

# SCIENCE FICTION CINEMA

Spring 2016

"Learn from me . . . how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge, and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow."

Victor Frankenstein

Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus (1818)

## Course Description and Objectives

Communication 323, Science Fiction Cinema, will primarily focus on the examination of the North American science fiction film genre. The readings, lectures, and screenings are organized historically to facilitate an understanding of the evolution of science fiction cinema within a cultural context. The course is also designed to expand the student's understanding of the critical/cultural theoretical approaches most commonly employed in the analysis of science fiction texts. The format for each class will consist of lecture, screening, and discussion. Assigned readings and screenings must be completed on time to facilitate the class discussions. Students are expected to watch at least one assigned film outside of class each week. Informed class participation is an important part of this class

## Faculty

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Office Hours: Monday 3-4 and 7-8, Tuesday 5-6:30, Wednesday 1-3, and by appointment.

## Required Texts

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (available online at [gutenberg.org](http://gutenberg.org))

*Liquid Metal: The Science Fiction Film Reader* edited by Sean Redmond (online)

*Science Fiction Film* by J.P. Telotte

## **Reserve Readings and EBL/Full Text**

*A Distant Technology: Science Fiction Film and the Machine Age* by J.P. Telotte

*Alien Zone II* edited by A. Kuhn

*Endangering Science Fiction Films* by Sean Redmond

*Fantasy Girls* by Elyce Halford

*Gendering Science Fiction Films: Invaders from the Suburbs* by Susan George

*Projecting Tomorrow* by James Chapman and Nicholas J. Cull (online)

*Science Fiction Cinema: Between Fantasy and Reality* by Christine Cornea (online)

*Science Fiction Film* by J.P. Telotte

*Science Fiction Film: A Critical Introduction* by Keith Johnston

*Science Fiction Film Reader* by Gregg Rickman

*Screening Space: The American Science Fiction film* by V. Sobchack

*Seeing is Believing* by P. Biskind

*Tech-Noir: The Fusion of Science Fiction and Film Noir* by Paul Meehan

*Tech-Noir Film: A theory of the Development of Popular Genres* by Emily Auger (EBL)

*Simultaneous Worlds* by Jennifer Feely

*The End All Around Us* edited by John Walliss (EBL)

## **Evaluation**

two 8 page papers 45%

mid-term examination 25%

final exam 25%

participation 5%

Grading Scale

100-94 = A, 93-91 = A-, 90-89 = B+, 88-84 = B, 83-81 = B-, 80-79 = C+, 78-74 = C,

73-71 = C-, 70-69 = D+, 68-62 = D

You are expected to be actively engaged in class discussions and to study all assigned readings and films.

All written assignments submitted for credit must be typed and double-spaced. Errors in grammar, spelling and organization will be a factors grading. Late work will be penalized one full letter grade for each day a paper is late. An unexcused absence from an exam will result in a grade of zero for that exam.

University standards regarding academic integrity, examinations and grading will be observed in this course. Plagiarism in academic work or dishonest examination behavior will result in an “F ” grade for the assignment or for the course, and might carry further sanctions. (see the Loyola Undergraduate Studies Catalogue)

Turn off cell phones during class.

## **Tentative Class Schedule**

\*indicates films to be watch outside of class. Some are available on Youtube and/or Netflix.

### **Class 1 Introduction to Class**

#### **1/25 The Evolution of a Genre: Early Science Fiction Cinema**

Genre Studies – What is Science Fiction Cinema?

Screening: Frankenstein (dir. James Whale, 1931) Reserve: Metropolis (dir. Fritz Lang, 1926)\*

A Voyage to the Moon (dir. G. Melies, 1902)\*

Aelita: Queen of Mars (dir. Yakov Protazanov 1924)

Island of Lost Souls (dir. Erle Kenton, 1932)

Readings: Cornea, chapter 1

Telotte, chapter 1 and 3 (pages 64 – 90)

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelly

### **Class 2 The Imagination of Disaster: Post WWII U.S. Science Fiction Cinema**

2/1 Screening: *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (dir. Robert Wise, 1951)

Reserve: *When Worlds Collide* (dir. Rudolf Mate, 1951) \*

*Invaders From Mars* ( dir. William Cameron Menzies, 1953)

Readings: Biskind, *It's Only a Movie* and *Seeing is Believing: Pods and Blobs* (on reserve)

Cornea, chapter 2

Telotte, chapter 2

Sontag, *The Imagination of Disaster* (LM)

### **Class 3 Atomic Fears**

2/8 Screening: *Them!* (dir. Gordon Douglas, 1954)

*The Thing from Another World* (dir. Howard Hawks, 1951)\*

*Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (dir. Don Siegel, 1956)\*

Readings: Biskind, *The Russians Are Coming, Aren't They? Them and The Thing* (LM)

Jancovich, *Re-examining the 1950's Invasion Narratives* (LM)

\*\*First Paper Assignment

### **Class 4 60's Science Fiction: Dystopian Visions of America's Future**

2/15 Screening: *THX 1138* (dir. G. Lucas, 1971) 86 min.

Reserve: *2001: A Space Odyssey* (dir. S. Kubrick, 1968)\*

*Planet of the Apes* (dir. Franklin J. Schaffner, 1968) \*

*The Omega Man* (dir. B. Sagal, 1972) required

Readings: Telotte, Chapter 3 (pages 90 – 123) and 4

Telotte, *The Problem of the Real* and *THX 1138* (Full Text)

### **Class 5 Silent Future: Science Fiction and the Environmental Movement**

2/22 Screenings: *Silent Running* (dir. D. Trumbull, 1972)

Reserve: *Soylent Green* (dir. Reichard Fleisher, 1977) \*

A Boy and His Dog (dir. L.Q. Jones, 1975)

Readings: Alien Zone II, *Race, Space, and Class: The Politics of Cityscapes in Science-Fiction Films*

R. Ryan and D Kellner, *Technophobia/Dystopia* (LM)

### **Class 6 Block Busters and Post-futurism**

2/2 Screening: *Close Encounters* (dir. S. Spielberg, 1977) 2 hours and 15 min.

