

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

COURSE OUTLINE – Winter 2023

EN3990 (A3): Science Fiction and Fantasy – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Anna Lapointe **PHONE:** 780-539-2992
OFFICE: C420 **E-MAIL:** alapointe@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 1:30-2:30 (in person and on zoom) or by appointment

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: This course explores the genres of science fiction and fantasy literature in English, with some reference to works in translation. The two genres will be examined as intersecting literary modes, with particular attention given to their potential for transformative creation.

PREREQUISITE: 6 credits of junior English.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Butler, Octavia E. *Bloodchild and Other Stories*
- Gaiman, Neil. *American Gods*
- Gibson, William. *Virtual Light*
- Jemisin, N.K. *The Fifth Season*
- L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time*
- Lewis, C.S. *The Magician's Nephew*
- White, T.H. *The Once and Future King*

Note: We will be reading only part one (*The Sword in the Stone*) of White's *The Once and Future King*. The omnibus novel was ordered due to its lower cost.

DELIVERY MODES: Lecture and discussion

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The aim of this course is to allow students to become familiar with contemporary modes of science fiction and fantasy writing by authors from a variety of traditions and cultural backgrounds. Emphasis will be given to contemporary writers disrupting literary patterns of misogyny, white supremacy, and colonialism. Students will read and engage with the texts through in-class presentations, follow-up discussions, and critical essays.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: At the end of this course, students will be able to

- Identify “source” patterns in science fiction and fantasy (sf/f) writing, and critique those patterns
- Engage with counter-narratives emerging in contemporary sf/f writing
- Critically analyze texts with reference to symbolic language, rhetorical approaches, structure, patterns of language, and modes of representation
- Develop advanced academic writing skills with an emphasis on literary criticism

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.ca>.

** Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. **Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

EVALUATIONS:

Assignments will be evaluated according to senior-level university standards of writing and grammar, and of critical expression. Standards of grading rise over the course of the term.

Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	25%
In-Class presentation (2 presentations x 7.5% each)	15%
Attendance and participation	10%
Final Exam	30%

GRADING CRITERIA: (The following criteria may be changed to suite the particular course/instructor)

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	90-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-89	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE:

This schedule is subject to change. Students are expected to have completed reading each text prior to the first class in which it is taken up. A more detailed schedule will be available once students have signed up for their presentations.

Jan 4 – Intro and welcome
Jan 9 – presentation and essay instruction
Jan 11 – genres: their histories and development
Jan 16 – Lewis
Jan 18 – Lewis
Jan 23 – Lewis
Jan 25 – L’Engle
Jan 30 – L’Engle
Feb 1 – L’Engle
Feb 6 – White
Feb 8 – White
Feb 13 – White
Feb 15 – flex day
Week of Feb 20 – Reading Week – No classes!
Feb 27 – Butler
Mar 1 – Butler
Mar 6 – Butler
Mar 8 – flex day
Mar 13 – Gibson
Mar 15 – Gibson
Mar 20 – Gibson
Mar 22 – Gaiman
Mar 27 – Gaiman
Mar 29 – Gaiman
Apr 3 – Jemisin
Apr 5 – Jemisin
Apr 10 – Jemisin
Apr 12 – review for exam (final exam outline given today)

Final exam date TBA. Please ensure that you are available for the entire exam period.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend class during class times. Attending class and engaging with classmates, discussion topics, and related activities is worth 10% of your final grade.

