

Jacquelyn Ardam, Visiting Assistant Professor  
jwardam@colby.edu

Class: Mon & Weds, 1:00-2:15, Lovejoy 103  
Office Hours: Mon 10:30-1:30, Thurs 12-4, Miller 218

### ENGLISH 297B: SCIENCE FICTIONS



This course is an introduction to the diverse genre of science fiction, a genre that imagines the possibilities and limitations of human experience, thought, and worlds. Our class is organized thematically, and will cover topics such as alien encounters, time travel, artificial intelligence and post-human life-forms, and the (post-)apocalypse in poetry, novels, short stories, television, and film. In reading and viewing a wide range of texts, we will consider issues and concerns including epistemology, power, technology, scientific innovation, race, gender, class, aesthetics, and nationhood.

#### Texts:

- Ursula LeGuin, *The Word for World is Forest*, 978-0765324641
- HG Wells, *The Time Machine*, 978-0486284729
- Octavia Butler, *Kindred*, 978-0765324641
- Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* 978-0345404473
- Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, 978-1400078776
- Emily St. John Mandel, *Station Eleven*, 978-0804172448
- PDFs available on Moodle

#### Learning Goals:

- Identify major trends in 20<sup>th</sup>-century science fiction
- Synthesize science fiction trends across genres and media
- Understand the relationship between texts and their historical, cultural, and aesthetic contexts
- Develop close reading skills

- Develop argumentation skills
- Develop presentational and leadership skills

**Assignments and Grading:**

- Short Assignments: 25%
- Paper (6-7 pages): 25%
- Concept Map + Reflection: 20%
- Discussion Leading: 10%
- Participation: 20%

**Short Assignments:** You will complete five short assignments during the semester that will be posted on Moodle, each of which will make up 5% of your grade. The assignments will likely include close reading and argumentation exercises, paper preparation, and at least one creative project. Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a grade (A to A-) for each late day.

**Concept Map:** Instead of a final exam, you will submit a concept map of the course that you will create in Coggle (coggle.it). Sign up for a Coggle account earlier rather than later; I recommend that you work on your map throughout the semester rather than leaving its creation until December. You will receive a separate handout that details the expectations for this project.

**Leading Discussion:** You will sign up to lead a class discussion as part of a small group one time during the semester. You will receive a separate handout that details recommendations and expectations for leading a discussion.

**Paper Policy:** Papers are due via the course website by the time and date marked on the syllabus. You may submit your paper as a Word document (.doc or .docx) or as a PDF. If you send me a corrupted file or a file that I cannot open, your paper will count as late until I receive a workable file. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 of a grade (A to A-) for each late day. I will return your papers to you via the course website. I may grant extensions in extenuating circumstances; when in doubt, come and talk to me.

**Format of Papers:** All papers should include your name, my name, the class title and number, and date. They should be formatted in size 12 font, with 1 inch margins. They must include a Works Cited page.

**Participation:** This is a small class and its success depends on active dialogue between students. Please come to class fully prepared to discuss the material. If you have trouble speaking in class, you might want to consider bringing prepared questions and/or comments with you. You cannot participate in class if you are not actually in class. More than one unexcused absence will have a negative effect on your participation grade.

**Office Hours:** I will hold walk-in office hours on Mondays from 10:30-12:30 and Thursdays from 12-4. I am also available at other times by appointment. I will hold extra office hours during the week before papers are due.

**Email Policy:** Please feel free to contact me via email at [jwardam@colby.edu](mailto:jwardam@colby.edu) with questions or concerns throughout the semester. I will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week; my email responses may take longer over the weekend. I will not respond to any questions about papers 24 hours before each of the papers is due, nor will I read entire drafts of your paper. If you have long or complicated

questions, I suggest that you meet with me during office hours. Meeting in person is usually much more productive than exchanging emails.

**Electronics Policy:** Please silence your electronic devices during class. In the interest of encouraging attentive, focused, and open class discussions, **laptops, tablets, kindles, etc. will NOT be allowed in class.** You will not need them. If you need to use one of these devices because of a disability, please speak with me.

**Academic Honesty:** Honesty, integrity, and personal responsibility are cornerstones of a Colby education and provide the foundation for scholarly inquiry, intellectual discourse, and an open and welcoming campus community. These values are articulated in the Colby Affirmation and are central to this course. Students are expected to demonstrate academic honesty in all aspects of this course. Any violations of academic honesty will be referred to the Coordinator of Academic Integrity; sanctions may include suspension or expulsion.

According to Colby (<http://web.colby.edu/farnham-writerscenter/academic-honesty/>), academic dishonesty includes more than just the purposeful submission of another's material as one's own without citation. Academic dishonesty also includes:

- **double-submitting**, or using the same work to meet assignments in two or more courses;
- **insufficient paraphrasing**, or representing someone else's language too closely as your own;
- **pirating ideas**, or using the thoughts, concepts, and analysis of someone else—even those of a friend or roommate in casual conversation—as your own;
- **incomplete citation**, or failing to include all necessary elements of documentation in your citations (for example, omitting either in-text citations or a Works Cited pages when both are required);
- **under-documentation**, or combining several sources into a single one.

