

## ENC1145—Writing About Science/Fiction (sect. 0529), Spring 2018

**Instructor Name:** Karina A. Vado

**Course Meeting Times & Location:** MWF 8, TUR 2349

**Office Location and Hours:** TUR 4335, F 4:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m. or by appointment

**Course Website:** <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>

**Instructor Email:** kvado1224@ufl.edu

### Course Description

This course surveys what literary scholars such as Isiah Lavender III call the “signature language of modernity”: science fiction (SF). In particular, we’ll be interrogating how the genre often represents genetics, genomics, and biotechnologies as “cure” for physical and social ills. Through a Disability Studies and Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) approach, we will consider the bioethical challenges that the intersections of race, science and medicine proffer. Moreover, because this is, first and foremost, an SF literature and popular culture course, we’ll be mapping the historical development of SF in the Americas, considering how the genre has invariably animated, complicated, and/or (mis)understood medico-scientific thought and practices.



We will thus begin our course with the text that sci-fi scholars consider the “first” example of science fiction: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus*. The novel’s exploration of the “body” as biocultural fact and its forward-looking treatment of research ethics will facilitate our “probing” of science fictional approaches to the promises—and perils—of appropriating the idioms of science, genetics/genomics, and technology. Lastly, we’ll consider and problematize S/F’s enduring fascination with constructions of humanity/inhumanity, illness/health, and biological evolution as social progress.

### General Education Objectives:

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) or Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university’s 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- Composition courses provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- *The University Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing

component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

### General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline
- Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

### Course-Specific Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

- Trace the historical development of medico-scientific thought and the science fiction genre
- Assess how SF can—and does— “humanize” the life sciences
- Familiarity with critical race theory, disability studies, and feminist theory
- Ability to critically analyze texts by situating these within differing cultural, economic, historical, and socio-political milieus
- Expose and deconstruct texts’ cultural and ideological assumptions
- Use interdisciplinary approaches to the reading of art, literature, and media

### Required Texts:

Edward James and Farah Mendelsohn, Editors, *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (2007)

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: Annotated for Scientists, Engineers, and Creators of All Kinds* (2017)

Pauline E. Hopkins, *Of One Blood* (1902)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (1915, free Kindle edition)

Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968)

Octavia E. Butler, *Clay’s Ark in Seed to Harvest* (1984)

Andrew Niccol, *Gattaca* (1997, available for rent via Amazon)

John Fawcett, *Orphan Black* (2013-2017, available for streaming via Amazon)

**\*Readings marked with asterisk are available through Canvas.**

### Recommended Texts:

*Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace* (5<sup>th</sup> edition), Joseph Williams and Gregory G. Colomb

*MLA Handbook* (8<sup>th</sup> edition), The Modern Language Association of America

### Assignments (see below for Grading Rubric and Grading Scale):

Assignment	Percentage	Due Date
Participation (*including attendance, discussion leading, pop quizzes, writing conferences, and other in-class activities)	20% of final grade (200 points)	N/A
Bioethics Case Studies Response Papers (Five, 500 words each, 2500-word total)	25% of final grade (50 points each, 250-point total)	Throughout the semester. Check for due dates in the course schedule.

Midterm Close Reading Paper (1250-word minimum, 1500-word maximum)	20% of final grade (200 points)	March 4
Final Paper Prospectus (250-word minimum, 500-word maximum) & Annotated Bibliography	10% of final grade (100 points)	April 1
Final Research Paper (2000-word minimum, 2500-word maximum)	25% of final grade (250 points)	May 2

**\*All assignment instructions are available through Canvas.**

#### Course Policies:

1. You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.

#### 2. Attendance and Punctuality Policies:

- You may miss four class sessions over the course of the semester without negatively impacting your final grade. **\*Special note:** Accumulating more than six absences results in automatic failure of the course.
- You are expected to arrive to class on time. Every two tardies will count as one unexcused absence. Moreover, you must come speak to me after class so that I know you came late.
- You must handle gathering any notes, handouts, or assignments that you miss due to an absence. I only grant excused absences for documented serious medical issues, university-approved reasons (i.e. varsity athletics, etc.) and religious holidays. If you will be missing class for university-approved events or religious holidays, you must notify me at least 48 hours in advance. Moreover, if you're missing class due to illness or university-approved reasons, you must submit formal documentation for your absence(s) within a week of your absence.

