

Spectrum Program Session 2

Course Title: Science Fiction & Fantasy Writing Honors

Course Description

Science fiction and fantasy writers create new, extraordinary worlds, allowing readers to imagine things that never were but might be some day or simply to engage with creative minds at play. Through readings, discussion, movie excerpts, writing exercises and workshops, students learn how to use character development, point of view, plot and setting effectively to produce a text in this genre. Students read novels and short stories from authors such as Isaac Asimov, Ursula LeGuin, Arthur C. Clarke, and Ray Bradbury. By the end of the course have gained a better understanding of the science fiction and fantasy genre within a historical context, improved their writing and editing skills and produced their own short story and dramatic presentation.

Essential Questions

- What do the imaginary worlds of science fiction and fantasy teach us about our own fantasies, obsessions, and fears?
- How can we write a story that compels interest and keeps the reader turning the pages?
- How can modern-day scientific advances inform our writing and appreciation of science fiction?
- How do we weave the concepts and the elements of the science fiction and fantasy genre into an original short story and dramatic presentation?

Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Identify and explain use of literary devices (i.e. dialogue, simile, metaphor, foreshadowing, personification, time sequence, imagery, repetition, allusion, symbolism, or syntax) in order to analyze a variety of science fiction and fantasy works.
- Understand the structural elements of science fiction and fantasy literature.
- Understand the historical development of science fiction and fantasy genres.
- Apply professional techniques used in commercial genre fiction.
- Write a short story in the genre of fantasy or science fiction.
- Develop editing skills to improve style, word choice, sentence variety, and meaning in relation to the purpose and the audience to take their writing from rough draft to polished manuscript.
- Refine the ability to self-edit and to peer-edit written pieces.
- Translate print text to non-print text in the form of dramatic interpretation.
- Develop an authentic voice that invites either reading or engagement.

Instructional Strategies

We will be analyzing the genres of science fiction and fantasy through a variety of methods including collaborative and flexible grouping and discussion, pair discussion, journaling, and individual and group presentations. On the first day, students will learn to question actively and to discuss as a cohesive group. We also will be engaging in kinesthetic activities, such as character roleplay, to help us to internalize the texts and to create an alternative mode of expression. There will be two final projects: (1) an original short story in the fantasy and science fiction genre, and (2) a group dramatic presentation of an excerpt from a computer game or movie based on a script that the students will write collaboratively. Students will also create a poster advertising their project, using their interpretive skills to translate print text to non-print text.

Resources and Materials

- **Books**

- a. *The Golden Compass* by Philip Pullman, ISBN 0375838309.
- b. *Rendezvous With Rama* by Arthur C. Clarke, ISBN 0899684491
- c. *The Book of Three* by Lloyd Alexander, ISBN 9780805080483

- **Course pack**

1. The course will also use excerpts from the following works, which will be provided in a course packet:

1984 by George Orwell
Dune by Frank Herbert
The Fellowship of the Ring by J.R.R. Tolkien
Perelandra by C.S. Lewis
Gormenghast by Mervyn Peake
The Knife of Never Letting Go by Patrick Ness
Flatland by Edward Abbott
2061: Odyssey Three by Arthur C. Clarke
The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams
The Restaurant at the End of the Universe by Douglas Adams
Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury
Foundation and Foundation and Empire by Isaac Asimov
Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Philip K. Dick
The Order of Odd-Fish by James Kennedy
The Martian Chronicles by Ray Bradbury
A Wind in the Door by Madeleine L'Engle
Perdido Street Station by China Mieville
Riddley Walker by Russell Hoban
A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess
Collected Essays by George Orwell
Erewhon by Samuel Butler
The Dark Tower by C.S. Lewis
Time's Arrow by Martin Amis
The End of Eternity by Isaac Asimov
The Napoleon of Notting Hill by G.K. Chesterton

2. These short stories will also be used in the course, and will be provided in a course packet:

"Frost and Fire" by Ray Bradbury
"The Call of Cthulhu" by H.P. Lovecraft
"Little Lost Robot" by Isaac Asimov
"The Figure" by Edward Grendon
"The 9 Billion Names of God" by Arthur C. Clarke
"The Last Question" by Isaac Asimov
"Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut
"And The Moon Be Still As Bright" by Ray Bradbury
"Mars is Heaven" by Ray Bradbury
"The Ethics of Elfland" by G.K. Chesterton
"A Sound of Thunder" by Ray Bradbury
"Ender's Game" by Orson Scott Card

- **Materials**

Students should bring one 1 ½ to 2-inch, 3-ring binder with lined notebook paper, several writing utensils, assorted markers, and a dictionary.

