SYLLABUS: ANTH 119 ANTHROPOLOGY AND ALIENS

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Before diving into the course work, review the information below. A couple of minutes spent reading this information now will save you lots of time, confusion, and frustration later.

1. Read the syllabus and familiarize yourself with course organization and the course Canvas site.
2. Set your Canvas notification preferences so that course Announcements will be sent to an email address, phone number, or other platform that you regularly use and monitor. I use Announcements to send out important course information and updates, and you are responsible for checking these announcements in a timely fashion. For instructions on how to set your preferences, see https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-1286.
3. If you experience difficulty accessing the course Canvas site or course materials, make sure you are using Google Chrome, as Canvas is not highly compatible with other browsers. For help with Canvas issues, contact Canvas Support Services.
4. If you require accommodations in this course, please contact me asap and send me a notification letter from Disability Services outlining your accommodations so that I can implement them in a timely manner. If you have any other questions, concerns, or issues, contact me as soon as possible at mscalise@uoregon.edu.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class explores how anthropology and science fiction, a genre of speculative fiction, have been linked historically as each explores ideas about culture and society. Thematic questions addressed in the class include: What is an “alien”? What is “the human”? How does anthropology permit us to interpret science fiction? The class investigates this convergence of interest through the analysis of science fiction in print and film. In addition, using science fiction, we will explore how fundamental concepts in anthropology—linguistic and cultural relativism; race, gender, class, and nationality; the ethics of first contact; gender, marriage, and kinship; law, morality, and religion; politics, violence, and war; medicine, healing, and consciousness; and the environment—influence the ways in which we think about the possibility of extraterrestrial life and about cultures on our own planet.

The course joins 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. It applies an anthropological analysis to science fiction texts and conceptualizes the relationship between social science theory and the processes by which we come to understand the world around us.

COURSE FORMAT

This online course is asynchronous, meaning that there are no coordinated course audio/video meetings. Instead, course materials, explanations of activities and expectations, and deadlines are available on Canvas and in this syllabus. Success in the course requires internal motivation, personal organization, and individual responsibility to complete
course activities on time and in a high-quality manner. In this course you are expected to take an active role in your learning. **Look ahead in the course calendar to anticipate course activities and due dates. Credit will not be given for work completed after it is due, except for rare exceptions.** An example would be a documented medical issue. Be in touch well before a due date with any situation regarding the timely completion of course activities—not in the hours just prior, much less after the fact. Your Instructor and GEs are available to answer questions and will be involved with your learning by evaluating your work as the course progresses. But to maximize your learning experience, and to earn a passing grade, you are expected to actively engage the course material and complete activities **before** deadlines.

**COURSE TEXTS**
Please purchase the following books:

LeGuin, Ursula K. *The Word for World is Forest*. (Any edition)
Other readings will be available on Canvas as PDFs.

You will be expected to view selected feature films. You will be expected to access some content online through commercial streaming services (e.g., Amazon Prime Video, Google Play, Hulu, iTunes, Netflix, Vuvu, YouTube). If cost or other barriers inhibit your access to movie content, please contact your Instructor well in advance of the deadline.

**STUDENT LEARNING GOALS**

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify and apply basic anthropological concepts
  - Cultural and linguistic relativism
  - Identity construction, cultural similarity, and difference
- Deconstruct literary and cinematic techniques
  - Narrative structure, casting/characterization, point of view, setting
  - Written and filmic representations that draw from shared cultural understandings
- Interpret science fiction texts and embedded messages about social life
  - Social values and anxieties
  - Social identifies such as race, gender, sexuality, and social class
- Produce academic writing that explains and offers analysis of written and film texts
  - Clear, well-organized composition
  - Insightful writing informed by course materials

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

Over the term you will complete 5 types of assignments. Each assignment is designed to assess your knowledge and understanding of the course content and to improve your writing and thinking. This course is asynchronous, so it will be your responsibility to complete each assignment on time. **NO INCOMPLETES.** Your grade is based on the following assignments:

1. **Personal Introduction (5 points)**

Personal introductions are due by 11:59 p.m. PST Friday of Week 1. Submit them via the discussion board titled “Introductions.” In this introduction, you will be asked to write a short paragraph or record a video of yourself sharing (1) a few details about yourself (e.g., What is your major? Why are you taking this course?) and (2) your favorite sci-fi universe (from a movie, novel, comic, tv show, etc.) and why. A more detailed prompt to help you compose your introduction can be found on Canvas under Assignments.
2. Discussion Board Participation (40 points)
You get the most out of learning when you make connections between new ideas, past learning, and interactions with classmates to help prompt connections. Your Canvas discussion board participation will be broken into two parts: (a) Discussion Posts and (b) Response Posts. Posts will be due on Friday of Weeks 2, 4, 6, and 8.

(a) Discussion Posts (7.5 points x 4 posts = 30 points): You will complete four Discussion Posts over the course of the term. Discussion posts are an opportunity for you to think through the ideas in the readings and other course materials, demonstrate your understanding of concepts, and make a meaningful contribution to class learning. Posts should be clear and well organized. Each post will be assessed according to: (1) clarity, following instructions, and careful organization; (2) providing an insight or interesting angle on an idea; and (3) applying arguments, concepts, or analysis from course readings (when applicable). For more detailed assignment guidelines, see Canvas.

(b) Response Posts (2.5 points x 4 posts = 10 points): In addition to your discussion post, you will respond to one of your classmates’ posts. Each response post will be evaluated for (1) clarity and careful organization, and (2) adding to a classmate’s post in order to reveal an additional insight or complementary idea. Argument, debate, and confrontation are not the goal. The constraints of this written format make it less than ideal for an extensive back-and-forth. Instead, this is a space to reflect on how a classmate’s post made you think differently or discover a new way of looking at something. For more detailed assignment guidelines see Canvas.

