

ANTH 119: Anthropology and Aliens

Winter 2018 (online)

4 credits

Dr. Rachel Carrico

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:30-1:30

GEs: James Daria and Latham Wood



Required books (all available at UO Bookstore):

- Roberts, Adam. *Science Fiction: The New Critical Idiom*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Wells, HG. *War of the Worlds* (1898)*
- Butler, Octavia E. *Dawn* (1988)*
- LeGuin, Ursula K. *The Word for World is Forest* (1972)*

*Also on Course Reserve at Knight Library

All other readings will be available as PDFs through Canvas.

Films and videos: Students will be expected to view films and videos in addition to reading assigned texts. Occasionally, short online videos will be assigned to accompany each week's lecture and readings. Some weeks, feature films will be assigned. Most films are available at the UO Library (either Knight or the Law library – double check the syllabus!) on course reserve. All are widely available through subscriptions services like Netflix and Hulu. If you cannot access a film at the library or through a service you already subscribe to, you will be expected to rent the film.

Course Description: This class explores how anthropology and science fiction (or, more broadly, Speculative Fiction) have been linked together historically as each explores ideas about culture and society. Thematic questions addressed in the class include: what is an alien? What is "the human"? Could SF be possible without anthropology? The class investigates this convergence of interest through the analysis of SF in print, film, television etc. In addition, using science fiction, we will explore how fundamental concepts in anthropology such as linguistic and cultural relativism, national and cultural identity, class, the ethics of first contact; gender, marriage, and kinship; law, morality; religion; race and embodiment; politics, violence, and war; medicine, healing, and consciousness; and the environment have entered into the ways in which we routinely think about the possibility of extraterrestrial life and the way in which we think about culture on our own planet .

Social Science Requirement: This course satisfies a General Education group requirement in the social sciences. The course is based on joining perspectives from anthropology, history, and speculative fiction to understand core insights of cultural anthropology, discuss themes of exploration, progress, cultural encounters, social organization and stratification, and human enhancement in science fiction and ethnographic narratives, apply an anthropological analysis to a science fiction text, and conceptualize

the relationship between social science theory and the processes by which we come to understand the world around us.

Expected Learning Outcomes

1. Identify, explain and apply basic concepts in Anthropology:
 - a. Linguistic and Cultural Relativism
 - b. Cultural Identity and Diversity
2. Evaluate the history of Science Fiction in relation to Social Theory
 - a. Science Fiction before the 19th Century
 - b. Science Fiction during and after the Industrial Revolution, the Space Age etc.
3. Demonstrate the way the two disciplines have approached and influenced each other:
 - a. Archaeological impacts
 - b. Cultural anthropological impacts
 - c. Folkloric impacts
4. Identify, explain, and critically analyze the role of Science Fiction and Anthropology in community constitution and relations, identity formation, and conflict negotiation for diverse groups of people in the United States and globally.

Students' achievement of these outcomes will be assessed as follows:

25% — Weekly Discussion Posts (10 total, 2.5% each)

20% — Reading Quizzes (4 total, 5% each)

15% — Midterm Exam

15% — Final Exam

25% — Final Blog Essay Project

Outline & Bibliography (5%)

Analytical, Interactive Blog Essay (20%)

Online Course Format, Description of Workload, and Expectations: This online course is structured so that you will work at your own pace to complete the assignments according to established deadlines. **Every single week**, you will be expected to listen to a recorded lecture, look at power point slides, complete all readings and view all films/videos in time to **contribute to an online discussion forum** by the end of the week. Discussion forums will be available from **8 AM Thursday until 11:59 PM Sunday** and your posts are graded. (NOTE: Week 5's discussion forum will close early, at 8 AM on Saturday morning, to leave time for the Midterm. Be sure to make your posts before then!) Four out of ten weeks, there will also be an **online reading quiz** to complete between **8 AM Thursday and 11:59 PM Sunday**. Additionally, you will take **two online exams** (midterm and final) and complete a **final project**. It is up to you to log on and complete/submit these assignments within the timeframes that they are available. Time management is key! Finally, a note on reading load: since you will not be spending three hours a week in class, the reading/film viewing load is heavier than might otherwise be expected for a 100-level course. Please keep this in mind as you schedule time to do the work required of this course.