Student Assessment

- Pre-Assessment**

Students will be given an article detailing a recent scientific advancement. They will be asked to write a short story that uses the article as inspiration.

- CTD Grading Scale**

A+	100-97%	A	96-93%	A-	92-90%
B+	89-87%	B	86-83%	B-	82-80%
C+	79-77%	C	76-73%	C-	72-70%
D+	69-67%	D	66-63%	D-	62-60%
F	below 60%				

- Breakdown of Final Grade**

The final grade for the course will be determined through a combination of in-class writing assignments (20%), problem-solving short story (10%), group presentations (10%), class participation (10%), and final short story (50%).

- Post-Assessment**

There will be two final activities: an original science fiction or fantasy short story, and a group dramatic presentation of a scene from a computer game or movie based on a script created in a collaborative group, with a poster advertisement.

Schedule

Date	Topic(s)	In-class Activities	Assignments and Assessments
7/18/11	Brilliant Beginnings: How to Start Your Story	<p>In-class reading and discussion: <i>1984</i> (pp. 5-20), <i>Dune</i> (pp. 3-13), and <i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> (22-31) to appreciate techniques in beginning these stories.</p> <p>"Gripping Beginning" writing exercise.</p> <p>Introduction to "Storytelling Craft" sections. Just tips and tricks for jumpstarting quick. Not eternal principles. Rules of thumb from grizzled hack.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion 1: How To Create a Compelling Character I: Characterize Them, then Contrast That With Their Inner Life. Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion 2: "A story is not about a person, it's about a person's problem." "Imagine You're on an Airplane." "How to be Unhateable." Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Science Portion: Theories of personality psychology: medieval humors, enneagrams, stuff from modern neurology in which action seem to precede volition, etc. (Wolfe's essay?)</p>	Read chapters 1-5 of <i>The Golden Compass</i> by Philip Pullman.

Date	Topic(s)	In-class Activities	Assignments and Assessments
7/19/11	Creating Another World	<p>In-class reading and discussion of <i>Perelandra</i> (pp. 32-44), <i>Gormenghast</i> (pp. 9-17), <i>The Knife of Never Letting Go</i> (pp 3-38). Also excerpts from <i>Flatland</i> and <i>2061: Odyssey Three</i>.</p> <p>All-five-senses description exercise.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion 1: How to Create a Compelling Character II: Choose a Metaphor Family and Determine their Verbal DNA. Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion 2: Know the Way the World Works – Any World. Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Science Portion: Strange habitats and environments in the real world (ecosystems near thermal vents at ocean floor, conditions on other planets.)</p>	<p>Read chapters 6-9 of <i>The Golden Compass</i>.</p> <p>“Frost and Fire” by Ray Bradbury</p>
7/20/11	Fantastical Creatures	<p>In-class reading of discussion Sandworm parts of <i>Dune</i>; the Babel Fish in <i>The Hitch-hikers’ Guide to the Galaxy</i> (p. 42); H.P. Lovecraft’s Cthulhu mythos; the Mechanical Hound of <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> (p. 25-29, 130-131).</p> <p>Writing exercise: creating own fantastical creatures. What function does it have in narrative, other than being cool? Should reify some emotion or problem in story. Mechanical Hound is Montag’s conscience about his secret; Babel Fish “initiates” Arthur, and solves sci-fi problem of aliens speaking English; sandworm is physical catalyst of the galactic religion. Make things physical!</p> <p>Writing exercise: Pairing off and making creatures from the previous exercise meet.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion 1: How to Create a Compelling Character III: Give them a Universal Fear, and a Painful Dilemma. Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion 2: The Villain’s Plan Comes First. Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Science Portion: Weird insect and animal facts. (John Green’s “Power Moves”?)</p>	<p>Read chapters 10-14 of <i>The Golden Compass</i>.</p> <p>Read H.P Lovecraft's "The Call of Cthulhu."</p>

