

Lakehead University
Gender and Women's Studies Department
WOME 3310 FA/FAO/FB/FBO
Term: Fall 2022



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Instructor: Dr. Miranda Niittynen

Course Type: In-person (LU) / In person, Video Conference (Orillia)

Location: ATAC 5041 (Thunder Bay Campus) and OA 2020 (Orillia Campus)

Meeting Time: Fridays, 8:30am – 11:30am

Office Hours: Virtual Office Hours, by appointment only

Email: mniitty1@lakeheadu.ca

Course Description:

The genre of Science Fiction has always provided otherworldly time and space, allowing for us to think outside of the conventions, cultural norms, and social interactions of the everyday world. Traditionally, science fiction has been believed to be a male-dominated and male-occupied genre; however, further research shows that women's interventions into sci-fi writing took place in the early chapters. Despite constraints, women often used male pseudonyms to be published in the sci-fi genre. More famously known are the feminist authors in the 60s and 70s, spearheaded by the matriarchs of science fiction writing: Joanna Russ, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Marge Piercy (to name only a few) and later by scholars such as Octavia Butler and Margret Atwood. Since these profound interventions and subversions to the science fiction literary genre, feminist writers, artists and creators have transformed sci-fi content, offering new ways of seeing and being through a variety of books, poems, films, television series, graphic novels, and other representational mediums. In light of this rich material, we will collectively analyze the science fiction genre (past and present) and discuss topics such as utopia/dystopia, monsters, clones, aliens, cyborgs, time and space travel, the apocalypse and extinction often used as metaphors for socio-political issues discussed among feminist and social justice circles relating to state of the world in which we live. In addition to these topics, students will be introduced to contemporary science fiction theory and content (in filmic and literary examples) as well as contemporary discussions in the fields of Indigenous speculative fiction, Afrofuturism, queer science fiction, posthumanism, and transhumanism.

Student Evaluation:

1. Attendance / Participation	20%	ongoing
2. Sparker Presentation	15%	scheduled by Week 2
3. Scifi Film Response Papers (3 x 10%)	30%	Oct 7 and Nov 11 and Dec 2
4. Final Exam	35%	TBA

Required Texts:

- All pdfs will be offered through the course website. For your organization, each reading is organized alphabetically by the author's last name.

Email Note:

- Please include our course code (**WOME 3310**) in the subject line of any and all email correspondence to avoid any confusion throughout the term

Covid-19 Protocol for WOME 3310:*From the University:*

Due to the transition back to in-class learning, Lakehead University will follow a cautionary protocol for Covid-19 related illness.

Masking on Lakehead University properties will continue to be strongly encouraged in spaces where physical distancing may not be possible, however it is not required.

It is important to respect those who choose to wear a mask - individuals will make such decisions based on their personal health and the needs of their community -- what they feel is right for them. Masks are one of the easiest ways to help protect oneself and those around you. If the ongoing COVID situation warrants, please be advised that the University may reinstate a masking requirement in specific, or all, indoor spaces in accordance with recommendations or requirements issued by public health and/or the province.

As always, those experiencing COVID symptoms, or who are not feeling well, should avoid coming to campus.

From your professor:

In the event that I (your professor) contract Covid-19, class materials and lectures will be posted online until I test negative and can safely return to the classroom space.

I will also be masking when entering and exiting our classroom space (not during lectures, however). If you have a question or need to speak to me in class, please wear a mask when approaching the front of the room. I will be holding office hours virtually in order to avoid unnecessary contact, please book an appointment by email if you need to discuss the course assignments or anything else related to our course.

Note on Class Content:

This course is a study of science fiction in all of its representational forms. We will collectively analyze a number of representations from films, tv-episodes, dated media, short stories, performances, and artworks as they relate to science fiction, gender, and social change. Subsidiary to these examples, we will look at a number of artists, activists, and writers who have creatively and critically responded within the masculine-dominated genre of science fiction, in order to make space for a variety of different forms of storytelling. Remember that studying in the humanities and social sciences often involves learning from the lived experiences of others and oftentimes with a variety of visual media. At times, critical academic pieces may use offensive language to highlight various forms of oppression. We will be discussing a number of different issues that affect the lives of people from a broad range of geographies, locations, cultures, and backgrounds.

Because the materials focus on a number of social and emotional issues, such as racism, sexism, colonialism, eugenics, extinction, illness, dystopic storytelling and other forms of complex representations, it is important to practice self-care, good health, and wellness set by your own individual needs. While some of the materials might be difficult to navigate, students will be given a number of critical outlets through activist inspired artists, performers, and speakers to help reflect on the realities of the past and the pressing oppressions of the present.

If you are struggling this term, please seek out help through campus counselling. More information can be found at the following url:

Student Health and Counselling:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/wellness-recreation/student-health-and-wellness>

Course Evaluation and Assignments:**1. Class Attendance/Participation: 20%** of overall course grade.