**3. Paper Format & Submission:** All written assignments should follow MLA conventions, and are to be submitted in .doc or .docx format via Canvas. My favorite online (and free!) resource for all things MLA is the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL).

**4. Late Papers/Assignments:** All assignments are due on the assigned time/due date. However, if an emergency situation arises that impedes or affects your ability to complete and submit your work on time, please communicate this to me as early as possible (preferably before the due date). **\*Important note:** Please keep in mind that I'll be making a 5% deduction to your overall assignment grade for each day that it is late. That being said, a late assignment must be submitted no later than five days from when the assignment was originally due. Failure to meet the late submission deadline will result in an automatic zero for the assignment.

**5. Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.

**6. Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism:** Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>. If I find that any of your written assignments are plagiarized, you will receive an automatic zero for the given assignment. If you plagiarize on more than one occasion, you will automatically fail the course.

7. Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.

8. For information on UF Grading policies, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

9. **Grade Appeals:** In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). **Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.**

10. **Course Evaluations:** Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>

11. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>

## 12. Classroom Behavior and Technology Policies:

- Meaningful, constructive, and “difficult” dialogue is encouraged in this course and requires a degree of shared respect, willingness to listen, and acceptance of differing points of view. Because discussion in this course will oft-times center on and explore issues of personal and social identity (i.e. race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality) respect for individual and alternative ideological stances and viewpoints will be maintained **at all times** in this class. One’s words and use of language should thus be reasonable and within acceptable bounds of civility and decorum. Failure to maintain a respectful, safe, and welcoming classroom environment will result in immediate dismissal from class. This will then result in one unexcused absence.
- With the exception of laptops and tablets used for notetaking purposes, all cell phones, Smartphones, and other electronic devices that generate or record sound and/or images/pictures must be turned off during class. If I discover that you’re using notetaking devices for other purposes not related to our class/coursework, you will be asked to leave class for the day. This will thus result in one unexcused absence.

13. **Participation:** Because 20% of your final grade rests on the level and quality of your in-class participation, I expect you to not only to have read all the assigned readings for each class period, but also be prepared to discuss them in depth, and at length. To this end, you must bring two discussion questions, and your critical responses to said questions, to each class session based on the reading for that day. As strong critical responses are based on direct textual evidence, you must reference two to three examples from the text (with page numbers). Although seemingly tedious, these daily exercises will help prepare you for longer writing assignments!

For the sake of efficiency and orderliness, **you must write and submit your Q&A on a 3 x 5 index card.** You will then turn these in at the beginning of each class period as I will use these to take attendance. Through random selection, I will pick two discussion questions. If selected, it is your responsibility to lead class discussion based on your Q&A for ten minutes. **\*\*\* Please note that you are only responsible for leading discussion two times throughout the semester. \*\*\***

**\*About discussion questions:** A discussion question calls for critical and interpretive analysis and thus cannot be simply answered with a matter-of-fact response. For instance, after reading Octavia Butler's *Clay's Ark* you may pose the following question: "What is the symbolic meaning or significance of disease and genetic disorder(s) in the novel?"

**14. UF's Policy on Harassment:** UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>

### Course Schedule

*\*Please note: The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to the course schedule and the assigned readings as needed.*

*\*All assignments and readings are due on the date listed.*

*\*Readings marked with an asterisk (\*) are available in Canvas.*

### Week 1: (Pseudo)Science, Race, and the Enlightenment

Jan. 8: First day of class—Introduction

\*Defining what bioethics is and is not

\*Sample ethics vs. bioethics case studies

Jan. 10: Immanuel Kant, \**"On the Different Races of Man"* (1777)

Jan. 12: Samuel G. Morton, M.D. \*Excerpt from *Crania Americana* (1839) Preface; Introductory Essay: pgs. 1-7 <https://archive.org/details/Craniaamericana00Mort>

    Josiah C. Knott, \*Excerpt from *Types of Mankind* (1854) Part 1: Chps. 1 and 2 (pgs. 105-130)

### Week 2:

Jan. 15: Charles Darwin, \*Excerpt from *The Descent of Man* (1871)

    Francis Galton, \**"Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims"* (1904)

Jan. 17: Charles Davenport, \*Excerpt from *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* (1911)

Jan. 19: Siobhan Somerville, \**"Scientific Racism and the Emergence of the Homosexual Body"* (1994)