3. Midterm Exam (25 points)
The midterm exam will consist of 20 multiple-choice and true/false questions and two short essays. You will have 90 minutes to complete the midterm. The exam will be made available on Friday of Week 5 and you will have 48 hours in which to take it. This midterm is designed as a tool to evaluate your knowledge of the content. The midterm exam may cover any and all concepts or information from readings, lectures, films, and other course content from Weeks 1-5. You are permitted to use course materials—including lectures, readings, and notes—while taking the midterm. You are expected to abide by University Academic Honesty and Integrity Standards and U.S. Copyright Law. Under no circumstances may you copy or distribute any part of the midterm. This exam is to be your own work. Please do not discuss midterm questions with classmates. Violation of these conditions will be considered academic misconduct.

4. Film Reflection (10 points)
This assignment is another opportunity to demonstrate your grasp of the central arguments of the course. For this assignment, you must select one film and complete an analytical reflection that ties the film to at least two course readings. Your reflection essay should be between 600-750 words, clear, and well organized. You will be instructed on how to cite the authors within the text of the Short Essay prompts/questions that you will be given. Please structure your reflection with an introductory paragraph, a body of four or five paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph. Your citations should be in the body of your essay. Listing references cited at the end of the essay is not necessary. Reflections will be evaluated for: (1) following directions; (2) carefully and logically organizing your ideas; (3) writing incisively by crafting information-dense sentences and paragraphs and making precise word choices; and (4) providing engaged and insightful analysis wherein you thoughtfully consider and analyze course concepts and themes. More detailed prompts to help you compose your essays can be found on Canvas under Assignments.

5. Final Exam (20 points)
The final exam is designed to evaluate your understanding of the course content. The final exam may cover any and all concepts or information from readings, lectures, films, and other course content from Weeks 6-10. This exam is not cumulative. The exam will consist of 40 multiple-choice and true/false questions and you will have 60 minutes to complete it. The exam will be made available on Wednesday of Finals Week and you will have 48 hours in which to take it. You are permitted to use course materials—including lectures, readings, and notes—while taking the exam. You are expected to abide by University Academic Honesty and Integrity Standards and U.S. Copyright Law. Under no circumstances may you copy or distribute any part of the exam. This exam is to be your own work. Please do not discuss exam questions with classmates. Violation of these conditions will be considered academic misconduct.
GRADING

Personal Introduction 5 points
Discussion Board Participation 40 points
Midterm Exam 25 points
Film Reflection 10 points
Final Exam 20 points

Grades will be assigned based on the following criteria:

- (A) Outstanding performance relative to course requirements; demonstrates a mastery of course content at the highest level
- (B) Performance that is significantly above course requirements; demonstrates a mastery of course content at a high level
- (C) Performance that meets course requirements in every respect; demonstrates adequate understanding of course content
- (D) Performance that is at a minimum level to pass, but does not fully meet requirements in all aspects; demonstrates a marginal understanding of course content
- (F) Performance that does not meet requirements, for whatever reason; demonstrates an inadequate understanding of course content

A  100  94 points
A- <94  90 points
B+ <90  87 points
B  <87  84 points
B- <84  80 points
C+ <80  77 points
C  <77  74 points
C- <74  70 points
D+ <70  67 points
D  <67  64 points
D- <64  61 points
F  <61  0 points

*If you take this course pass/no pass, you must have at least 70 points to pass.*

COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>WATCH</th>
<th>READ</th>
<th>DUE</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lecture 1&lt;br&gt;Video: The Evolution of Science Fiction (6 min.)</td>
<td>Course Syllabus&lt;br&gt;Welcome Announcement&lt;br&gt;Oman-Reagan</td>
<td>How to Host an Extraterrestrial</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Lecture 2</td>
<td>Slusser &amp; Rabkin</td>
<td>Aliens: Introduction</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Lecture 3&lt;br&gt;Film: Soylent Green (1975)</td>
<td>Boas</td>
<td>The Aims of Anthropological Research&lt;br&gt;Sapir</td>
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<td>Lecture</td>
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<td>Discussion/Final Exam</td>
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| 4 Lecture 4 | Outland (1981) | Roberts | Science Fiction and Race
Nama | Humans Unite!
Thompson | New Myths for Modern Times |
| 5 Lecture 5 | Enemy Mine (1985) | Nama | Structured Absence and Token Presence
Delany | Racism and Science Fiction |
| 6 Lecture 6 | Framed: The Politics of Stereotypes in News (2 min.)
Attebery | Aboriginality in Science Fiction (Optional)
LeGuin | The Word for World is Forest (ch. 1-4) |
| 7 Lecture 7 | Avatar (2009) | Adamson | Indigenous Literatures, Multinationalism, and Avatar
Rieder | Race and Revenge Fantasies in Avatar, District 9, and Inglorious Basterds
LeGuin | The Word for World is Forest (ch. 5-8) |
| 8 Lecture 8 | Why Should You Read Sci-fi Superstar Octavia Butler? (4 min.)
Alien (1979) | Roberts | Science Fiction and Gender
Newton | Feminism and Anxiety in Alien
Kavanaugh | Feminism, Humanism, and Science in Alien (Optional)
Butler | Dawn (parts 1 & 2) |
Bruno | Ramble City: Postmodernism and Blade Runner (Optional)
Butler | Dawn (Parts 3 & 4) |
| 10 Lecture 10 | Sleep Dealer (2008) | Beehler | Border Patrols
Cravey et al. | Imagining the Future from the Margins: Cyborg Labor in Alex Rivera’s Sleep Dealer |
| 11 | | | Final Exam |