Students are expected to attend all classes, read the outlined materials in preparation for classroom discussion, and actively and respectfully listen to course lectures and to peers. Without a documented medical reason, student's absences will be reflected on their final grade. Attendance will be taken every class. In the event that you contract Covid-19, please get in touch with your professor at your earliest convenience and review lecture materials online for that week. It may be useful to get the contact of a peer from class to receive notes by the chance of any absences related to Covid-19.

Due Date: Participation will be **ongoing** throughout the course term.

2. Sparker Presentation: 15% of overall course grade.

Discussion Sparkers -- *choose one cultural example related to science fiction*.

Sparkers will give the class the opportunity to cross-apply concepts and approach science fiction examples from a critical lens. Students will have 15 minutes to present their cultural example and facilitate discussion with 2 questions.

Due Date: Students must sign up for their Sparker Presentation **no later than Week 2** of the course.

Sparker presentations will focus on a topic of choice by the student and do not have to be related to the weekly theme. This is an invitation to share your interests and passion in the science fiction genre with the class and to give us an opportunity to expand our interests and discussion beyond the course content.

3. Scifi Film Response Papers (3 x 10%): 30% of overall course grade.

Each student will write a short response paper reflecting on the three science fiction films screened in the course. Papers will be 2-3 pages in length and will discuss the film in relation to the readings assigned to the theme. All papers will follow *MLA* style formatting (see course website for details). Students are encouraged to explore and respond to each film and include secondary research that reflects the topic of *Science Fiction and Social Change*. Each short response paper will be clearly organized (you are encouraged to outline your paper with a thesis and introduction), focusing on key content that the student finds relevant from the film and the assigned readings (in addition to any other relevant materials the student wants to add). I highly encourage drawing connections across content that most interests you and your own knowledge of the science fiction genre.

Reminders:

- Put your Name on your paper
- Include a Paper Title
- Times New Roman font; pt. 12 size font
- Double-spaced
- Page numbers
- Be sure to properly cite IN-TEXT the sources you are using throughout
- *Cite the film you are discussing in the formal bibliography/works cited page*
- Late assignments will be penalized 2% per day without prior arrangements made
- Papers will be cited in *MLA* style

A good response paper will:

1. Address the overarching themes of the film and any key points from the assigned readings
2. Draw connections across supplementary materials (news articles, blog posts, videos, books, short-stories, other media and relevant content etc.)
3. Offer the student's reflection on the film as it relates to the discussion of science fiction and social change
4. Include any follow-up questions or viewpoints the student may have in response to the film screened in class

Due Date: Papers due dates are set by the following schedule:

Note: Assignment guidelines and rubrics will be posted on D2L and discussed in class

Due Dates:

Movie 1:September 23, *District 9*Due Date: **October 7****Movie 2:**October 21, *Never Let Me Go*Due Date: **November 11****Movie 3:**November 11, *Her*Due Date: **December 2****ALL FILM RESPONSE PAPERS WILL BE EMAILED TO ME IN DOCX FORMATTING**

Please send response papers with document title: Last Name, First Initial – Assignment Title (ex., Niittynen, M – Film Response 1)

4. Final Exam: 35% of overall course grade.

Students will be tested through a formal Final Exam on the lectures, course readings, videos, films, and other materials discussed throughout the term. Students will be tested on their comprehension and understanding of the course concepts related to science fiction, gender, and social change. The final exam will test students on material cumulative of the course, Weeks 2-12. An exam review and study preparation will be posted on D2L.

Due Date: Final Exam **TBA**.*Note:* Exam review will be scheduled and notifications will take place prior to the scheduled exam.

Reading Schedule

W1/Sept 9: History of Science Fiction: Women's Intervention in Writing*Readings:*

- Ursula K. Le Guin – Preface, *Left Hand of Darkness*
- Helen Merrick – “Birth of a Subgenre: Feminist SF and its Criticism”

Video Clips:

- *Gender Questions and Feminist Science Fiction*

W2/Sept 16: Monsters, Mothers, and Queer Reproduction*Readings:*

- Helen Merrick – “Queering Nature: Close Encounters with the Alien in Feminist Science Fiction”
- Margrit Shildrick – “Monsterring the M(Other)”
- J. Rubén Valdés-Miyares – “*Beowulf's* Monster Discourse Now: Grendel in Twenty-First-Century Film”

Video Clips:

- *Alien* (1979)
- *Prometheus* (2012)
- *Brave New World* (2020)

Sparker 1:**Sparker 2:****W3/Sept 23: Aliens, Alienation, and Afrofuturism Part I***Schedule:*

- *Film and discussion*

Readings:

- Rebecca Weaver-Hightower – “The Postcolonial Hybrid: Neill Blomkamp’s *District 9*”

