

FA 48L

SCIENCE FICTION FILM

Lecturer: Tuba AY

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Lectures: TBA

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:

Under the guise of 'pure entertainment' with spectacular special effects and mise-en-scene, science fiction has always been a film genre that reflects deep-rooted cultural, social and political fears and anxieties. The aim of this course is to decipher these fears regarding the body, identity, race and gender, by concentrating on the various figures of 'the Other' (biological other like the alien, or artificial other like the cyborg, the robot, the android etc.) portrayed as the unfamiliar, the outsider, or the uncanny in various films. With cinematic examples from different decades, this course also intends to explore the evolution of the ever-existent theme of 'the Other' in science fiction through time due to the effects of modernity and postmodernity.

Policies:

- Attendance is strictly required and failure to attend lectures more than 5 times will result in a final grade of F. Excused absences are those that have been discussed with me ahead of time or for which you can provide reasonable documentation. In addition, class participation and excellent attendance can make a difference if student is hovering between two grades. **Mind that coming in late is disruptive, so please be on time.**
- You are responsible for viewing the film on your own before class meeting. If you can't find the movie please contact me earlier.
- You are required to read the material assigned on the syllabus in order to fully understand the weekly lecture and to prepare for the class discussions.
- Paper deadlines are stated in your syllabus and late submissions will not be accepted.
- Make-up exams are only possible for medical reasons and will be administered when a proper medical documentation is submitted by the student in order to justify his/her absence. Do not demand to take a make-up exam just because your grades are low.
- Plagiarism is a serious offense, which can result in a failing grade for the class. Acknowledge all reading and research sources with footnotes and use quotation marks for your citations as the guide in your paper handout indicates. **Otherwise, the paper you submitted will not be graded.**

- If you want to get in touch with me, best way is by e-mail. If you need to discuss something with me at greater length, you can meet with me by appointment.

Assigned Texts:

You can find your readings aligned as a course-pack at the photocopy center located in North Campus Library.

Grading System:

Paper 1	%30
Paper 2	%30
Final Exam	%40

Papers received later than due date will be penalized one-half letter grade (5 points) per day. Late submissions after a week of its due will not be accepted. You will be given a detailed handout regarding the subject of your paper along with some important rules of citation that will prevent you from being condemned of plagiarism. Details about the papers will be notified later.

Week 1 Introduction: Generic Distinctions and Characteristics of Science Fiction
 Film: *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927) Restored Version

XENOPHOBIA AND THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL OTHER

Week 1 Film: *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956)
 M. Keith Booker, 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers', *Alternate Americas: Science Fiction Film and American Culture*, pp. 59-73.
 Cindy Hendershot, 'The Invaded Body: Paranoia and Radiation Anxiety in Invaders from Mars, It Came from Outer Space, and Invasion of the Body Snatchers', *Extrapolation*, vol. 39, no.1, 1998, pp. 26-39.

Week 1 Film: *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (Robert Wise, 1951)
 M. Keith Booker, 'The Day the Earth Stood Still', *Alternate Americas: Science Fiction Film and American Culture*, pp. 27-41.
 Anne Cranny-Francis, 'Mapping Cultural Auracy: The Sonic Politics of The Day the Earth Stood Still', *Social Semiotics*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2007, pp. 87-110.

Week 2 Film: *The Men Who Fell to Earth* (Nicolas Roeg, 1976)

Week 2 Film: *District 9* (Neill Blomkamp, 2009)

ROBOTS, CYBORGS, AND ANDROIDS: THE ARTIFICIAL OTHERS

- Week 2 Film: *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982) Director's cut
- M. Keith Booker, 'Blade Runner', *Alternate Americas: Science Fiction Film and American Culture*, pp. 171-186.
- Daniel Dinello, 'Machines Out of Control: Artificial Intelligence and Androids', *Technophobia!: Science Fiction Visions of Posthuman Technology*, pp. 105-114.
- Week 3 Film: *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (James Cameron, 1991)
- ***Also view *The Terminator* (James Cameron, 1984)
- Daniel Dinello, 'Rampaging Cyborgs: Bionics', *Technophobia!: Science Fiction Visions of Posthuman Technology*, pp. 115-146.
- Christine Cornea, 'The Masculine Subject of 1980's Blockbuster Era', *Science Fiction Cinema: Between Fantasy and Reality*, pp. 111-130.
- Week 3 Film: *Bicentennial Man* (Chris Columbus, 1999)
- ***Also view *I, Robot* (Alex Proyas, 2004)
- Daniel Dinello, 'Cybernetic Slaves: Robotics', *Technophobia!: Science Fiction Visions of Posthuman Technology*, pp. 58-86.
- First Paper Due!**

GENETIC DISCRIMINATION AND RACIAL CONTAMINATION: THE OTHER WITHIN AND AMONG US

- Week 3 Film: *The Thing* (John Carpenter, 1982)
- Adilifu Nama, 'Bad Blood: Fear of Racial Contamination', *Black Space: Imagining Race in Science Fiction Film*, pp. 42-69.
- Week 4 Film: *Gattaca* (Andrew Niccol, 1997)
- David A. Kirby, 'The New Eugenics in Cinema: Genetic Determinism and Gene Therapy in GATTACA', *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 27, no. 2, July 2000, pp. 193-215.
- Available on the web at: www.depauw.edu/sfs/essays/gattaca.htm

AI GONE AWRY: THE MACHINE AS THE OTHER

- Week 4 Film: *Demon Seed* (Donald Cammell, 1977)
- ***Also view *The Matrix* (Andy & Lana Wachowski, 1999)

Daniel Dinello, 'Machines Out of Control: Artificial Intelligence and Androids', *Technophobia!: Science Fiction Visions of Posthuman Technology*, pp. 87-105.

Patricia Melzer, 'Our Bodies as Our Selves: Body, Subjectivity, and (Virtual) Reality in The Matrix', *Alien Constructions: Science Fiction and Feminist Thought*, pp. 159-175.

Recommended Reading:

Stefan Herbrechter, 'The Posthuman Subject in The Matrix', *The Matrix in Theory*, Eds. Myriam Diocaretz & Stefan Herbrechter, pp. 249- 289.

GENDER POLITICS IN SCI-FI: WOMAN AS THE OTHER

Week 4 Film: *The Stepford Wives* (Bryan Forbes, 1975)

Christine Cornea, 'Gender Blending and the Feminine Subject in Science Fiction Film', *Science Fiction Cinema: Between Fantasy and Reality*, pp. 145-174.

Second Paper Due!

Week 4 Film: *Alien Resurrection* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 1995)

***Also view *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979)

Patricia Melzer, 'Technoscience's Stepdaughter: The Feminist Cyborg in Alien Resurrection', *Alien Constructions: Science Fiction and Feminist Thought*, pp. 108-148.