

# STSC 1101 Science & Literature

Wednesday, 3:30-6:30 pm – [Classroom]

Instructor: Dr. Kate Dorsch (she/her/hers)

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Office hours: By appointment, <https://calendly.com/ppe>

## Course Description

This course introduces major themes and works in science fiction and provides context through topical primary and secondary readings. We operate in the seminar format, meeting once a week for three hours. This course is discussion-oriented and depends on prepared and engaged course members. In addition to reading, watching, and listening to some great science fiction, we'll also work together to develop skills in different types of reading, note-taking, writing, and the art of navigating long, challenging, and/or dense texts.

This course is reading-intensive. The syllabus may appear daunting, but don't worry! We'll tackle it together.

Your prepared and engaged regular attendance is expected.

## Course Materials

Some of these books are available as eBooks, or through Course Reserve at Van Pelt. Others can be acquired "Used" and on the cheap. **I do encourage you to visit <https://www.indiebound.org/> before resorting to Amazon. Local independent booksellers are a precious resource and deserve our support!**

All other readings will be made available via the Canvas site for the course. If you have any issues or difficulties accessing the Canvas site or the course materials, or have any other concerns, please bring them to me as soon as possible!

## Assessments

There are no mandatory assignments or assessments in this course. Instead, everything you do in this course will have a point value attached to it. Your grade will be a direct result of the extent to which you engage in the content of this course.

The overall point breakdown is as follows:

- 275+: A+
- 250: A

- 230: A-
- 205: B+
- 180: B
- 160: B-
- 150: C+
- 140: C
- 135: C-

For more information on how to earn points, please see the appropriate Canvas page.

**In general**, you will be able to submit tasks for points up to two weeks after the relevant week. For example, submissions related to Week 3's content can be submitted until the end of Week 5.

### Extension Policy

Generally speaking, extensions will be granted, no questions asked, under the following conditions:

- You identify a new due date no more than one week after the original deadline (and we agree on it)
- The work will not be accepted after the revised due date.

### Email Policy

When emailing me, please allow at least 24 hours for a reply and potentially more over the weekend. I like to take time away from my screens and encourage you to do the same! However, if you have not received a reply from me within 72 hours, please send a gentle follow-up email.

### Absences

Your attendance and participation in this course is crucial to everyone's success. If you anticipate missing multiple classes for any reason, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to find a solution.

I continue to stand by my policy of "not taking attendance." However, it is difficult to fully participate when you're not in class.

### Mental Health and Wellness

If you are experiencing undue personal and/or academic stress during the semester that may be interfering with your ability to perform academically, UPenn's Student Health and Counseling services offers a range of services to assist and support you. I am available to you to talk about stresses related to your work in my course! I can also assist you in connecting with the good folks at Student Wellness, who are the central and first point of contact to help students navigate and

connect to appropriate resources on and off-campus, develop a plan of action, and provide ongoing support. You can reach out to them at <https://wellness.upenn.edu/student-health-and-counseling>.

### Accessibility and Inclusivity

I strive to make my classes as accessible and inclusive as possible, and your success in this course is important to me. This class respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities. Therefore, I expect all of us to respect each other and treat each other with kindness. If at any point you feel like I or any member of our class has violated that trust, please bring this to me as soon as possible so that we can address it.

If there are circumstances that make our learning environment and activities difficult, if you have medical information that you need to share with me, or if you need specific arrangements in case the building needs to be evacuated, please let me know. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all students, but I can only do so if you discuss your needs with me as early as possible. I promise to maintain the confidentiality of these discussions.

Any student who faces challenges securing food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support and is encouraged to notify me, if you are comfortable doing so, so that I may bring any resources I have to bear as well.

### Accommodations

The Weingarten Center offers a variety of resources to support all Penn students in reaching their academic goals. All services are free and confidential. **To contact the Weingarten Center, call 215-573-9235.** The office is located in Stouffer Commons, 3702 Spruce Street, Suite 300.

### **Academic Support**

Learning consultations and learning strategies workshops support students in developing more efficient and effective study skills and learning strategies. Learning specialists work with undergraduate, graduate, and professional students to address time and project management, academic reading and writing, note-taking, problem-solving, exam preparation, test-taking, self-regulation, and flexibility.

Undergraduates can also take advantage of free on-campus tutoring for many Penn courses in both drop-in and weekly contract formats. Tutoring may be individual or in small groups. Tutors will assist with applying course information, understanding key concepts, and developing course-specific strategies. Tutoring support is available throughout the term but is best accessed early in the semester.

### **Disability Services**

The University of Pennsylvania is committed to the accessibility of its programs and services. Students with a disability or medical condition can request reasonable accommodations through the Weingarten Center website. Disability Services determines accommodations on an individualized

basis through an interactive process, including a meeting with the student and a review of their disability documentation. Students who have approved accommodations are encouraged to notify their faculty members and share their accommodation letters at the start of each semester. Students can contact Disability Services by calling 215-573-9235.