Pay special attention to the dates that the three novels are due. They vary in length, and you will likely need to begin reading each one well ahead of its due date.

Descriptions of Graded Assignments:

25% — Weekly Discussion Posts (10 total, 2.5% each) [DUE 11:59 PM every Sunday except Week 5, DUE 8 AM Sat. Feb. 10]: You have been randomly assigned to a 25-person discussion group in which you will participate throughout the quarter. Every week, you and your 24 colleagues will engage in a virtual conversation, via discussion board, about the readings, films, and videos. The discussion board will appear on Canvas and be managed by one of the GEs. Each week, you are required to contribute **1 thoughtful post** AND to **respond thoughtfully and respectfully to 1 colleague's post** (this can include adding on to a comment thread). Therefore, each week's post has **2 parts**: an original post *and* a reply to another's post. (Please note: you are more than welcome to respond to others' comments on your original posts, but those do not count toward your 2 required contributions.) Guidelines for writing stellar discussion posts will be shared during Week 1. Discussion forums will be available from **8 AM Thursday until 11:59 PM Sunday** and your posts are graded.

20% — Reading Quizzes (4 total, 5% each) [DUE 11:59 PM on Sundays at the end of weeks 2, 4, 7 and 10]: Four reading quizzes will be administered on Canvas. They will be **open-book** and **timed**. If you have not read carefully and taken detailed notes before beginning the quiz, it will be very difficult for you to answer the questions within the timeframe. In order to perform well on these quizzes, complete the readings and view the videos/films when they are assigned, participate fully in discussion, and keep detailed notes on the connections between the various readings and videos/films. If you do this, then you will have no problem earning high grades on the quizzes. **Quizzes will be available on Canvas from 8 AM Thursday until 11:59 PM on Sunday during the end of weeks 2, 4, 7 and 10.** See course calendar below for exact dates. You can start the quiz at any moment during that timeframe, but once you begin, you will have a limited amount of time to complete it, and you can only make one attempt.

15% & 15% — 2 Exams: Midterm [Feb. 10/11] & Final [March 19/20]: The midterm exam will be administered on Canvas, **available from 8 AM Saturday Feb. 10 until 11:59 PM Sunday, Feb. 11.** The final exam will be administered on Canvas, **available from 8 AM Monday, March 19 until 11:59 PM Tuesday, March 20.** Both exams will be **open-book** and **timed**. The final exam is not cumulative; it will only cover material introduced after the midterm. Much like the quizzes, if you have not read carefully and taken detailed notes before each exam, it will be very difficult for you to answer the questions within the timeframe. In order to perform well, complete the readings and view the videos/films when they are assigned, participate fully in discussion, and keep detailed notes on the connections between the various readings and videos/films. Review guides will be provided to help you prepare. You can start the exam at any moment during the established timeframe, but once you begin, you will have a limited time to complete it, and you can only make one attempt.

25% — Final Blog Essay Project: Your final project for this course will be an interactive, analytical blog essay that **uses course concepts to analyze one (1) piece of science fiction that you choose.** It can be a TV show episode (just one episode, not an entire series), a movie, a novel or short story, a comic strip (just one issue, not an entire series), a cartoon episode, a piece of visual art, or a creation in another

medium. I ask that you do not pick anything that has been assigned for the course. You will create a **750-word blog post, using interactive media such as clips and hyperlinks**, to explain how anthropological concepts can help us to better understand the deeper meanings behind this piece of science fiction. You may use your blogging platform of choice (i.e. WordPress, Wix, etc.). There are many excellent free platforms available. Detailed instructions will be shared in advance.

- **Outline & Bibliography (5%) [DUE Wednesday, Feb. 28, at 11:59 PM]**: Submit an outline of your blog post and a bibliography of the readings that you plan to cite.
- **Multimedia, Analytical Blog Essay (20%) [DUE Wednesday, March 21, at 11:59 PM]**: Submit the link to your completed blog post.

