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Course Materials

Readings:

- Sean Edmond (ed.), *Liquid Metal. The Science Fiction Film Reader* (Wallflower 2005) [required] [LM]
- Course readings available on OWL (<https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>) [required]
- Vivian Sobchack, *Screening Space. The American Science Fiction Cinema* (Rutgers University Press 2002, 2nd edition) [recommended]

Note: Theory “essentials” are marked with an asterix*. They need special intellectual attention and provide general concepts that are relevant beyond individual units. Please also use the two text books independently – the more you read (and the more films you discover through reading), the better you will understand Science Fiction cinema.

Methods of Evaluation

Participation and attendance	10%
Group Presentation	15%
Paper 1	15%
Paper 2	30%
Final exam (see UWO exam schedule)	30%

Students also have to present their ideas for the final research paper to the class. The oral presentation is required for the completion of this course, but will not be graded.

Note: Research papers handed in late without prior approval will be penalized 3% per day. You must request an extension *before* the due date, and extensions will be given at my discretion. Essays must be submitted to me personally or left in the Essay Drop Box outside the English Office (across from UC 2431). Keep a copy of your essay! In addition, essays must also be uploaded to www.turnitin.com. An essay wholly or partly plagiarized will receive a mark of 0 and may not be rewritten—other penalties as detailed in the English Department’s Regulations for Students will apply. Familiarize yourself with this document. Attendance will be taken at every class and screening, and three or more absences will be reflected in your enrollment file.

Timetable

Week 1 (11 Jan): Close Encounters: Defining Science Fiction

To watch before class: *The Thing* (John Carpenter, US 1982)

In class screening: *A Trip to the Moon* (Georges Méliès, F 1902)

Reading: Vivian Sobchack "Images of Wonder" (LM); Steve Neale "You've Got to Be Fucking Kidding!" (LM), Darko Suvin, "Estrangement and Cognition" [excerpts]*

Week 2 (18 Jan): Back to the Future: Silent Science Fiction and Modernity

+ *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, G 1927)

Reading: Tom Gunning, "Cinema of Attractions"* [excerpt], Georges Méliès, "Trick Effects", J.P. Telotte, "A Picture of Distance: The German Science Fiction Film" [excerpt], Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* [excerpt], Anton Kaes, "Metropolis – City, Cinema, Modernity"

Week 3 (25 Jan): Sci-Fi Literature: Early Pulp and the Classic Period

READING: Edmond Hamilton: *The Man Who Evolved* (1931); On OWL

FILM: *The Fly* (dir. David Cronenberg, 1986, USA)

Week 4 (1 Feb): War of the Worlds: Sci Fi and the Cold War

Screening: FILM: *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (dir. Philip Kaufman, 1978, USA)

M. Keith Booker, *Alternate Americas: Science Fiction Film and American Culture* [excerpt]

Week 5 (8 Feb): Space is the Place: The Genius of Kubrick

Screening: *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, GB 1968)

Reading: Chapman/Cull, "The Watershed: 2001", Arthur C. Clarke, "The Myth of 2001" Carl Freedman, "Kubrick's 2001 and the Possibility of a Science-Fiction Cinema"

****Thurs 15 Feb: PAPER ONE due – submitted to OWL****

Week 6 (15 Feb): The Dystopian Imagination of the 1970s

Screening: *Videodrome* (David Cronenberg, 1971, Canada)

Reading: Michael Ryan/Douglas Kellner, "Technophobia/Dystopia" (LM),

****Feb 17-25 READING WEEK****

Week 7 (29 Feb): It's After the End of the Word: Afrofuturism

Screening: *Space is the Place* (John Coney, US 1974) + *Pumzi* (Wanuri Kahiu, Kenya 2009)

Reading: John Corbett, "Brothers from Another Planet", Ritch Calvin "The Environmental Dominant in Wanuri Kahiu's *Pumzi*", Ramzi Fawaz, "Space, that Bottomless Pit: Planetary Exile and Metaphors of Belonging in American Afrofuturist Cinema *excerpt+"

Week 8 (29 Feb): Science Fiction as Philosophy: Lem and Tarkovsky

Screening: *Solaris* (Andrei Tarkovsky, USSR 1972)

Leon Marvell, "Tarkovsky's *Solaris* and the (im)possibility of a Science Fiction Cinema",
Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky: Labyrinths of Space and Time* [excerpt]

Week 9 (7 Mar): Mothers, Monsters, Aliens: Science Fiction and Feminism

Screening: *Alien* (Ridley Scott, US 1979)

Reading: Barbara Creed, "*Alien* and the Monstrous Feminine,"* Judith Newton, "Feminism
and Anxiety in *Alien*", Cornea, *Science Fiction Cinema*, 150-54

**Week 10 (14 Mar): IN CLASS Student Presentations of Final Research Paper Topics
(Counts towards participation) – 3 minute speech**

Week 11 (21 Mar): Postmodern Memory: Replications, Simulations and Cyborgs

Screening: *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, US 1982)

Reading: Bruno, "Ramble City: Postmodernism and *Blade Runner*", Mary Ann Doane,
"Technophilia"* (LM)

*****FRI 28 Mar: Research Paper due in English Department dropbox and on
turnitin.com*****

Week 12 (28 Mar): Things to Come: Global Science Fiction in the 21st Century

Screening: *Annihilation* (Alex Garland, 2018, US)

Reading: Brandon Taylor, "The Ideological Train to Globalization"

Week 13 (4 Apr): Things to Come: Global Science Fiction in the 21st Century

Screening: *Gamer* (Mark Neveldine and Brian Taylor, 2009, US)

Reading:

University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com).

3. UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness: Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation in assignments, or other academic activities should contact the Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) at osas@uwo.ca or call 519-824-4100. For more information, visit the OSAS website at www.uwo.ca/osas/.

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GRADING CRITERIA

A+ (90-100)

Argument: Clear development of a specific, challenging and original thesis. The writer has

expound ideas, whose development might be rather thin.