

# Perspectives on Science Fiction

HUMN 1011 | Summer 2017 1st Session | Online |  
Dr. Lucas



Gerald R. Lucas

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



From the BBC's Doctor Who 2005: "Blink."



he short story has been a mainstay in literature for centuries, but arguably no other genre has benefited from this form than science fiction. This course will examine short-form science fiction through short stories, television episodes, and short 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 | [@drglucas](#) | [About](#)
- Office: CAS-117 (Macon campus)
- Office Hours: By appointment on [Slack](#) and/or Skype
- Email: gerald.lucas [at] mga [dot] edu

I try to respond to email within a few hours. Please do not expect a response after 5pm on weekdays or anytime during the weekend. I may be available, but I also need some down time. Thanks for your understanding.

## How to Do Well in My Class

Students should engage learning with enthusiasm, imagination, and focus.

medium.com



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## 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)

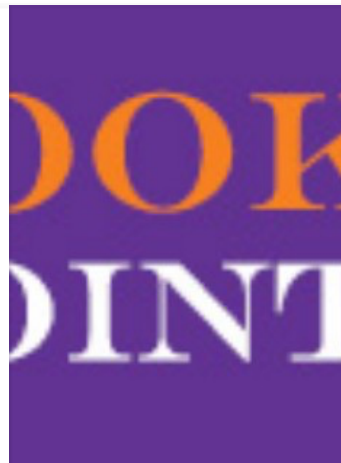
1. Students will assimilate, analyze, and present thoughts and opinions in oral forms.
2. Students will demonstrate the abilities to analyze, or interpret evidence or arguments, in order to formulate and support new arguments or solve problems.

3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between television and society.

### Student Success Center : Middle Georgia State University

The mission of the Student Success Centers is to positively impact retention and progression by providing academic...

[mga.edu](http://mga.edu)



### Required Texts

There are no required textbooks for this course. However, several PDFs and online articles will make up the class readings. 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. 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.



A still from Black Mirror.

## 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 University 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: **June 12, 2017**. After this date, 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. Class time is made available every week to complete these lessons—see the schedule below.

## **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, ten-minute presentation will be based on the critical thinking paper outlined above: present your research, argument, and approach to your critical thinking paper. All presentations should be videoed and uploaded to YouTube; creativity will be rewarded while a talking head will earn you minimum points. See the “Speech Evaluation Rubric.”

## **Participation (20%)**

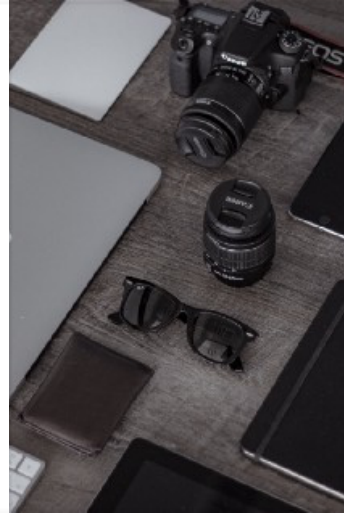
Includes anything not outlined above: discussions, online responses, quizzes, etc.

**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 Every Book You Read

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

[jamesclear.com](http://jamesclear.com)







Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock

## Procedure & Schedule

Since this section of HUMN 1011 is fully-online and a session course, it will follow a similar procedure for all “meetings” to keep us on-track. It will have four “due dates” per week, on Monday through Thursday before midnight. All work assigned for those dates below should be turned in before midnight on that date. Simply follow the directions for each day, but be sure to read ahead so you know what will be expected of you for the next day.

**All discussions assigned under “write” should be done on D2L in the appropriate discussion forum. All PDFs and reading quizzes may be found on D2L.**

**Wed 05/24**

- **Complete:** Read [Humanites Basics](#) and [Online Basics](#), and take the quiz.
- **Read:** You might begin reading LeGuin’s essay (see tomorrow’s assignment), since it’s a bit more than you will normally be assigned. I promise all subsequent reading will be much shorter.
- **Write:** Introduce yourself and tell us what your experience is with science fiction and what you hope to get out of this class (other than satisfying a requirement); respond to someone’s introduction.