Movie 1: *District 9* (2009)

Sparker 1:**Sparker 2:****W4/Sept 30: Aliens, Alienation, and Afrofuturism Part II***Readings:*

- Adilifu Nama – “Black Space: Structured Absence and Token Presence”
- Sofia Samatar – “Toward an Planetary History of Afrofuturism”

Video Clips:

- Miscellaneous Wangechi Mutu
- *Octavia Butler: The Grand Dame of Science Fiction*
- *Black Panther* (2018)
- *Afrofuturism: From Books to Blockbusters*

Sparker 1:**Sparker 2:****W5/Oct 7: Time-Travellers: Indigenous Science Fiction and Colonialism Exploration***Readings:*

- Sandi Solis – “Culloden and Wounded Knee: Genocide, Identity, and Cultural Survival”
- Chelsea Vowel – excerpts from *Buffalo is the New Buffalo*

Video Links:

- *Avatar* (2009)
 - *Outlander* (2014-2022)
 - *12 Monkeys* (2015-2018)
 - *The Man in the High Castle* (2015-2019)
 - *Arrival* (2016)
 - *Four Faces of the Moon* (2017)
- Other:
- Salty Lil' Ojibwe response on Twitter

Sparker 1:

Sparker 2:

**Film 1 Response
Paper Due**

W6/Oct 14

Reading Week

- Relax and catch up on reading ☺

W7/Oct 21:

Clones, Disability, and the Eugenic Model: Part I

Schedule:

- Film and discussion

Readings:

- Kazuo Ishiguro – excerpts from *Never Let Me Go*

Movie 2: *Never Let Me Go* (2010)

Sparker 1:

Sparker 2:

W8/Oct 28:

Clones, Disability, and the Eugenic Model: Part II

Readings:

- Rosemarie Garland-Thomson – “Eugenic World Building and Disability: The Strange World of Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*”
- Anna Petnaházi – “‘Who Can Straighten What He Hath Made Crooked?’: Eugenics and the Camp in *Gattaca* and *The Island*”

Video Clips:

- *Gattaca* (1997)
- *The Island* (2005)
- *Moon* (2009)
- *Never Let Me Go* (2010)
- *X-Men* (2011)

Sparker 1:
Sparker 2:

W9/Nov 4: Posthumanism: Interspecies Blendings and Becoming Animal

Readings:

- Karen Joy Fowler – “What I Didn’t See”
- Pat Murphy – “Rachel in Love”
- Nayar K. Pramod – excerpts from *Posthumanism*
- H.G. Wells – *excerpts* from *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

Video Clips:

- *Planets of the Apes* (1968)
- *The Fly* (1986)
- *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1990)
- *Splice* (2009)
- *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (2011)
- *Lamb* (2021)
- *Sweet Tooth* (2021)
- *Jurassic Park* (1993)

Sparker 1:
Sparker 2:

W10/Nov 11: Transhumanism, Desire, and the AI Girl: Part I

Schedule:

- *Film and discussion*

Readings:

- Alex Garland – *excerpts* from *Ex Machina* script
- Nickolas Pappas – “Spike Jonze’s *Her*: Love and the Science Fiction Film”

Movie 3: *Her* (2013)

Film 2 Response
Paper Due

Sparker 1:
Sparker 2:

W11/Nov 18: Transhumanism, Desire, and the AI Girl: Part II

Readings:

- Kate Devlin and Olivia Belton – “The Measure of a Woman: Fembots, Fact, and Fiction”
- Paolo Bacigalupi - *excerpts* from *The Wind-up Girl*
- Elizabeth Mullen – “‘Not much of a rind on you’: (De)constructing Genre and Gender in *Westworld*”

Video Clips:

- *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968)
- *Blade Runner* (1982)
- *Lars and the Real Girl* (2007)
- *Wall-e* (2008)
- *Ex Machina* (2014)
- *Westworld* (2016-2022)

Sparker 1:**Sparker 2:****W12/Nov 25: Dystopia, Ecofeminism, and (De-)Extinction***Readings:*

- Miranda Niittynen – *excerpt* from “Apocalyptic Time”
- Melina Pereira Savi – “Looking to Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Word for World is Forest* to find ways to Respond to the Dilemmas of the Anthropocene”
- Alicia E. Stalling – “The Machines Mourn the Passing of People”
- Kyle P. Whyte – “Indigenous Science (Fiction) for the Anthropocene: Ancestral Dystopias and Fantasies of Climate Change Crisis”

Video Clips:

- *Armageddon* (1998)
- *Children of Men* (2006)
- *Melancholia* (2011)
- *The Martian* (2015)
- *The Lobster* (2015)
- *Star Wars: Rogue One* (2016)
- *The Handmaid’s Tale* (2017)
- *Don’t Look Up* (2021)

Sparker 1:**Sparker 2:****W13/Dec 2: Exam Review***Final Exam Review Scheduled***Final Exam: TBA****Sparker 1:****Sparker 2:****Film 3 Response
Paper Due**

Course Policies:

Class Participation and Attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes in order to listen to course lectures, screen videos, and view visual examples in preparation for tested comprehension of course materials on the Final exam. A failure to do so will be reflected on each student's final grade. Students are expected to read the course material for each week and are encouraged to participate in course discussion.