Reserve: *Star Wars* (dir. G. Lucas, 1977) 2 hours 16 min.\*

*Logan's Run* (dir. M. Anderson, 1976) 2 hours

Carol Schwartz Ellis, *With Eyes Uplifted.....* (LM)

Vivian Sobchack, *Postfuturism* (LM)

### **Exam**

### **3/6 Spring Break**

### **Class 7 Cyborgs and Humans – Race and Otherness**

3/14 Screening: *Blade Runner* (dir. R. Scott, 1982) 1h 57m

Reserve: *Alien* (dir. R. Scott, 1979) 1h 57m\*

*Robo Cop* (dir. P. Verhoeven, 1987) 1h 53m\*

*The Brother from Another Planet* by John Sayles (1984)

Readings: Haraway, *A Manifesto for Cyborgs* (LM)

Telotte, *Human Artifice and the Science Fiction Film* (LM)

Penley, *Time Travel, Primal Scene and the Critical Dystopia* (LM)

### **Paper 1 Due**

## **Class 8 The Feminine Subject in Science Fiction Cinema**

3/21 Screening: *Aliens* (dir. J. Cameron, 1986) 2h 34m

Reserve: *The Terminator* (dir. J. Cameron, 1984) 1h 48m

Readings: Cornea, chapter 4 and 5

Doane, *Technophilia: Technology and the Representation of the Feminine*

**(LM)**

\*\* Second Paper Assignment

## **Class 9 Technoir and the Postmodern Science Fiction**

3/28 Screening: *Dark City* (dir. A. Proyas, 1998) 100 min.

Reserve: *The Matrix* (dir. Larry and Andy Wachowski, 1999)\*

Readings: Cornea, chapter 8

Meehan, chapter 1 (on reserve)

## **Class 10 The New Apocalyptic Cinema**

4/4 Screening: *Children of Men* (Alfonso Cuaron, 2006) 109 min.

*28 Days Later* (dir. Danny Boyle, 2002) 113 min.\*

Reserve: *The Road* (dir. John Hillcoat, 2009) \*

*Melancholia* (dir. Lars von Trier, 2011)

Reading: Walliss, *Apocalypse at the Millennium* and *The Days are Number* (EBL) *Endangering Science Fiction Film*, chapter 5

### **Class 11 New Technologies and the Vision of Science Fiction.**

4/11 Screening: Battle for Terra (dir. Aristomenis Tsirbas, 2007) 90 min.

Avatar (dir. James Cameron, 2009)\*

Reading: Chapman, chapter 12

Cornea, chapter 8

### **Class 12 The New Independent Cinema and Science Fiction Cinema**

4/18 Screening: Attack the Block (dir. Joe Cornish, 2011) 1hr 28min.

Reserve: Moon (dir. Duncan Jones, 2009) 97 min.\*

Upstream Color ( dir. Shane Carruth, 2013)

Readings: Cornea, chapter 6

Telotte, chapter 8

\*\*Second Paper Due

### **Class 13 The Feminine Other as Protagonist/Hero**

4/25 Screening: Ex Machina (dir. Alex Garland, 2015) 108 min.

Reserve: Under the Skin (dir. Jonathan Glazer, 2013)\*

Mad Max: Fury Road (dir. George Miller, 2015)\*

Reading: Telotte, The Persistence of the Robot in Endangering Science fiction Film

Femmes Futures: one hundred years of female representation in

film by Dean Conrad (Full Text)

## **Recommended Viewing**

Five (dir. Arch Oboler, 1951)

Forbidden Planet (dir. Fred M. Wilcox, 1959)

On the Beach (dir. Stanley Kramer, 1959)

La Jetee (dir. Chris Marker, 1962)

Children of the Damned (dir. Anton Leader, 1964)

Fahrenheit 451 (dir. Francois Truffaut, 1966)

Solaris (dir. Andre Tarkovski, 1972)

Pitch Black (dir. David Twohy, 2000)

Donnie Darko (dir. Richard Kelly, 2001)

Primer (dir. Shane Carruth, 2004)

Monsters (dir. Gareth Edwards, 2010)

I, Robot (dir. Alex Proyas, 2004)

Serenity (dir. Joss Whedon, 2005)

Cloverfield (dir. Matt Reeves, 2008)

District 9 (dir. Neill Blomkamp, 2009))

Sunshine (dir. Danny Boyle, 2007)

Inception (dir. Christopher Nolan, 2010)

Another Earth (dir. Mike Cahill, 2011)

Perfect Senses (dir. David Mackenzie, 2011)

Gravity ( dir. Alfonso Cuaron, 2013)

Interstellar (dir. Christopher Nolan, 2014)

Her (dir. Spike Jones, 2013)

The Hunger Games (dir. Gary Ross, 2012)



Divergent (dir. Neil Burger, 2014)

The Host (dir. Joon Ho Bong, 2006)

Looper (dir. Rian Johnson, 2012)

Source Code (dir. Duncan Jones, 2011)

Robot and Frank ( dir. Jake Schreier, 2012)

These Final Hours (dir. Zak Hilditch, 2013)

Europa Report (dir. Sebastian Cordero, 2013)

Snow Piercer (dir. Joon Ho Bong, 2013)

The World's End (dir. Edgar Wright, 2013)

Guardians of the Galaxy (dir. James Gunn, 2014)

Edge of Tomorrow ( dir. Doug Liman, 2014)