

Perspectives on Science Fiction

This section of HUMN 1011 Perspectives on Genre Fiction will examine short-form science fiction.



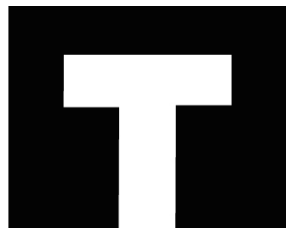
LitMUSE

Jan 2, 2017 · 9 min read

25311 | HUMN 1011 | Spring 2017 | Dr. Lucas | CAS-122



A still from Black Mirror.



The short story has been a mainstay in literature for centuries, but arguably no other genre has benefited more from this form than science fiction. This course will examine short-form science fiction in short stories, television episodes, and films.

This is an Area B course that develops key competencies in critical thinking and oral communication through an introduction to short-form science fiction. The course includes an online Critical Thinking and Oral Communication (CTOC) component. In addition, traditional classroom work will examine and discuss texts in a particular genre and consider how these texts represent cultural concerns. The course offers an opportunity for students to apply critical thinking skills to science fiction and to gain experience in developing and presenting original arguments in oral forms.



A promotional photo for Battlestar Galactica.

Instructor Information

- Dr. Gerald R. Lucas | [@drgrlucas](#) | [About](#)

- Office: CAS-117 (Macon campus)
- Office Hours: MW 12:15–2pm in CAS-117; TR 8–9:30am and 11–11:30am online; and via appointment on [Slack](#) and/or Skype
- Email: gerald.lucas [at] mga [dot] edu

I try to make myself as available as much as possible during the first couple weeks of a semester, including evenings and weekends. If you need to chat with me and cannot see me in-person on campus, **direct message** me on [Slack](#) and we'll arrange a video conference, if necessary. Please do not expect a response on any social media after 5pm on weekdays or anytime during the weekend. I may be available, but I also need some down time. Thanks for your understanding.



Course Information

This is an Area B course that develops key competencies in critical thinking and oral communication through an introduction to genre fiction, in this case short-form science fiction. **Prerequisite:** None. **Credit:** 4 hours.

Course Goals

- To develop and enhance the students' critical and analytical ability to read and understand various short-form science fiction texts and their contexts and significance through a variety of pedagogical strategies.
- To develop and enhance the students' ability to think critically and creatively and to write and to speak effectively about the arts and culture.

Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

1. Students will assimilate, analyze and present thoughts and opinions in oral forms.
2. Students will demonstrate the abilities to analyze, or interpret evidence or arguments, in order to formulate and support new arguments or solve problems.
3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between television and society.

Student Success Center : Middle Georgia State University

Provide support for student academic success.
Sign up for a tutoring session, review citation...
mga.edu



Required Text

There are no required textbooks for this course. However, several PDFs and online articles will make up the class readings. Instructions for accessing these texts will be given in class. Additional small fees might be incurred to purchase or to rent videos and texts for certain lessons. I will try to keep these expenses to a minimum. See lesson schedule below for more details. A subscription to a video streaming service, like Netflix, Hulu, or Amazon Prime, might be worth your time for the semester. Most give free trial periods or discounts for students.



From the BBC's Doctor Who 2005.

Course Policies

Students are held accountable for knowing and practicing each of the course policies. Consider them like the law: the excuse “I didn’t know” will carry no weight.

As a Middle Georgia State College student, it is your responsibility to read, understand, and abide by the MGA Student Code of Conduct.

Students may withdraw from the course and earn a grade of “W” up to and including the midterm date: **March 15, 2017**. After midterm, students who withdraw will receive a grade of “WF.”



Course Requirements

HUMN 1011 addresses key competencies in Area B. Therefore, it has the following requirements—all of which must be passed in order for students to successfully complete the course.

Critical Thinking and Oral Communications Assessments (30%)

Middle Georgia State University does key assessments of Critical Thinking and Oral Communications skills in Area B courses such as this one. These requirement includes the Critical Thinking and Oral Communication (CTOC) units integrated into D2L and a separate critical thinking writing assignment—each worth 10% of the final grade. The latter will use the “[Critical Thinking Rubric](#)” for evaluation. More information will follow in class.

Critical Thinking Paper (35%)

This essay will be a comparative analysis of two texts we cover in class this semester. It will choose a theme, character, or symbol and critically analyze how it operates in two of the course texts by examining distinct parallels between the texts. In other words the paper will answer the question: how does an examination of this key theme (character or symbol) help with a critical understanding of these two texts? Students will be asked to write a proposal that will be due before midterm; this [proposal](#) will count as your “Critical Thinking Assignment” (worth 10% of the paper’s total of 35%).

Oral Presentation (15%)

Middle Georgia State University does key assessments of Critical Thinking and Oral Communications skills in Area B courses such as this one. This formal, fifteen-minute presentation will be based on the critical thinking paper outlined above. More information will follow in class. See the “[Speech Evaluation Rubric](#).”

Participation (20%)

Includes in-class discussions, online responses, quizzes, and anything not outlined above.

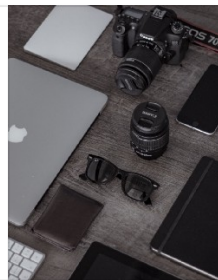
NOTE: Since reading is a key component of our class, be sure you’re doing your best to comprehend what you read. Consider these

strategies:

Reading Comprehension Strategies: How to Retain More of Everything You Read

Finishing a book is easy. Understanding it is harder. In recent years, I have focused on building good...

jamesclear.com



Schedule

This schedule represents the ideal outline for our semester, but it is tentative and subject to change. It reflects only an overview of readings

and assignments, but does not always indicate other specific class-session assignments or activities.

