, *Journey*, pages 55-99
- T 9/25 Verne, *Journey*, pages 99-170
- H 9/27 Verne, *Journey*, pages 170-217;
PAPER #2 DUE

Weeks 7-11: Mad Scientists, Mad Natural Philosophers

- T 10/2 William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* Acts I, II, III (pages 1-60)
- H 10/4 Shakespeare, *The Tempest* Acts IV, V (pages 60-84)
- T 10/9 NO CLASS – FALL BREAK
- H 10/11 NO CLASS – FALL BREAK
- T 10/16 *Forbidden Planet* (view in class)
- H 10/18 *Forbidden Planet* (view in class);
PAPER #3 DUE
- T 10/23 H. G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, pages 7-99
(Introduction, chapters 1-12)
- H 10/25 Wells, *Dr. Moreau*, pages 100-151 (chapters 13-16)
- T 10/30 Wells, *Dr. Moreau*, pages 152-206 (chapters 17-22);
PAPER #4 DUE

Weeks 11-14: Art and Artificial Intelligence

- H 11/1 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birthmark" (Canvas);
Ovid, from *Metamorphoses* (Canvas)
- T 11/6 Hiroshi Yamamoto, *The Stories of Ibis*, pages 9-91
("Prologue," "Intermission 1," "The Universe on My Hands,"
"Intermission 2," "A Romance in Virtual Space," "Intermission 3")
- H 11/8 Yamamoto, *Ibis*, pages 92-159
("Mirror Girl," "Intermission 4," "Black Hole Diver," "Intermission 5");
PAPER #5 DUE

Weeks 11-14: Art and Artificial Intelligence (continued)

- T 11/13 Yamamoto, *Ibis*, pages 160-244
("A World Where Justice is Just," "Intermission 6," begin "The Day Shion Came")
- H 11/15 Yamamoto, *Ibis*, pages 244-299
(finish "The Day Shion Came," "Intermission 7")
- T 11/20 Yamamoto, *Ibis*, pages 300-398
("Al's Story");
PAPER #6 DUE
- H 11/22 NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15: Extraterrestrial Perspectives

- T 11/27 Yamamoto, *Ibis*, pages 399-423 ("Intermission 8," "Epilogue");
Dante, *Paradiso* Canto XXVII (Canvas)
- H 11/29 Dante, *Paradiso* Canto XXVIII-XXIX, XXX (Canvas);
Torquato Tasso, from *The Liberation of Jerusalem* (Canvas);
PAPER #7 DUE

Week 16: Do We Need Old Stories?

- T 12/4 Percy Shelley, *Adonais* (Canvas);
Star Trek, "Who Mourns for Adonais" (view in class)
- H 12/6 wrap-up, discuss Adonais

Final Exam: Friday (12/14) from 8-10 am