Student Engagement Inventory

Educational Activity	Hours Student Engaged	Explanatory Comments
Online lectures and power point slides	10 hours	1 hour weekly for 10 weeks
Assigned Reading and Video/Film Viewing	80 hours	Reading and viewing videos & films are at the heart of the course, and students will be expected to read and watch assigned materials carefully and take detailed notes, an average of 8 hours per week.
Weekly Discussion Posts	15 hours	This figure includes 1.5 hrs/week for composing one and replying to one post.
Quizzes and Exams	6 hours	This figure includes time for 4 short reading quizzes, a midterm and a final exam, as well as time for quiz/exam prep.
Final Blog Essay Project	13 hours	This figure includes time to complete two assignments (1. annotated bibliography and outline; 2. final draft), and discussion with the professor/GEs.
Total Hours	124 hours	

Policy on Late Work: Assignments will not be accepted after their due dates, and quizzes/exams cannot be submitted after they close on Canvas. No late work will be accepted or make-up quizzes/exams given, except under the following circumstances: Students inform the instructor no later than 24 hours in advance that they are ill (a doctor's note is required) or that a documentable emergency has come up. Be prepared to provide documentation. In NO case will an assignment be accepted beyond 3 days of when it was due. If a make-up quiz/exam is given, it will occur no later than 3 days after it was originally scheduled.

Students with Documented Disabilities: I will do everything possible to assist those with documented special needs. Please contact me in the first week of class to discuss how we can work with the Accessible Education Center to accommodate you.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism: Students at the UO are expected to act with academic honesty. All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. It is the official policy of the University of Oregon that all acts of alleged academic dishonesty by students be reported to the Director of Student Conduct and Community Standards in the Office of Student Life. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, clips, images, or paraphrases from books, articles, websites, films, interviews, etc.) must be properly acknowledged and documented. Violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. The two most prevalent forms of academic dishonesty are cheating and plagiarism. To learn more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, consult the UO library's guide on plagiarism: <http://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>. To learn about how UO defines "cheating" and the consequences of academic dishonesty, consult the UO Student Conduct Code: <http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/conduct>. If you are in doubt regarding any aspect of these issues as they pertain to this course, please consult me before you complete any relevant requirements.

Communication: Please be attentive to our Canvas site, as I will post announcements, assignments, readings, and other communications there, and you will be responsible for retrieving them. You may contact me through the email address listed above or visit my office by during office hours or by making an appointment. **A note on emails:** Since there are 200 hundred students in this course (and I teach more than one class this quarter), using the following protocol will ensure that I return your emails in a timely fashion. **Email me directly (don't use the Canvas email tool) and include ANTH 119 in the subject line.** Please note that I will devote Thursday mornings to returning ANTH 119 emails. If you write on Friday, you may not receive a response until the following week, although I will do my best to be attentive to your concerns. **If you have a question or need that requires attention within 24 hours, please include URGENT in the subject line.**

Code of Conduct: When communicating with classmates on discussion boards or in other ways, I expect you to conduct yourself professionally and to respect the views of your colleagues, no matter how much you might disagree. It can be tempting to fire off insensitive comments when hidden behind a screen — and easier than it would be in a face-to-face classroom discussion. It is essential that we work together to create a virtual classroom environment where everyone feels free to express their opinions while simultaneously respecting the plurality of experiences and perspectives of others. **Respect is paramount in this class, since it asks us to discuss topics that can be difficult to talk about, such as racism, sexism, and economic oppression.** None of us, not even me, has the perfect answer for questions on these topics. We will all push ourselves to understand them better. Furthermore, you will be evaluated not on whether you agree with my views or the views of your GEs or peers, but on how well you present and develop your own perspectives.

Grades:

Please take note of the guidelines for achieving a certain grade as outlined in the department of Anthropology's guidelines:

A+: Quality of student's performance significantly exceeds all requirements and expectations required for an A grade. I do not give this grade.

A: Quality of performance is outstanding relative to that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at the highest level.

B: Quality of performance is significantly above that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at a high level.

C: Quality of performance meets the course requirements in every respect; demonstrates adequate understanding of course content.

D: Quality of performance is at the minimal level necessary to pass the course, but does not fully meet the course requirements; demonstrates a marginal understanding of course content.

