

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**2016-2017** C LIT 242: Science Fiction Section B-1  
(Summer Term)

Instructor: Mimi Okabe

Time: 9:00 am to 10: 50 am

Office: 441-B

Place: Tory 1-96

Telephone: N/A

Fax: 780-492-9106

Office Hours: Monday @ 11:00-12:00

E-mail: tokabe@ualberta.ca

or by appointment

Personal Website: mimiokabe.com

Course Website: eClass

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**Course Prerequisite:** no prerequisite

**Course-based Ethics Approval** in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes  No, not needed, no such projects approved.

**Community Service Learning** component

Required  Optional  None

**Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available**

- Exam registry – Students' Union  
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

**Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)**

Yes  No

**Course Description and Objectives:**

What is science fiction? With a focus on narratives that explore the intersection of science, technology and identity politics, students in this course will interpret, analyse and define sf through a selection of classic and contemporary literary texts and films. In addition, this course offers a selection of theoretical and philosophical readings (as supplementary works) to contextualise questions concerning artificial life and intelligence, utopia and dystopia, and issues of race and gender. This course works to cultivate a positive and professional learning environment where students feel safe and inspired to critically engage in classroom discussions such as through

group facilitations. I also encourage students to think and respond to course materials in creative ways! Students will demonstrate their knowledge of sf by applying and synthesising concepts and major tropes of the genre in a mock-publication assignment for the local *On Spec* a Canadian magazine for the Fantastic. Furthermore, at the end of this course, students will be able to:

- **Recognise** the works of some of the most influential writers of sf
- **Identify and define** major thematic concepts, tropes, conventions of sf
- **Identify** thematic connections between texts
- Effectively **articulate** personal responses to course materials
- **Develop** critical thinking tools in order to devise original ideas and interpretations of texts
- **Develop** competency in theory, which will manifest itself in written assignments and discussion
- **Evaluate** theoretical works in relation to your own stance on a particular topic
- **Analyse** literary and popular works in relation to their form, content, (and/or medium)
- **Formulate** critical questions for discussion and debate
- **Demonstrate** knowledge synthesis of sf in the production of your own short story!

### **Texts (2):**

Other (electronic) versions are OK

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* ISBN-13: 978-0141439471

Heather Masri's *Science Fiction Stories & Contexts* ISBN-13:978-1457674464

Note: All short stories can be found on eClass.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* can be found @ [gutenberg.org](http://gutenberg.org)

### **Grade Distribution (see "Explanatory Notes"):**

Class Participation and Attendance: **10%**

Quizzes (assigned at random throughout the term): **15%**

Group Facilitation: **25%**

Mock-publication assignment: **25%** (Wednesday August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017)

In-class Essay: **25%** (Thursday August 17<sup>th</sup> 2017 @ 11:30 am)

<http://www.registrarsoffice.ualberta.ca/en/Examinations/Fall-2016-Winter-2017-Exam-Planner.aspx>

### **Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable):**

A student who has missed a final exam because of incapacitating mental and/or physical illness, severe domestic affliction or for circumstances as described in the University's Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate Policy (including religious belief) may apply for a deferred exam. Please consult the website for more information:

<http://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806#Examinations> (Exams)

### **Explanatory Notes on Assignments:**

#### **Class Participation and Attendance: 10%**

Much of the critical analysis of the assigned readings takes place during class time so it is mandatory for students to attend all lectures and to come prepared for class. Students are required to engage in

discussion and to support their peers. An attendance sheet at the beginning of each class will be circulated for students to sign-in. An absence without a valid reason will result in a complete loss of the grade for the day missed.

**In-class screening:** It is mandatory for students to attend all in-class screenings and to actively take notes, while watching the film or animation.

**Group Facilitation: 25%**

On the first day of class, students will be assigned partners and will be asked to select a presentation date. In either pairs or in groups students are required to prepare three critical questions in relation to the assigned reading for that day in order to facilitate discussion for no less than 30 minutes.

**CONTENT:** The questions must be open-ended and prompt discussion in relation to students' interests, the text's thematic issues and/or socio-political context. Students can also focus on a particular passage and conduct a close reading, or refer to a specific scene from a film. At least one out of the three questions must refer to the supplementary, critical reading (if applicable). Writing strong questions requires you to think about what you are reading, enabling you to consider your own critical insight and knowledge about a particular topic. It should also highlight your ability to make meaningful connections between texts.