Date	Topic(s)	In-class Activities	Assignments and Assessments
7/21/11	Artifacts and Technologies	<p>In-class reading and discussion of gadgets from <i>The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy</i> such as the Total Perspective Vortex and Improbability Drive; the stillsuit from <i>Dune</i>; the Visisonor from <i>Foundation and Empire</i> (pp.173-177); the Empathy Box from Philip K. Dick's <i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i>; the Apology Gun from <i>The Order of Odd-Fish</i></p> <p>Writing exercise: creating one's own strange gadget, using provided hardware as inspiration.</p> <p>Talk about 3 Laws of Robotics to prep for tomorrow. (Dovetails with gadgetry!)</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion 1: How to Create a Compelling Character IV: Let them Lay Down the Law; Add a False Goal and a True Goal; Add Two Statements of Philosophy.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion 2: "Objects Need Affection Too." "Catholics are Better Than Protestants, and Sweet Potato Beats Sweetheart." "Beyond Specific vs. Generic." Corresponding Writing Exercise.</p> <p>Science Portion: learning about real-life (or soon-to-be real-life) devices that seem sci-fi (quantum computers, sound cannon, etc.)</p>	<p>Read chapters 15-18 of <i>The Golden Compass</i>.</p>
7/22/11	Intelligent, But Not Human	<p>In-class reading and discussions of the Martians in <i>The Martian Chronicles</i>; the elves in <i>Lord of the Rings</i>; the Green Lady in <i>Perelandra</i>; farandolae in <i>A Wind in the Door</i>; robots in Asimov; the Weaver from <i>Perdido Street Station</i> (pp. 284-291). Readings by Tolkien, Lewis and Chesterton on the slippery idea of "Faerie."</p> <p>Create groups for final dramatic presentation. 10-15 minutes long. A short play <i>or</i> a live-action demonstration of a storylike video game. A quest narrative with costumes, scenery, and at least one "device." Limits of budget -> creativity.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion 1: How to Create a Compelling Character V: Make them Resourceful, Set a Deadline. Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion 2: Throw Away the Map / Take Away the Safe Spaces. Kitchens are Better than Bedrooms. Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Science Portion: Artificial Intelligence. The Turing test. Reference the "most human human" competition.</p>	<p>Read chapters 19-23 to finish <i>The Golden Compass</i>.</p> <p>Reading Quiz on <i>The Golden Compass</i>.</p> <p>"Little Lost Robot" by Isaac Asimov (Discuss: Ethics. Manhattan Project. Three Laws of Robotics.)</p>

Date	Topic(s)	In-class Activities	Assignments and Assessments
7/25/11	<p>Creating a Mythology</p> <p>Elements of video games</p>	<p>In-class reading and discussion of "The 9 Billion Names of God" by Arthur C. Clarke.</p> <p>In-class reading and discussion of creation myths from many cultures: Hindu, Japanese, Icelandic, etc.</p> <p>Write a genesis myth; write an apocalypse myth.</p> <p>Group work for final presentation.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion: Eight Ways to Alienate an Audience.</p> <p>Science Portion: Science and Cosmology. Big Bang. Big Crunch. Heat Death. Nietzsche's Theory of Eternal Return.</p>	<p>Read chapters 1-8 of <i>Rendezvous With Rama</i> by Arthur C. Clarke.</p> <p>"Ender's Game" by Orson Scott Card (short story version).</p>
7/26/11	Rituals	<p>In-class reading and discussion of excerpts from <i>The Tombs of Atuan</i>; the Hate Week section in <i>1984</i>; excerpts about rituals in <i>Gormenghast</i>.</p> <p>Insult Battle from <i>The Order of Odd-Fish</i>. Dome of Doom writing exercise with costumes.</p> <p>Writing Exercise: Students try to write about what ritual Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring" is about, while listening to it. Tell them after what it means.</p> <p>Group work for final presentation.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion: Freudian Character Prism (or, Harry's the ego, Hermione's the superego, and Ron's the id). Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Science Portion. Freudian psychology (this stretches the definition of "science," I know). <i>Totem and Taboo</i>.</p>	<p>Read chapters 9-17 of <i>Rendezvous With Rama</i>.</p>
7/27/11	New Languages	<p>In-class examination and translation of language in <i>Riddley Walker</i>, <i>A Clockwork Orange</i>, Tolkien.</p> <p>Reading of excerpts from Orwell's <i>Politics and the English Language</i> side-by-side with <i>1984</i>.</p> <p>Creatively translate unknown language exercise.</p> <p>Create a new language exercise.</p> <p>45-minute long joint session with the Creative Writing course of Amy Roberts-Paeth speaking about the revision process for a professional writer.</p> <p>Group work for final presentation, if time allows.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion: Theories of Story Structure: Joseph Campbell's "Hero's Journey," Blake Snyder's "Beat Sheet"</p> <p>Science Portion: Some linguistics science culled from Steven Pinker's <i>The Language Instinct</i>.</p>	<p>Read chapter 18-26 of <i>Rendezvous With Rama</i>.</p> <p>Pages 1-2 of original short story.</p>