F: Quality of performance in the course is unacceptable and does not meet the course requirements; demonstrates an inadequate understanding of course content.

Grades by Percentage:

A = 94-100%

A- = 90-93%

B+ = 87-89%

B = 83-86%

B = 80-82%

C+ = 77-79%

C = 73-76%

C- = 70-72%

D+ = 67-69%

D = 63-66%

D- = 60-62%

F = Below 60%

Tentative Course Calendar

Subject to change at the Instructor's discretion

Week 1: Introductions and Definitions

- Roberts, "Defining Science Fiction," pp. 1-36
- Stover, Leon E. "Anthropology and Science Fiction," *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Oct., 1973), pp. 471-474. [PDF]
- Slusser, George E. & Eric S. Rabkin. "Introduction." In *The Anthropology of the Alien*, pp. vii-xxi. [PDF]
- Not just fiction! Read this recent news story on the revelation of the "real" *X-Files* at the Pentagon: <https://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2018/01/03/575276342/ufo-investigations-the-science-and-the-will-to-believe>

Week 2: Science Fiction and Basic Concepts in Anthropology

- Boas, Franz. "The Aims of Anthropological Research." In *Anthropology in Theory*, pp. 22-31. [PDF]
- Kroeber, A.L. "The Concept of Culture in Science." In *Anthropology in Theory*, pp. 32-36. [PDF]
- Sapir, Edward. "The Unconscious Patterning of Behavior in Society." In *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*, pp. 281-291. [PDF]

- SF Reading: Jack Vance, "The Moon Moth" (short story) [PDF]

Reading Quiz 1: 8 AM Thursday, Jan. 18 until 11:59 PM Sunday, Jan. 21

Week 3: Anthropology, Science Fiction & Colonialism: First Contact and Beyond

Start reading War of the Worlds (182 pages) if you haven't already!

- Roberts, "Origins," pp. 47-59
- Rieder, John. *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press. Pp: 1-61. [PDF]
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. "Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness." In *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World*. New York, NY: Palgrave, 2003, pp. 7-28. [PDF]

Week 4: War of the Worlds – Science Fiction, Modernity, and the Industrial Revolution

- Wells, H.G. *The War of the Worlds* (182 pgs; finish entire novel before discussion this week)
- Roberts, "Jules Verne and HG Wells," pp. 47-67
- Reed, John R. "H.G. Well's Familiar Aliens." In Slusser, George E. & Eric S. Rabkin, *The Anthropology of the Alien*, pp. 145-156. [PDF]
- Radiolab on *War of Worlds* broadcast (one hour) (<http://www.radiolab.org/story/91622-war-of-the-worlds/>)

Reading Quiz 2: 8 AM Thursday Feb. 1 until 11:59 PM Sunday Feb. 4

Week 5: Blade Runner — Technology, Postmodernism, and Postindustrial Anxieties

- Roberts, "New Wave," and "Case Study: *Star Wars* (1977)," pp. 79-90
- Roberts, "Technology and Metaphor," pp. 146-169
- Nama, Adilifu. "Humans Unite: Race, Class and Postindustrial Aliens." In *Black Space: Imagining Race in Science Fiction Film*. Pp. 96-122. [PDF]

- Bruno, Giuliana. "Ramble City: Postmodernism and *Blade Runner*." *October* vol. 41 (Summer 1987):61-74. [PDF]

SF Film: *Blade Runner* (1982) (DVDs available on Course Reserve at Knight Library and at John E. Jaqua Law Library Open Reserve Room Video [PN1997.2 .B5633 2007]; streaming available on many popular platforms).

NOTE: Discussion section will be open for less time this week – closes at 8 AM Saturday, Feb. 10 to allow time for Midterm Exam! Be sure to make your posts before it closes!

Midterm Exam: 8 AM Saturday, Feb. 10 until 11:59 PM Sunday, Feb. 11

Week 6: *Star Trek* - Anthropology, Race and Science Fiction

Start reading Dawn (264 pages) this week if you haven't already!

