



ENGLISH 386K
Science Fiction
Fall 2017

Dates / contact hours:

Academic Credit: 1
credit

Areas of Knowledge: ALP

Modes of Inquiry: EI,
STS

Course format: lecture, in--class discussion

Instructor's Information

N. Katherine Hayles

katherine.hayles@duke.edu

919-308-5439

Prerequisite(s), if applicable: no prerequisites

Course Description

Extinction narratives in novels and short stories. How the shape of present and future worlds has been profoundly transformed, destabilizing notions of the human and the human life--world.

Course Goals / Objectives

Raise philosophical and literary questions about the human future as entwined with threats to the environment and human flourishing.

Learn to write essays on speculative and science fiction texts.

Interrogate American culture through the popular genre of science fiction novels and stories.

Required Text(s)/Resources

Stanley Chen, *The Waste Tide*. Available as pdf.

N. K. Jameson, *The Fifth Season*.

Emily St. John Mandel, *Station Eleven*.

Short stories available as pdf on website

Additional Materials (optional)

Journal articles in *Science---Fiction Studies*, *Extrapolation*, *Contemporary Literature*, and elsewhere (available as pdf)

Course Requirements / Key Evidences

Read and discuss course novels and stories. Write one essay and final project. Posts on online are due every Thursday on week's reading.

Technology Considerations, if applicable

Classroom projector for seminar discussion. Access to course Sakai website/discussion board for student postings and class information. Wordpress site for course information and public postings.. Students will need laptops for essay composition and postings.

Assessment Information / Grading Procedures

Grading guidelines will include:

1. Essay, final project and postings: originality and intellectual force of ideas articulated
2. Essay: ability to form a thesis and coherent argument
3. Postings: scope of ideas articulated and timely completion
4. Participation: regular attendance and participation in discussion

Weekly postings will count for 60% of the grade, the essay 15%, the final project 15%, and class participation 10%. Postings are to be made at *both* the course website in Wordpress and on the Sakai site. Detailed rubrics of expectations for each assignment will be provided. Attendance is required. Participants may miss two class sessions without penalty. After that, a grade penalty will be assessed.

Diversity and Intercultural Learning (see Principles of Duke Kunshan Liberal Arts Education)

Many science fiction texts imagine futures in which the present ethic/cultural configurations are radically transformed. In the process, they interrogate the assumptions underlying contemporary American hegemony and culture. These texts in particular question how the human future will be affected by environmental toxicity, contagious viruses, and interventions on a planetary scale, for example in geoengineering. How can cultural values be maintained when the survival of humanity is at risk? What factors are leading contemporary cultures to the precipice?

Course Policies and Guidelines

- Academic integrity: information will be distributed about plagiarism and unauthorized copying of someone else's work
- Attendance : students may miss two class sessions; after that a grade penalty applies.
- Attention to assignment deadlines: all written assignments and postings are to be turned in on time. A short grace period will be allowed for essays, but postings will be penalized if late.
- Make---up work: at discretion of instruction.
- Appropriate or inappropriate use of cell phone, laptop, or other technology during class. No cell phones; laptops or pads OK during class time.
- Students will follow Duke Kunshan guidelines for academic standards.

Course Schedule

Syllabus

Week 1.

Monday August 28. Introduction to course; introduction of participants and instructor; forecast of reading and writing assignments.

Tuesday August 29. *The Waste Tide*, 1-100 pages.

Thursday, August 31. *The Waste Tide*, 100-200 pages. Postings due on first 200 pages.

Week 2.

Monday September 4. *The Waste Tide*, 200-300 pages.

Tuesday September 5. *The Waste Tide*, to finish.

Thursday, Sept. 7. "The Year of the Rat" or other stories. Postings due on *The Waste Tide* or story.

Week 3.

Monday, Sept. 11. *Station Eleven*, pp. 1-109, Chapters 1-16.

Tuesday, Sept. 12. *Station Eleven*, pp. 110-199, Chapters 17-37.

Thursday, Sept. 14. *Station Eleven*, pp. 199-end. Postings due on *Station Eleven*.

Week 4.

Monday, Sept. 18. Short story, tba.

Tuesday, Sept. 19. Discussion of essay topics, essay composition.

Thursday, Sept. 21. Essay due, presentations.

Week 5.

Monday Sept. 25. Readings from workshop participants, tba.

Tuesday, Sept. 26. Readings from workshop participants, tba.

Thursday, Sept. 28. Questions for workshop presented and discussed.

Friday, Sept. 29. Science Fiction Workshop, dinner with speakers. Attendance required.

National Day Holiday, October 1-8. No classes.

Week 6.

Monday, October 9. *The Fifth Season*, pp. 1-100

Tuesday, October 10. *The Fifth Season*, pp. 100-200.

Thursday, October 12. *The Fifth Season*, pp. 200-300. Postings due on *The Fifth Season*.

Week 7.

Monday, October 16. *The Fifth Season*, pp. 300-end.

Tuesday, October 17. Presentations by participants on final projects.

Thursday, October 19. Last class, evaluations.

Tuesday, Oct. 24. Final projects