

English 2225: How Other Things Become Science Fiction

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class meets: TuTh 9:10-10:30 in BU C 203
office hours: TuTh 11:00-12:00 in LNCO 3428
and any day/time by appointment



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 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.

Required Texts:

- Yamamoto, Hiroshi. *MM9*. San Francisco: Haikasoru, 2012. ISBN-13: 9781421540894
- Verne, Jules. *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. Trans. William Butcher. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992. ISBN-13: 9780199538072
- Wells, H. G. *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. New York: Penguin, 2005. ISBN-13: 978-0141441023
- 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. Please talk to me if you have any questions about accessing or using our course's Canvas site.

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).

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-	

Exam #1	– 20% of total course grade
Exam #2	– 20%
Exam #3 (Final)	– 30%
weekly participation	– 30% (2 points each week)

The exams will include short answer questions, as well as essay questions. The first exam will cover reading and lecture material from weeks 1-5 of the semester. The second exam will cover reading and lecture material from weeks 6-9 of the semester. The third exam will be comprehensive, but with a major focus on the reading and lecture material from weeks 11-16 of the semester.

I will give participation assignments, including reading quizzes (usually unannounced and open book) from time to time in class, to further encourage and track your regular engagement with the course material. You will receive a weekly participation grade for all the activities and quizzes that you complete throughout each week.

Late Work:

Missed exams can be rescheduled (though be careful to reschedule the final exam in advance, as your rescheduling options will be limited at the very end of the semester).

The purpose of the participation assignments and quizzes is to encourage and track your regular attendance and engagement with the course, so I will not accept them late, except in special cases, in accordance with University policy. However, emergencies do come up, so I will drop every student's lowest individual participation grade. There will also be an extra credit assignment that you can use to make up for lost points.

Course Schedule:

Come to class having read the assignment for the day and prepared to discuss it (bring the assigned text). I may make changes to this schedule 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 1/7 introduction; Michael Crichton, from *Eaters of the Dead* (read in class)
H 1/9 Charles Dickens, "The Signal-man" (Canvas);
 Doctor Who, "The Unquiet Dead" (view in class)
- T 1/14 Hiroshi Yamamoto, *MM9*, Parts One, Two (pages 9-79)
H 1/16 Yamamoto, *MM9*, Parts Three, Four (pages 81-178)
- T 1/21 Yamamoto, *MM9*, Part Five (pages 179-251)

Weeks 3-6: Extraordinary Journeys

- H 1/23 *St. Brendan's Voyage* (Canvas); *Physiologus* (Canvas)
- T 1/28 Jules Verne, *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, pages 1-55
H 1/30 Verne, *Journey*, pages 55-99
- T 2/4 Verne, *Journey*, pages 99-170
H 2/6 Verne, *Journey*, pages 170-217
- T 2/11 EXAM #1

Weeks 6-11: Mad Scientists, Mad Natural Philosophers

- H 2/13 William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* Acts I, II, III (Canvas)
- T 2/18 Shakespeare, *The Tempest* Acts IV, V (Canvas);
 Forbidden Planet (view in class)
H 2/20 *Forbidden Planet* (view in class)

- T 2/25 H. G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, pages 7-99
(Introduction, chapters 1-12)
- H 2/27 Wells, *Dr. Moreau*, pages 100-151 (chapters 13-16)
- T 3/4 Wells, *Dr. Moreau*, pages 152-206 (chapters 17-22)
- H 3/6 EXAM #2
- T 3/11 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
- H 3/13 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Weeks 11-14: Art and Artificial Intelligence

- T 3/18 Ovid, from *Metamorphoses* (Canvas)
- H 3/20 Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Birthmark” (Canvas)
- T 3/25 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 3/27 Yamamoto, *Ibis*, pages 92-159
 (“Mirror Girl,” “Intermission 4,” “Black Hole Diver,” “Intermission 5”)
- T 4/1 Yamamoto, *Ibis*, pages 160-244
 (“A World Where Justice is Just,” “Intermission 6,” begin “The Day Shion
 Came”)
- H 4/3 Yamamoto, *Ibis*, pages 244-299
 (finish “The Day Shion Came,” “Intermission 7”)
- T 4/8 Yamamoto, *Ibis*, pages 300-398
 (“Ai’s Story”)

Weeks 14-15: Extraterrestrial Perspectives

- H 4/10 Yamamoto, *Ibis*, pages 399-423 (“Intermission 8,” “Epilogue”);
 Dante, *Paradiso* Canto XXVII (Canvas)
- T 4/15 Dante, *Paradiso* Cantos XXVIII-XXX (Canvas);
 Torquato Tasso, from *The Liberation of Jerusalem* (Canvas)

Weeks 15-16: Do We Need Old Stories?

- H 4/17 Percy Shelley, *Adonais* (Canvas);
 Star Trek, “Who Mourns for Adonais” (view in class)
- T 4/22 wrap-up, discuss *Adonais*

Final Exam: Tuesday (4/29) from 8:00-10:00 am

Course Policies:

Plagiarism:

It is expected that students adhere to University of Utah policies regarding academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which they are preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for their profession/discipline may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah's Student Code: <https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-410.php>

English Department Statement of Belonging:

Literature allows us to imagine the lives of others and broaden our perspectives. How we talk about it together, in the physical and virtual classroom, is part of that process. Our diverse identities and experiences will inform and enhance those discussions. As we approach sometimes difficult topics, each member of the class is expected to foster a respectful, generous, and supportive classroom environment that makes room for productive difference and reasoned debate.

Students with Disabilities (ADA):

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 & Access, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability & Access. To read the full accommodations policy for the University of Utah, please see Section Q.

Campus Safety Statement:

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct:

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, SSB 328, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).