## Thurs 05/25

- **Read:** [Some Views of Science Fiction](#); Le Guin “Intro to the Norton Book of SF” (PDF); Ballard “Which Way to Innerspace” (PDF).
- **View:** [“The Science Fiction Phenomenon”](#) (use your Galileo password).
- **Find:** Another article or video online that gives an introduction to science fiction, like [this one](#).
- **Write:** How has the reading and viewing changed your view of science fiction? What was the additional source that you found (post the link) and explain how it helped you. Be sure to cite specific evidence from the viewing(s) and readings. Respond to someone’s post to receive additional points; also vote posts up or down as you read.

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## Tues 05/30

- **View:** Chris Marker “La Jetée” ([Amazon](#))
- **Write:** Find a significant image from “La Jetée” and upload it. Discuss its importance in understanding one or more of the film’s themes. Do not summarize the plot; *analyze the image*. Respond and vote.

## Wed 05/31

- **Read:** William Gibson “The Gernsback Continuum” (PDF).
- **Take:** Reading quiz on D2L.
- **View:** *Doctor Who* “Blink” ([Amazon](#)).
- **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 and vote.

## Thurs 06/01

- **Complete:** CTOC Units One through Three (on D2L).

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## Mon 06/05

- **Read:** Philip K. Dick “We Can Remember It for You Wholesale” (PDF).
- **Take:** Reading quiz on D2L.
- **View:** *The X-Files* “José Chung’s ‘From Outer Space’ ” ([Hulu](#) or [Amazon](#)).
- **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 and vote.

## Tues 06/06

- **Read:** Tiptree “The Girl Who Was Plugged In” (PDF).
- **Take:** Reading quiz on D2L.
- **View:** *Black Mirror* “The Entire History of You” ([YouTube](#)).

- **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 and vote.

### Wed 06/07

- **Complete:** CTOC Unit Four and Critical Thinking Exam (on D2L);
- **Submit:** Critical Thinking Paper Proposal (See D2L for the submission folder). 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?” Spend some time on this and be sure your proposal contains an **explicit thesis statement** and at least **three sources in a working bibliography**. If these latter two items are missing, you will receive no credit for this proposal.

### Thurs 06/08

- **Read:** Sterling “Maneki Neko” (PDF).
- **Take:** Reading quiz on D2L.
- **View:** *Star Trek* “The City on the Edge of Forever” ([Hulu](#) or [Amazon](#)).
- **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 and vote. Remember, the crucial aspect of this is your **critical analysis of the comparison**—just pointing it out is not enough.

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### Mon 06/12

- **Read:** Godwin “The Cold Equations” (PDF).
- **Take:** Reading quiz on D2L.
- **View:** *Battlestar Galactica* “33” ([Amazon](#)).
- **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”? Respond and vote.

## Tues 06/13

- **Read:** Pratt “Impossible Dreams” (PDF).
- **Take:** Reading quiz on D2L.
- **View:** *Deep Space Nine* “Far Beyond the Stars” ([Hulu](#)).
- **Write:** Anything you’d like that addresses this week’s two texts. Respond and vote.

## Wed 06/14

- **Read:** Liu “Staying Behind” (PDF).
- **Take:** Reading quiz on D2L.
- **View:** Whitmore “At the End” ([Vimeo](#)).
- **Write:** Take any approach to the two texts that you would like. Respond and vote.

## Thurs 06/15

- **Complete:** CTOC Units Five through Seven (on D2L).

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## Mon 06/19

- Catch Up Day. Work on items you might have missed over the past few weeks. All must be submitted by Wed, 07/21.

## Tues 06/20

- Upload your 5-minute presentation video to YouTube and link it in the Presentations forum. Ask a question or post a comment on each video. (Due 06/21)

## Wed 06/21

- 1st Session Classes End
- **Complete:** CTOC Unit Eight and Communications Exam (on D2L).

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## Mon 06/26

- **Post:** Critical Thinking Paper due. Upload to D2L.

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**Last updated on 17 May 2017 @ 15:26.**

*Please do not print this document; access it online as information may change.*

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