Date	Topic(s)	In-class Activities	Assignments and Assessments
7/28/11	Commenting On Our World	<p>Read-aloud and in-class discussion: "Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut.</p> <p>In-class reading and analysis of excerpts from <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>, <i>1984</i>, <i>Brave New World</i>, <i>Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy</i>, and <i>Erewhon</i>.</p> <p>Group work for final presentation.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion: Structures part 2. Frank Daniel's "Sequence" approach; stereotypically "male" and "female" stories. Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Science Portion. Surprising recent work in neuroscience.</p>	<p>Read chapters 27-35 of <i>Rendezvous With Rama</i>.</p> <p>"And The Moon Be Still As Bright" by Ray Bradbury.</p> <p>Pages 3-4 of original short story.</p>
7/29/11	Making the Ordinary Strange, and the Strange Ordinary	<p>Start with discussion of "mooreffoc" effect as introduced by Dickens and elaborated on by Chesterton.</p> <p>In-class reading and discussion of excerpt from <i>Time's Arrow</i> by Martin Amis.</p> <p>Group work for final presentation. Extra time to discuss getting materials for scenery, costumes etc. over the weekend.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion: Dealing with Exposition. Avoiding the infodump. Upsetting News is the Best News. Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Science Portion: Zeno's Paradoxes.</p>	<p>Read chapters 35-46 to finish <i>Rendezvous With Rama</i>.</p> <p>Reading quiz on <i>Rendezvous With Rama</i>.</p> <p>"Mars is Heaven" by Ray Bradbury.</p> <p>"The Ethics of Elfland" by Chesterton.</p> <p>Peer Editing of short story pages 1- 4</p> <p>Corrections to pages 1-4</p>
8/1/11	Time Travel	<p>Read and discuss in class "The Figure" by Edward Grendon, excerpt from <i>The Dark Tower</i> by C.S. Lewis, excerpt from <i>The End of Eternity</i> by Isaac Asimov.</p> <p>Group work for final presentation.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion: Anti-Glibness: If You Laugh at Death, You Suffer the Consequences. Angry Minds Don't Think Alike. It Was All A Dream. Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Science Portion: Special and general relativity. The "block universe."</p>	<p>Read chapters 1-4 of <i>The Book of Three</i> by Lloyd Alexander.</p> <p>Read "A Sound of Thunder" by Ray Bradbury.</p> <p>Pages 5-7 of original short story.</p>

Date	Topic(s)	In-class Activities	Assignments and Assessments
8/2/11	Predicting the Future How a Short Story Works	<p>In-class reading and discussion of beginning of <i>The Napoleon of Notting Hill</i> by G. K. Chesterton and excerpts from Isaac Asimov's <i>Foundation</i>. Discussion of Ray Bradbury's quote "I don't try to describe the future. I try to prevent it."</p> <p>Dramatic presentation rehearsals. Instructor as producer giving "notes."</p> <p>Conferences</p> <p>Storytelling Craft Portion: Defying Expectations Is Easy, Creating Expectations Is Hard; Twists Should Explain Everything. Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Science Portion: Look at "predictions of the future" from different eras (1890s, 1950s) and current predictions of our own future</p>	<p>Read chapters 5-10 of <i>The Book of Three</i>.</p> <p>"The Last Question" by Isaac Asimov.</p> <p>Finish original short story.</p>
8/3/11	What Makes an Effective Advertisement?	<p>Peer editing</p> <p>Work on poster ads for group project.</p> <p>Conferencing</p> <p>Dramatic presentation rehearsals. Instructor as producer giving "notes."</p> <p>Storytelling Craft: From Zero to Caring in 60 seconds flat. Corresponding writing exercise.</p> <p>Science Portion: Bell's Theorem. Weird results from quantum theory.</p>	<p>Read chapter 11-14 of <i>The Book of Three</i>.</p> <p>Finish peer editing.</p> <p>Final conferences.</p>
8/4/11	Final Sharing: Essential Questions Answered	<p>Dramatic presentation rehearsals. Instructor as producer giving "notes."</p> <p>Storytelling Craft 1: The Good Advice Problem, and the Bad Advice Solution. People Only Want What They Want. Corresponding writing exercise.</p>	<p>Read chapters 15-20 to finish <i>The Book of Three</i>.</p> <p>Reading quiz on <i>The Book of Three</i>.</p> <p>Final Presentations</p>
8/5/11	Final Sharing: Essential Questions Answered	<p>Group sharing of dramatic presentation and poster.</p> <p>"Game Show" of trivia from throughout the class.</p> <p>Storytelling Craft: Leave a question unanswered. Sometimes You Have to Write Deleted Scenes. Corresponding writing exercise.</p>	<p>Final Presentations</p> <p>Final Stories Due</p>

CTD Statement on Third-Party Web Sites

Instructors are required to thoroughly review any third-party web sites they intend to use in their courses for inappropriate content. However, because web content continuously changes, CTD disclaims any responsibility for any of the content contained on third-party web sites used in course materials. If you become aware of anything that may be inappropriate, please notify CTD staff immediately.

SAMPLE