- If your absence is for a legitimate reason (internet disruption, illness, family crisis), **let the instructor know by e-mail**. In your e-mail, please indicate your course number and section. Please send a new e-mail for each class missed for a legitimate reason, or clearly state which days will be missed. E-mailed notices of absence do not automatically “roll over” for future missed dates.
- **Participation & Engagement:** You are expected to comment, respond to questions, interact with classmates, and otherwise contribute to the class dialogue. Questions are welcomed and encouraged. If you're wondering about something, most likely several classmates are as well, only they're afraid to speak up. So ask!
 - In order to participate effectively, you should have the day's reading completed before class begins. This will allow you to comment, answer questions, and ask questions of your own.
 - The goal of this class is to create a safe environment in which we examine both texts and our own ideas about them. Discomfort can be part of the learning process. However, if the discomfort starts to turn to distress, please take care of yourself. You can withdraw from an activity or discussion if necessary.
- **Missed Material:** Students are responsible for all missed material, including material missed due to legitimate/excused absences. Students are responsible for securing notes on the missed material from classmates. If, after you have reviewed the notes, you have questions, you may bring them to the instructor.
- **In-Class Presentations:** each student is required to do two in-class presentations, one in the first half of the term and one in the second half. Each presentation will address a section of the text, an aspect of the author's work, or an associated theme. Presentations require research and preparation. Strong presentations can and should be adapted into essays. (This means that your essays will be “built out” from your presentations.)
 - Presentations can only be delayed due to extreme circumstances. Permission to “make up” a missed presentation is at the instructor's discretion.
 - Students should submit the notes and/or slides accompanying their presentation on the same date that they give the presentation (by 4:00pm).

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the Northwestern Polytechnic Calendar at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/programs/calendar/> or the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy which can be found at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>.

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

Additional Information:

- **Assignment Submission:** Assignments are due at 4:00pm Alberta time on the due date. At 4:01pm, they become late, so you might as well take a few hours and polish your work to offset the penalty.
 - Assignments must be submitted to the MyClass dropbox. Assignments must be typed, in pdf format, and double-spaced. Improperly submitted work will not be accepted. If the dropbox for some reason will not give you access, e-mail your completed assignment to the instructor to prove that you have completed it, then submit on MyClass when the issue has been resolved.

- **Late Essays:** Late papers are penalized at the rate of 1% per day, to a maximum deduction of 15%. Late papers will be accepted until Wednesday, April 12, 2023, at 4:00pm Alberta time. Starting at 4:01pm on that day, no more late assignments will be accepted, and the missing assignments will receive grades of 0%.

- **Extensions: Students must contact the instructor directly regarding extensions.** I grant extensions for the following reasons: technological failure (may be used only once), sick children/family crisis, illness or injury of student (with doctor's note), alien abduction (documentation required). Extensions are not open-ended; rather, we will agree on a new deadline, after which late penalties apply.
 - **Extensions are not given because of workload.** Due dates across classes tend to come in clusters. Plan ahead and be prepared to deal with the schedule.

- **Office Hours:** My office hours are listed on the first page of this course outline.
 - You don't need an appointment to meet with me during office hours. I meet with students in the order that they show up.
 - This is your time, as much as class is. Please don't feel you're imposing.
 - Office hours are cancelled if the instructor is sick. But I'll post an announcement to that effect, and re-schedule when I'm better.
 - If you make an appointment to meet with me outside of regular office hours, please actually attend that meeting, or notify me that you won't be able to make it, so I'm not left humming to myself.

- **Pre-Assessments:** Students often request that I "look over" an assignment and offer feedback before the assignment is due. I regret that I cannot do this, simply because of the time commitment involved, and the number of students I teach.

- However, I am always pleased to review your thesis statement, and even to review several drafts of it. Please send your thesis statement for feedback by email, pasted into the body of the e-mail.
- Thesis statements are not reviewed in person, because I need time to consider and give you the best feedback I can. E-mail them to me for best results!

- **Preferred Names & Pronouns:** At the course's outset, my list of students' names is based on the register. If you would prefer to be called something else, please let me know, and I will adjust my list accordingly, and use your preferred name from that point on. You should feel free to use your preferred given name on all essays and submitted assignments, as well as on your Zoom. (If your preferred surname varies from the name under which you are registered, I may need occasional reminders.)
 - If you want to tell me your pronouns, you should feel free to do so. I will respect your pronouns.
 - All students are expected to respect their classmates' preferred names and pronouns.

- **Crisis Management:** I'm not a monster, but I'm not psychic, either. If something goes wrong in your life, I won't automatically know. If you let me know, I will work with you to help you keep up/catch up in the course. You are human, and entropy affects us all: crises happen. I will happily work with you to ensure they don't derail your academic career.

- **Important Note:** How you do in the class has no effect on how much I like and respect you. If you submit an assignment late, I will not be ashamed of you or look on you with disgust. If your work is imperfect, it's a sign that there are things you need to learn/I need to help you with; it is not a sign that you are a bad, lazy, or unworthy person.