Sci-Fi: East and West (Online)
Spring 2019
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Course Description
This course compares Slavic and Anglophone science fiction on page and screen.
We will examine how a given culture's dominant concerns are articulated in a genre popular in
the East (i.e., Eastern and Central Europe) and the West (i.e., America and Great Britain). These
concerns emerge in works that imaginatively posit fantastic situations rooted in spatial, temporal,
and biological explorations beyond those currently verified by science.

Based on a wide range of novels, stories, essays, TV shows, and films, we will discuss such
topics as progress, utopia/dystopia, ideology, human perfectibility, the limits of science, gender,
the nature of knowledge, and human/other identity. We will also engage in a range of specific
theoretical approaches to our texts, and a portion of our discussion will involve an attempt at
applying these approaches to particular SF works.

As the course title suggests, we are going to examine science fiction works from the East (i.e.,
Eastern and Central Europe) and the West (i.e., America and Great Britain). We will consider
these various works in both geographic isolation as specific products of their specific locations as
well as in a comparative manner. Our readings will include primarily novels and a few short
stories, and our viewing material will consist of both full-length films and a few shorter visual
works.

Course Goals
By the end of the course, you should be able to examine various works of science fiction (novels,
films, short stories) for various theoretical frameworks and social context in which they were
created.

Form of the Course
This is an online hybrid course. This means that the bulk of the course will be conducted online.
Here you will find course materials, communicate with your instructor and your classmates, and
find information on and submit all tasks and assignments. You should access the course website
frequently and check your messages at least once per day. In addition, we will meet face to face
on three Saturday afternoons over the course of the semester. The Saturday meetings will be on
January 12, February 16 and March 23 from 9:30am until 12:30pm in Cathedral of Learning 249.
We will use this time to screen films and film clips, and we will discuss them in the context of
the readings we have been doing for the course. If you cannot come to the Saturday sessions,
and/or will not have regular access to the internet, you should rethink taking this class.

Attendance
Since this is predominately an online course, you are free to study at the place and time of day of
your choice (with the exception of the Saturday sessions and the exams), as long as you complete

each assignment by midnight on the due date. You have to complete your readings in time to participate in the online discussion, and your discussion grade will depend on the thoroughness of your participation on the discussion boards. This means that you need to log into the course website every day, or at least once every two days. The best way to succeed in the course is to keep up with the reading to ensure that you are posting thoughtful comments and questions during the week for which the reading is assigned.

Workload
This is not an easy class. I will give you as much help as I can, both in introducing the material, moderating discussion, and answering questions, but I expect this course to challenge you. You should plan on an average of at least twelve hours a week for study and activity work, but some of you may spend considerably more time than that, particularly if you very actively involved in the discussion boards.

Technology and Skills
I expect you to have at least basic computer skills, such as the ability to use a mouse and keyboard, use word-processing software, use an internet browser, etc. You must also have access to an internet connection and browser.

Email Policy
Each student is issued a University email address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This email address may be used by the University (and me) for official communication with students. You are expected to read email sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve you from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an email forwarding service that allows students to read their email via other service providers (e.g., gmail). Students that choose to forward their email from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If email is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University email address. Therefore, please check your Pitt email regularly; "I didn't get it," or "It must have been lost" are not acceptable excuses for missing pertinent information. Please manage your email quota to ensure that you continue to receive important messages.

Course Website
This course was developed using a web course tool called Blackboard. All course materials, tasks, assignments, exams, etc. (except for the required books) will be online. You will use your main Pitt account to log in to the course at CourseWeb (http://courseweb.pitt.edu). This course site will be available to you from the first day of the term.

If you haven't used Blackboard before, in order to get started with a Blackboard course, please see the Blackboard Student Manual at http://library.blackboard.com/ref/ac6a8266-81c9-423f-a187-6cf4f7a505b7/index.htm. If you need further help, the Pitt Technology Help Desk Team provides technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can be reached at 412-624-HELP, helpdesk@pitt.edu, or http://technology.pitt.edu/Help.aspx.

Interaction with the Instructor

I will communicate with you primarily through the discussion boards and through email. I will monitor the discussion boards all week, asking follow-up questions and responding to student posts as necessary. I will also respond to individual concerns and questions through email; my address is era17@pitt.edu. Unless something unusual arises, I will check the discussion boards and my email at least once a day on weekdays, usually during typical working hours. Late night or weekend emails will likely have a longer wait time for a response. I highly suggest looking at each week's assignment on Monday or Tuesday, even if you cannot complete it until later, to make sure you have time for all your questions to be answered. My office hours are by appointment only. If you have something you would like to discuss in real time (ie: not over email), please email me and we can set up a phone or skype appointment.

Course Materials
Reading List - The following are available at the book store. Feel free to order online from your favorite source.
Evgeny Zamyatin, *We*
Ayn Rand, *Anthem*
H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine*, *War of the Worlds*
Stanisław Lem, *The Futurological Congress*, *Solaris*
Karel Čapek, *War with the Newts*
William Gibson, "Burning Chrome" and "Johnny Mnemonic"

Viewing List - These are available in the Hillman library
Forbidden Planet (in-class viewing)
War of the Worlds (dirs. Pal and Spielberg)
The Time Machine
The Matrix
Alien (in-class viewing)

Course Requirements and Grading
Requirements
Students are required to:
1. Complete the assignments scheduled (readings, films, quizzes, discussions)
2. Participate actively and intelligently in discussions
3. Take two scheduled exams
Grades
- Quizzes = 30%
- Discussions = 30%
- Workshop attendance/ assignment completion = 5%
- Exams = 35%, weighted equally

Academic Integrity:
Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity.](#) Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level,

as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

Disabilities:
If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and the Disability Resources and Services no later than the 2nd week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Office is located in 216 William Pitt Union.

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Accessibility
Blackboard 5.5 is ADA Compliant and has fully implemented the final accessibility standards for electronic and information technology covered by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. Please note that, due to the flexibility provided in this product, it is possible for some material to inadvertently fall outside of these guidelines.

Weekly Schedule
 Please note the dates of the class meetings and mark them on your calendar now to avoid any scheduling conflicts!

Also - you will have to take the multiple choice part of your exam at the CIDDE Testing Services. (See more details on the center here: http://www.uptc.pitt.edu/home/) This part of your exam will take less than an hour, but please check the hours that the center is open during the week of your exams and plan your schedule accordingly! If you anticipate any problems with this, please contact the instructor ASAP.

Due Date	Unit
January 12	FIRST CLASS MEETING
January 13	Read these pages: Welcome, Syllabus, Tech Requirements Complete: Introduction Unit
January 20	Complete What is SciFi? Unit and Foundation Unit
January 27	Complete Forbidden Planet Unit
February 3	Complete Time Machine Unit
February 10	War of the Worlds Unit - Part 1

February 16	SECOND CLASS MEETING
February 17	War of the Worlds Unit - Part 2
February 24	Complete the We Unit
March 3	Complete the Anthem Unit
March 10	Exam 1
March 11- March 17	Spring Break
March 23	THIRD CLASS MEETING
March 24	Complete Alien Unit
March 31	Complete War with the Newts Unit
April 7	Complete Solaris Unit
April 14	Complete Futurological Congress Unit
April 21	Complete the Gibson and Matrix Unit
FRIDAY April 19- SATURDAY April 27	Exam 2