### Academic Integrity

Students are expected to be familiar with and comply with Penn's Code of Academic Integrity, which is available in the Pennbook, or online at <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>. I generally have a zero-tolerance policy for cheating, and all violations will result in substantial penalties. If you have any doubts or questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please do not hesitate to contact me. If at ANY POINT you are unsure as to whether what you are doing does or does not count as plagiarism, cheating, or so on, please ask!

ON PLAGIARISM: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDp3cB5fHXQ>

And now, without further ado...

## **SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1 – January 24**

Intro: What is Science Fiction?

*Battlestar Galactica*, “The Miniseries” (first 90 minutes)

### **Week 2 – Utopia - January 31**

More, *Utopia* (1551), excerpts

Bacon, *New Atlantis* (1626), PDF pp. 46-57 (NA pp. 31-42)

Cavendish, *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing-World* (1666), PDF pp. 4-20

Gascoigne, John. “The Royal Society and the Emergence of Science as an Instrument of State Policy.” *British Journal for the History of Science* 32(2) Did the Royal Society Matter in the Eighteenth Century? (June 1999): 171-184.

Wilkins, Emma. “Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society.” *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 68(3) (20 Sept 2014): 245-260.

### **Week 3 – The City and the Country - February 7**

Arthur C. Clarke, *Against the Fall of Night* (1953)

Williams, Raymond. “Country and City” and “Pastoral and Counter-Pastoral.” In Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973), 1-8, 13-34.

Mumford, Lewis. "Utopia, the City, and the Machine." *Daedalus* 94(2) (Spring 1965): 271-292.

#### **Week 4 – Colonialism/Imperialism I – February 14**

C. S. Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938)

Selections from Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1992):

From "Introduction," pp. xi-xiv

From Chapter One, "Empire, Geography, and Culture," pp. 3-14

From Chapter One, "Connecting Empire to Secular Interpretation," pp. 43-61

Ellingson, Ter. "Colonialism, Savages, and Terrorism." In Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 45-63.

#### **Week 5 – Colonialism/Imperialism II – February 21**

H. G. Wells, *War of the Worlds* (1898) OR E. R. Burroughs, *A Princess of Mars* (1912)

F. J. Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893), excerpts

Cronon, William. "The Trouble with Wilderness." *Environmental History* 1(1) (Jan 1996): 7-28.

#### **Week 6 – February 28**

Maria Doria Russell, *The Sparrow* (1996)

Hsia, Florence C. "Who is that Masked Man?" In Hsia, *Sojourners in a Strange Land: Jesuits and Their Scientific Missions in Late Imperial China*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 1-11.

Selections from *The Jesuit relations* (in class)

#### **Week 7 – SPRING BREAK**

#### **Week 8 – March 13**

Nnedi Okorafor, *Binti* (2015)

W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Comet" (1920)

Samuel R. Delany, "Racism and Science Fiction." In Thomas, ed., *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora* (New York, NY: Warner Books, 2001), pp. 383-397

Mark Dery, "Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose." In Dery, ed., *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 179-222.

### **Week 9 – March 20**

Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We* (1924)

Foucault, "Panopticism," from *Discipline and Punish*

Holquist, Peter. "Information is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work': Bolshevik Surveillance in its Pan-European Context." *Journal of Modern History* 69(3): (Sept 1997): 415-450.

### **Week 10 – March 27**

George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949)

Jack London, "A Curious Fragment"

Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty"

### **Week 11 – April 3**

Excerpts from young Marx, *The Marx and Engels*

*Star Trek: Deep Space 9*, "Bar Association" (in class)

\*Get a jump on LeGuin, *The Dispossessed* – pp. 1-191

### **Week 12 – April 10**

Ursula K. LeGuin, *The Dispossessed* (1974)

Kaiser, David. "Nuclear Democracy: Political Engagement, Pedagogical Reform, and Particle Physics in Postwar America." *Isis* 93(2) (June 2002): 229-268.

Schmid, Sonja D. "Defining (Scientific) Direction: Soviet Nuclear Physics and Reactor Engineering During the Cold War." In Oreskes and Krige, ed., *Science and Technology in the Global Cold War*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2014. 317-342.

### **Week 13 – April 17**

Liu Cixin, *The Three-Body Problem* (translated 2006)

Heberer, Thomas. "The 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution': China's modern trauma."  
*Journal of Modern Chinese History* 3(2) (Dec 2009): 165-181.

**Week 14 – April 24**

Kim Stanley Robinson, *Red Mars*, Parts 1-4

**Week 15 – May 1**

Kim Stanley Robinson, *Red Mars*, Parts 5-8