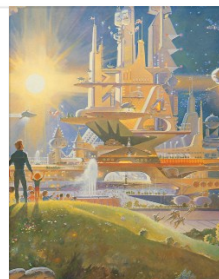
All PDFs may be found on D2L.

Week 1

- **M 1/09**—Course Introduction; **Complete:** signup for [Slack](#) and join the **#fiction** channel; **Review:**

Some Views of Science Fiction

Some of these definitions of science fiction are useful; some less so. However, I think it's smart t...
medium.com



- **W 1/11**—[Writing in the Humanities](#); **Read:** Le Guin “Intro to the Norton Book of SF” (PDF); Ballard “Which Way to Innerspace” (PDF); Find your own definitions of science fiction online; **View:** “The Value of Science Fiction” and “Brave New Worlds: The Science Fiction Phenomenon” ([Films on Demand](#))

Week 2

- **W 1/18**—**View:** Chris Marker “La Jetée”; **Complete:** CTOC Unit One: Elements of Critical Thinking; **Write:** Find a significant image from “La Jetée” and upload it to Slack. Discuss its importance in understanding one or more of the film’s themes. Do not summarize the plot; analyze the image.

Week 3

- **1/23**—**Read:** William Gibson “The Gernsback Continuum” (PDF)
- **1/25**—**View:** *Doctor Who* “Blink” ([DailyMotion](#)); **Complete:** CTOC Unit Two: Evaluating Arguments; **Write:** Trace a *similar* theme, character, symbol, metaphor, or other in Gibson and “Blink.” How does this similarity help in your understanding of both texts? Once posted, respond to someone’s else’s post. Remember, the crucial aspect of this is your **critical analysis of the comparison**—just pointing it out is not enough.

Week 4

- **1/30—Read:** Philip K. Dick “We Can Remember It for You Wholesale” (PDF)
- **2/1—View:** *The X-Files* “José Chung’s ‘From Outer Space’ ” ([Hulu](#)); **Complete:** CTOC Unit Three: Forming Arguments; **Write:** Trace a *similar* theme, character, symbol, metaphor, or other in Dick and “José Chung.” How does this similarity help in your understanding of both texts? Once posted, respond to someone’s else’s post. Remember, the crucial aspect of this is your **critical analysis of the comparison**—just pointing it out is not enough.

Week 5

- **2/6—Read:** Tiptree “The Girl Who Was Plugged In” (PDF)
- **2/8—View:** *Black Mirror* “The Entire History of You”; **Complete:** CTOC Unit Four: Problem Solving; **Write:** Trace a *similar* theme, character, symbol, metaphor, or other in Tiptree and “History.” How does this similarity help in your understanding of both texts? Once posted, respond to someone’s else’s post. Remember, the crucial aspect of this is your **critical analysis of the comparison**—just pointing it out is not enough.

Week 6

- **2/13—Read:** Sterling “Maneki Neko” (PDF)
- **2/15—View:** *Star Trek* “The City on the Edge of Forever” ([Hulu](#)); **Complete:** CTOC Critical Thinking Exam; **Write:** Trace a *similar* theme, character, symbol, metaphor, or other in Butler and “City.” How does this similarity help in your understanding of both texts? Once posted, respond to someone’s else’s post. Remember, the crucial aspect of this is your **critical analysis of the comparison**—just pointing it out is not enough.

Week 7

- **2/20—Read:** Godwin “The Cold Equations” (PDF)
- **2/22—View:** *Battlestar Galactica* “33” ([DailyMotion](#)); **Complete:** CTOC Unit Five; **Write:** find a review of “33” online and read it carefully, noting discussions about themes, characters, etc. What is reviewer’s main point(s)? Which do you agree with, which not?

Finally, how can you relate it to “Cold Equations”? Remember, the crucial aspect of this is your **critical analysis of the comparison**—just pointing it out is not enough.

Week 8

- **2/27 & 3/1—Library Exercise:** spend some time in the library researching your paper topic. Find strong sources (books, book chapters, articles from academic periodicals) that can potentially assist you in your writing, including at least one book. Include these sources in your paper proposal; **Complete:** CTOC Unit Six; **Paper Proposal Due:** follow the instructions on [this handout](#) from the U of Washington. Your research questions is: “How does an examination of a shared theme (metaphor or character or symbol) help with a critical understanding of two texts we have read for class?” Submit this to me on paper before the end of class on Wednesday.



Week 9

- **3/13 & 3/15—Conferences (No class this week); Complete:** CTOC Unit Seven: Preparing for the Presentation

Week 10

- 3/20—**Read:** Pratt “Impossible Dreams” (PDF)
- 3/22—**View:** *Deep Space Nine* “Far Beyond the Stars” ([Hulu](#));
Complete: CTOC Unit Eight: Presenting the Speech

Week 11

- 3/27—**Read:** Liu “Staying Behind” (PDF)
- 3/29—**View:** Whitmore “At the End” ([Vimeo](#)); **Complete:** CTOC Communications Exam

Week 12

- 4/3 & 4/5—Conferences to discuss paper progress. No class meeting. See me during class time in my office on Monday. **Note:** I will not be available after 2pm on Wed for conferences; come during my office hours, if you need to come on W.

Week 13

- 4/10—**Read:** Lucas “Every You, Every Me” (PDF)
- 4/12—**View:** “Uncanny Valley” ([Vimeo](#)) and “Lost Memories 2.0” ([Vimeo](#))

Week 14

- 4/17 & 4/19—Presentations

Week 15

- 4/24 & 4/26—Presentations (Off Week)

Finals Week

- 5/1—Final Essay Due

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*This is a hypertextual document from Dr. Lucas’ course web site [LitMUSE](#) and is **not** intended for print. The most current and accurate course information will always be online. Last updated: **Feb 17, 2017 at 09:18.***