**FORMAT:** Questions should be more than one sentence. They may take the form of an introductory statement that leads into discussion, or confer knowledge about the supplementary reading followed by a question. Questions must be typed (Times New Roman, 12 size font) and sent to the instructor prior to the day of the discussion either by e-mail or hardcopy). Students should also know the answers to their own questions.

This exercise is meant to encourage collaborative work and the sharing of ideas in a respectful and professional manner with your peers. I also encourage you to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this assignment.

**\*\*Additional documents and a rubric will be provided in class\*\***

**Quizzes: 15%**

Quizzes will be assigned at random throughout the term. There will be 5 quizzes in total each weighing 3% each. No more than five questions will be provided on the quizzes. Quizzes will be in multiple choice format and/or fill in the blank and cover course readings, screenings, key concepts and/or definition of terms.

**Mock-publication assignment: 25% (Wednesday August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017)**

Students are required to create an original short sci-fi story for *potential* publication. The short story must demonstrate students' application of the genre's key concepts and/or thematic elements. You can adapt a story that we've read, or create a story of your own original design. It can be a parody, or it can

be serious. You may want to narrow your scope such as by selecting a specific subgenre of sf (hard sf, feminist, cyberpunk etc).

Guest editors from *OnSpec* have been invited to give a talk about the Magazine followed by a Q & A session. Your attendance is required. I encourage you to participate during the Q& A session. I also encourage you to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this assignment--at any stage of your work.

**Guidelines:** Short stories must be 5-6 pages in length and follow the guidelines for submission outlined by *OnSpec* (with exception to page length). Refer to *OnSpec*'s "Guidelines for Submission Format" @ [onspecmag.files.wordpress.com](http://onspecmag.files.wordpress.com). A copy of the submission format will also be provided in class.

**In-class Essay: 25% (Thursday August 17<sup>th</sup> 2017 @ 11:30 am)**

On the day of the exam, students will be provided with a series of questions from which they will be asked to choose ONE to answer. Students will also be asked to conduct a comparative analysis of two texts examined in class. This will be an open book exam, meaning students can bring ONE page of notes 8.5 x 11 (standard letter size) and up to **TWO** primary texts to use as evidence to support the paper's argument. The essay must include an introduction, a thesis, supporting paragraphs (as many needed) and a conclusion. In other words, the essay must be clear and concise. Students should make strong statements and have a strong argument. Students will be graded on both content and style.

\*\*Additional documents and a rubric will be distributed several days before the day of the exam\*\*

**Required Notes:**

"Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar."

***Academic Integrity:***

"The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University."

***Learning and Working Environment:***

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

### ***Academic Honesty:***

**All students** should consult the information provided by the [Office of Judicial Affairs](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

**Students involved in language courses and translation courses** should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” **Students in language courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

### ***Recording of Lectures:***

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

### ***Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:***

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

**In this course, regular attendance** of the class lectures is very important as it constitutes 10% of your total grade. An absence without a valid excuse (family emergency, health, or personal) will result in a total loss of the participation segment of the day missed. Emergencies are unpredictable, but **please consult with me at your earliest convenience** if you know that you will miss a class(es) for any of the reasons listed above.

### ***Policy for Late Assignments:***

Students who consult **in advance** with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension just one time throughout the course with no penalty. However, if a second excuse will be granted for late assignments, the student will be penalized at 5% per day (including weekends), unless you requested an extension for a valid reason. Extensions will not be granted after the due date. After the period of 7 days (from the due date) no assignments will be accepted.

***Student Accessibility Services:***

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with [Student Accessibility Services](#), contact their office immediately (1-80 SUB; Email [sasrec@ualberta.ca](mailto:sasrec@ualberta.ca); Email; phone 780-492-3381).

***Grading:***

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned <https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>". The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

**MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale"**

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%
<b>Excellent.</b> A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	<b>A+</b>	4.0	<b>97-100</b>
	<b>A</b>	4.0	<b>93-96</b>
	<b>A-</b>	3.7	<b>90-92</b>
<b>Good.</b> B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	<b>B+</b>	3.3	<b>87-89</b>
	<b>B</b>	3.0	<b>83-86</b>
	<b>B-</b>	2.7	<b>80-82</b>
<b>Satisfactory.</b> C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	<b>C+</b>	2.3	<b>77-79</b>
	<b>C</b>	2.0	<b>73-76</b>
	<b>C-</b>	1.7	<b>70-72</b>

<b>Poor/Minimal Pass.</b> D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	<b>D+</b>	1.3	<b>65-69</b>
	<b>D</b>	1.0	<b>60-64</b>
<b>Failure.</b>	<b>F</b>	0.0	<b>0-59</b>