- Roberts, "Representing Race" and "Race and *Star Trek*," pp. 118-132
- Delany, Samuel R. "Racism and Science Fiction." In Thomas, Sheree R. *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora*. New York, NY: Warner, 2000, pp. 381-397. [PDF]
- Nama, Adilifu. "Structured Absence and Token Presence." In *Black Space: Imagining Race in Science Fiction Film*. Pp. 10-41. [PDF]
- Video: "Trekspertise 1.1: Native Americans in *Star Trek*" (18 min) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVC1N0kUX8&list=PL6h9yUNqP_yz2ceLtExCYBS01_OMPvsfY#t=1078.389697739)
- Video: Scene of the first interracial kiss of American television, *Star Trek* TV series, Season 3, Episode 10 (3 min) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lThvEsP5-9Y>)
- Video: Actor Nichelle Nichols on the impact of the first interracial kiss on TV (3 min 30 sec) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRfRXcP1Gsg>)
- SF movie: *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan* (DVD available at John E. Jaqua Law Library Open Reserve Room Video [PN1997.2 .S8378 1982]; streaming available on many popular platforms)

Week 7: *Dawn* — Race, Gender and Sexuality

- Bulter, Octavia E. *Dawn* (264 pages; finish the entire novel before discussion this week)
- Roberts, "Alien Abduction," pp. 132-136; and "Gender," pp. 91-106.
- Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto" [PDF]

Reading Quiz 3: 8 AM Thursday Feb. 22 until 11:59 PM Sunday Feb. 25

Week 8: *Avatar* - Indigenous Aliens Part 1

Start reading *The Word for World is Forest* (189 pages) this week if you haven't already!

- Adamson, Joni. "Indigenous Literatures, Multinaturalism, and *Avatar*: The Emergence of Indigenous Cosmopolitics." *American Literary History* Vol.24(1): 143-162. [PDF]
- Rieder, John. "Race and Revenge Fantasies in *Avatar*, *District 9* and *Inglourious Basterds*." *Science Fiction Film and Television* Vol.4(1): 41-56. [PDF]
- Video: Montana hip hop artist Supaman performing "Prayer Loop Song":
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jq7jla34Y>
- SF Film: *Avatar* (2009) (DVD available at John E. Jaqua Law Library Open Reserve Room Video [PN1997.2 .A883 2010]; streaming available on many platforms)

Final Project Outlines DUE Wednesday, Feb. 28, at 11:59 PM

Week 9: *The Word for World is Forest* — Indigenous Aliens Part 2

- LeGuin, Ursula K. *The Word for World is Forest* (189 pages; finish the entire novel before discussion this week)
- Attebery, Brian. "Aboriginality in Science Fiction." *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Nov., 2005), pp. 385-404. [PDF]

Week 10: Anthropology and Immigration — What is an Alien anyway?

- Niven, Larry: "The Alien in Our Minds." In Slusser, George E. & Eric S. Rabkin, *The Anthropology of the Alien*. Pp 3-13. [PDF]
- Beehler, Michael: "Border Patrols." In Slusser, George E. & Eric S. Rabkin, *The Anthropology of the Alien*. Pp: 26-36. [PDF]
- Cooke, Leighton Brett: "The Human Alien: In Groups and Outbreeding in *Enemy Mine*." In Slusser, George E. & Eric S. Rabkin: *The Anthropology of the Alien*. Pp: 179-199. [PDF]

Watch the following videos (in this order):

- Alex Rivera, SciFi film director, speaking at Platform Summit 2014 (18 min.)
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHPsmfLdiUs>)
- Alex Rivera's short film, "Why Cybraceros?" (5 min)
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xr1eqKcDZq4>)
- 1950s film by Council of California Growers, "Why Braceros?" (18 min)
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xr1eqKcDZq4>)
- Trailer for Alex Rivera's 2014 feature film, *Sleep Dealer*
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbJGQl-dJ6c>)

Reading Quiz 4: 8 AM Thursday March 15 until 11:59 PM Sunday March 18

Finals Week

Final Exam: 8 AM Monday, March 19 until 11:59 PM Tuesday, March 20

Final Project Blog Essay DUE Wednesday, March 21, at 11:59 PM