For more, see page 9 of your student handbook on "Academic Honesty" (<http://www.colby.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Colby-College-Student-Handbook-2-16.pdf>). If you have any questions about plagiarism, don't hesitate to contact me! I am happy to talk through any concerns you may have about academic honesty.

**Athletic Participation:** While Colby College is supportive of athletic participation by its students, academics takes priority over athletics. Both NCAA and Colby rules prohibit missing class for practices. In the case of overlapping commitments between class and athletic competitions, you must meet with me as soon as possible to discuss these overlaps. You may request permission to miss class and make up the missed work, but I have the final authority either to grant or to withhold permission.

**Religious Holidays:** Colby College is supportive of the religious practices of its students, faculty, and staff. The College is committed to ensuring that all students are able to observe their religious beliefs without academic penalty. If you observe a religious holiday that will impact your work in this course, please see me at the beginning of the term. We will then work to find a reasonable accommodation that will allow you to complete the academic work.

**Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Statement:** Colby College prohibits and will not tolerate sexual misconduct or gender-based discrimination of any kind. Colby is legally obligated to investigate sexual misconduct (including, but not limited to sexual assault and sexual harassment).

If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact Colby Counseling Services (207-859-4490) or the Director of the Gender and Sexual Diversity Program, Emily Schusterbauer (207-859-4093).

Students should be aware that faculty members are considered responsible employees; as such, if you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a faculty member, they have an obligation to report it to Colby's Title IX Coordinator. "Disclosure" may include communication in-person, via email/phone/text, or through class assignments. To learn more about sexual misconduct or report an incident, visit: <http://www.colby.edu/sexualviolence/>

### **Week 1**

Wed Sep 6: Introductions

### **Aliens & Others**

### **Week 2**

Mon Sep 11: Sci Fi Poems:

Tracy K. Smith, "Sci-Fi"

Lisel Mueller, "The End of Science Fiction"

Les Murray, "Science Fiction"

*The Twilight Zone*, "The Monsters are Due on Maple Street" (available on Netflix)

Weds Sep 13: Ursula LeGuin, *The Word for World is Forest* (Chapters 1-2)

### **Week 3**

Mon Sep 18: Ursula LeGuin, *The Word for World is Forest* (Chapters 3-6)

Weds Sep 20: Ursula LeGuin, *The Word for World is Forest* (Chapters 7-8)

\*\*\*Fri Sep 22: Assignment #1 due by 12 noon\*\*\*

### **Week 4**

Mon Sep 25: Ted Chiang, "Story of Your Life"

Weds Sep 27: Ted Chiang, "Story of Your Life"

Sunday Oct 1: *Arrival* screening, 7pm, Arey 5

### **Week 5**

Mon Oct 2: *Arrival*

\*\*\*Mon Oct 2: Assignment #2 due by 12 noon\*\*\*

## Time Travel

Weds Oct 4: H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (Chapters 1-5)

### Week 6

Mon Oct 9: H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (Chapters 6-Epilogue)

Weds Oct 11: Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (1-51)

### Week 7

Mon Oct 16: [fall break]

Weds Oct 18: Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (52-188)

### Week 8

Mon Oct 23: Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (189-264)

## Artificial Intelligence & the Post-Human

Weds Oct 25: Philip K Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (Chapters 1-7)

\*\*\*Friday Oct 27: Assignment #3 due by 12 noon\*\*\*

### Week 9

Mon Oct 30: Philip K Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (Chapters 8-15)

Weds Nov 1: Philip K Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (Chapters 16-22)

Sunday Nov 5: *Battlestar Galactica* (episodes 1-3) screening, 7pm, Arey 5

### Week 10

Mon Nov 6: *Battlestar Galactica*

\*\*\*Mon Nov 6: Assignment #4 due by 12 noon\*\*\*

Weds Nov 8: Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (Part 1)

### Week 11

Mon Nov 13: Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (Part II)

Weds Nov 15: Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (Part II)

### Week 12

Mon Nov 20: Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (Part III)

\*\*\*Tues Nov 21: Paper due by 12 noon\*\*\*

Weds Nov 22: [no class, Thanksgiving]

### **Post-Apocalypse**

#### **Week 13**

Mon Nov 27: Emily St. John Mandel, *Station Eleven* (1-115)

Weds Nov 29: Emily St. John Mandel, *Station Eleven* (116-196)

#### **Week 14**

Mon Dec 4: Emily St. John Mandel, *Station Eleven* (197-333)

Weds Dec 6: Ray Bradbury, "There Will Come Soft Rains"

\*\*\*Fri Dec 8: Assignment #5 due by 12 noon\*\*\*

\*\*\*Wed Dec 13: Concept Map due by 12 noon\*\*\*