If a student is absent for more than 20% of class attendance (without a valid reason or accommodation) the professor is not permitted to pass the student in the course.

As per Lakehead University's Regulation VIII, part (d):

“(d) A student is required to attend the courses of instruction and the examinations in all subjects prescribed. A student whose *attendance* at lectures and laboratories is deemed to be unsatisfactory by the Senate may have her/his registration in that course cancelled at any time.”

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to know Lakehead University's policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Lakehead University's policy on academic dishonesty can be found at the following url: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-conduct/academic-integrity/faq>

Policy on Missed/Late Assignments: Students are required to submit all assignments on the assigned due date. If accommodations are needed for an assignment, students should make arrangements with the instructor ahead of time otherwise late assignments will be penalized 2% for each day (including weekends) that the assignment is late.

- late work will not be accepted after two weeks from the due date unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances
- arrangements can be made for accessibility needs regarding due dates. Please make sure to sort out arrangements with the instructor prior to the due date

Email Etiquette:

All correspondence should be polite, respectful, and professional. Email inquiries must include:

- a salutation, (i.e. “hello”, “dear”, “To”, etc.) and **the course code WOME 3310**
- a detailed question, or polite request.
- a signature (i.e. your name). **Emails that do not follow this format will be discarded.**
- Before you email a question, be sure to read the course syllabus to see if you can find the answer there.
- If you have to discuss an in-depth issue, please email the instructor and make an appointment request for a meeting time that works for both you and the instructor.

Every effort will be made to respond to emails within 48 hours (excluding weekends or holidays). If you have not received a response after 48 hours, please send a polite reminder as sometimes emails can get lost in the shuffle.

Digital Policy and Classroom Etiquette:

Laptop computers and tablets are permitted in my class; however, such technologies should be used for classroom activities only. Students are not permitted to take photos, videos, record my lectures, or share any course materials online.

- Turn your phone and other electronic devices to SILENT MODE when you come into class. Texting and smart phone use are strictly prohibited in class.
- Talking in class: Please do not be disruptive during class lectures. Students are expected to be respectful to the professor and their peers. Talking is encouraged only during in-class discussion, Q&A sessions, or group work. Those who persist in talking and disrupting their peers learning during lectures will be asked to leave class.

Copyright

© Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., lectures, audio lecture, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

Submitting Assignments:

All assignments that are submitted by email must include the students name and be in docx formatting (Microsoft word). Please send assignments with document title: Last Name, First Initial – Assignment Name (ex., Niittynen, M – Response Paper 2).

Lakehead University Resources:

Lakehead University offers a number of resources for students who need additional accessibility and resources for their individual learning. “Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities and/or medical conditions to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible.” For more information on these services contact Student Accessibility Services.

Student Accessibility Services:

<http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca>

Office: SC0003

Tel., 343-8047

Email: sas@lakeheadu.ca

Other LU Resources:**Student Success Centre:**

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-success-centre>

Academic Support Zone / Writing Tutors:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/academic-success/student-success-centre/academic-support-zone>

Tutoring and Peer Assistant Learning:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/academic-support/tutoring>

Important Note: **Academic tutors / Writing tutors are available and paid for in your tuition.**

This is a great resource if you are new help with university level essay writing or if you need some additional help comprehending assignments / class content. *Be sure to plan ahead:* create drafts or prepare for exams and book early appointments with writing tutors / peer assistants with sufficient time before the assignment/exam due date.

Student Health and Counselling:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-services/tb/health-and-counselling>

All Emergencies: 24 Hours, Call 8-911

Your 8-911 call will be received at the Security Services Department.

Safe Walk:

“At any time during the night or day, if you feel uncomfortable walking alone, or would just like someone to walk with, contact Security at 343-8569 or call 343-7742 (8569 or 7742 using a campus Nortel phone).

One of our friendly and professional guards will be dispatched to your location and escort you to anywhere on campus. This service is offered 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. You can also let us know in advance of when you would like one of our team members to escort you by calling the numbers listed above.”

Indigenous Student Services Centre:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-services/tb/aboriginal-services>

Pride Central:

<http://pride.lusu.ca/>

Gender Equity Centre:

<http://gic.lusu.ca/>

“You cannot buy the revolution. You cannot make the revolution. You can only be the revolution. It is in your spirit, or it is nowhere.”

— Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*