Spring 2019

HSS 403-104: Science Fiction Film

Nancy Steffen-Fluhr

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INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Nancy Steffen-Fluhr, Associate Professor, Humanities (Science, Technology & Society Division)
OFFICE: Murray Center (265 CC)   OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays, 3 to 5 pm, by appointment.
PHONE: Murray Center: x4885   Cell: 201-919-4018
EMAIL: steffen@njit.edu
MOODLE: http://moodle.njit.edu/   Please visit our course Moodle & update your profile before our first class.

CLASS MEETINGS: Tuesdays, 6-9 pm   Kupfrian 104

BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION: In this course, we will analyze a set of science fiction novels, stories, and films in order to better understand the underlying cultural assumptions that drive the real-life US technological enterprise. In the second half of the course especially, we will take a closer look at how these assumptions are critiqued in the films of several major directors, with special attention to the idiosyncrasies of visual style.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
H.G. Wells. *The War of the Worlds* (1898)

ONLINE COURSE PACK (CP) of short stories and essays [Available on our course MOODLE]

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: “Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: [http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf](http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf). Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu”

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/GRADING:
Two analytical essays on assigned topics.

| Essay #1: March 26 | 20 points |
| Essay #2: May 7    | 20        |
| Midterm exam: March 12 | 20 |
| Final exam: May 14  | 30        |
| Weekly Quizzes     | 5         |
|                    | [10 quizzes @ 0.5 point each] |
| Class participation | 5         |
| **TOTAL**          | **100 points** |

READING/DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

NOTE ON READINGS & FILMS: You should have completed the assigned reading and/or seen the assigned film by the date on which it is scheduled for discussion. That is, you should have finished the novel *War of the Worlds* and have seen the 2005 Spielberg film version of War by next week, January 29. With a couple of exceptions, you are expected to rent and screen the assigned films on your own, at home or in your dorm. The films are widely available at Netflix and Amazon/Amazon Instant Video, among other sources. If you have trouble finding a given film, please see me.

J22 Unit 1

**What is SF?**

In-Class Film: Stanton. *WALL-E* (2008) (Part 1)

J29 Unit 2

**Them! (Aliens and the War within H.G. Wells)**

Reading: Wells. *War of the Worlds* (1898)
Film to Rent: Spielberg. *War of the Worlds* (2005) (excerpts) [See the complete film prior to class]
In-Class Film: Pal. *War of the Worlds* (1953) [excerpts]

F5 Unit 3

**Alien Transformations Part 1**

Films to Rent: *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) [See the complete film prior to class]
*Annihilation* (2018) [See the complete film prior to class]
In-Class Films:  

*Body Snatchers* (1993) [Excerpts]  
*Ivasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978) [excerpts]  
*The Invasion* (2007) [excerpts]

F12  
**Unit 4**  
**Alien Transformations Part 2**  
**Readings:**  
CP #1 Nussbaum (on Disgust) from *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge UP, 2003).  
CP #2 Van Vogt. "The Enchanted Village"  
**Film to rent:**  
*District 9* (2009) [See the complete film prior to class]

F19  
**Unit 5**  
**Alien Transformations Part 3**  
**Reading:**  
Scott. *Alien* (1979) [See the complete film prior to class]  
Scott. *Prometheus* (2012) [Extra Credit]  
**Film to rent:**  
*Cameron. Avatar* (2009) [See the complete film prior to class]

F26  
**Unit 6**  
**Aliens and Female Embodiment**  
**Film to rent:**  
*Scott. Alien* (1979) [See the complete film prior to class]  
*Scott. Prometheus* (2012) [Extra Credit]  
**Films to Rent:**  
*Villeneuve. Arrival* (2016) [See the complete film prior to class]  
*Del Toro. The Shape of Water* (2017) [See the complete film prior to class]

M5  
**Unit 7**  
**Alien Conversations**  
**Films to Rent:**  
*Max Headroom* (1985 British TV series pilot)

M12  
**Unit 8**  
**Welcome to Dystopia**  
**MIDTERM EXAM**  
**[1.5 hour]**  
**In-class film:**  
*Saleh. Metropia* (2009)

M19  
**NO CLASS**  
**SPRING BREAK**

A2  
**Unit 10**  
**Dystopia, Take Two: Aliens as Immigrants**  
**Film to rent:**  
*Cuarón. The Children of Men* (2006) [See the complete film prior to class]

A9  
**Unit 11**  
**Dystopia, Take Three: Inside Outside**  
**Film to rent:**  
*Winterbottom. Code 46* [See the complete film prior to class]

A16  
**Unit 12**  
**Dystopia, Take Five: The World of Stanley Kubrick**  
**Films to rent:**  
*Kubrick. Brazil* (1985) [See the complete film prior to class]  
*Kubrick. Dr. Strangelove* (1964) [See the complete film prior to class]  
*Stanton, WALL-E* (2008) [See the complete film prior to class]

A23  
**Unit 13**  
**Alien, Ocean, Self (3 Snapshots)**  
**LAST CLASS**  
**Review for Final Exam**  
**Reading:**  
**Film to rent:**  
*Soderbergh. Solaris* (2002) [See the complete film prior to class]  
**In-Class Film:**  
*Tarkovsky. Solaris* (1972) [excerpts]

May7  
**ESSAY #2 DUE**  
[No class on May 7: Tuesday is a Friday that week]

May14  
**FINAL EXAM**