### Week 3: Eugenics Re-loaded: Black, Mulatto, and Mestizo Eugenics in the Americas

Jan. 22: Martin Delany, \*Excerpt from *Principia of Ethnology: The Origin of Races and Color, With an Archaeological Compendium of Ethiopian and Egyptian Civilization* (1880)

Jan. 24: W.E.B. Du Bois, \**"The Conservation of the Races"* (1897)

Jan. 26: José Vasconcelos, Excerpt from *La Raza Cósmica/The Cosmic Race* (1925)

“Science fiction before the genre,” *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*

**\*Jan. 28: Bioethics Case Study Response 1 due**

**\*Topic: Human dignity and human rights**

**Week 4: On the Potentialities and Perils of (Life) Science: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein***

Jan. 29: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*; Introduction, Charles E. Robinson; Vol. 1, pages 1-30 (including novel’s preface)

Jan. 31: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Vol. 1, pgs. 31-69)

Feb. 2: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Vol. 2, pgs. 70-100)

**Week 5:**

Feb. 5: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Vol. 2/Vol. 3, pgs. 101-138)

H. Davis, \**“Can Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* be Read as an Early Research Ethics Text?”*

Feb. 7: No class—Instructor away at conference

Feb. 9: No class—Instructor away at conference

**Week 6:**

Feb. 12: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Vol. 3, pgs. 139-167)

Michel Foucault, \*Excerpt from *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963)

Feb. 14: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Vol. 3, pgs. 168-end)

“Science Fiction and the Life Sciences,” *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*

**Feb. 16: Scientific Feminisms & Bodily Utopias**

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (pgs. 1-34)

**\*Feb. 18: Bioethics Case Study Response 2 due**

**\*Topic: Autonomy and individual responsibility**

**Week 7:**

Feb. 19: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (pgs. 35-68)

“Gender in Science Fiction,” *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*

Feb. 21: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (pg. 69-end)

Feb. 23: No class—Instructor away at conference

Read “Utopias and Anti-Utopias” in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* in preparation for Canvas activity due Sunday, Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>

**\*Canvas discussion activity question: Is *Herland* a utopia or an anti-utopia?**

**Week 8:**

Feb. 27: Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood* (Introduction; chps. 1-6)

Feb. 29: Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood* (chps. 7-12)

Mar. 1: Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood* (chps. 13-16)

**\*Mar. 4: Midterm close reading papers due**

**Week 9:**

Mar. 5: NO CLASS—Spring Break

Mar. 7: NO CLASS—Spring Break

Mar. 9: NO CLASS—Spring Break

**Week 10: Social Darwinism & the Specter of Admixture in SF**

Mar. 12: Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood* (chp. 17-end; Epilogue)

Mar. 14: W.E.B. Du Bois, \*The Comet (1920)

Mar. 16: Isaac Asimov, \*"Half-Breed" (1940)

**\*March 18: Bioethics Case Study Response 3 due**

**\*Topic: Respect for sociocultural diversity and pluralism**

**Week 11: Blackness, Disability, and Speculative Infection in SF**

Mar. 19: "Race and Ethnicity in Science Fiction," *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*

Christopher Bell, \*Excerpt from *Blackness and Disability: Critical Examinations and Cultural Interventions*

Mar. 21: Octavia Butler, *Clay's Ark* in *Seed to Harvest* (Past 1-Present 10)

Mar. 23: Octavia Butler, *Clay's Ark* in *Seed to Harvest* (Past 11-Present 18)

**Week 12:**

Mar. 26: Octavia Butler's, *Clay's Ark* in *Seed to Harvest* (Past 19-Present 24)

Kathryn Allen, "Introduction: Reading Disability in Science Fiction"

Mar. 28: Octavia Butler's, *Clay's Ark* in *Seed to Harvest* (Past 25-end)

Mar. 30: Sophia Magnone, \*"Microbial Zoopoetics in *Clay's Ark*"

**\*April 1: Final Paper Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography due**

**Week 13: Androids, Humanoids, & (Ethno)Cyborgs**

Apr. 2: Phillip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (chps. 1-7)

Apr. 4: Phillip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (chps. 8-14)

Apr. 6: Phillip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (chps. 15-end)

**\*April 8: Bioethics Case Study Response 4 due**

**\*Topic: Non-discrimination and non-stigmatization**

**Week 14:**

Apr. 9: Janelle Monáe, *Metropolis: Suite I (The Chase)*

Stephanie A. Smith, \*"Cyber" in *Household Words: bloomers, sucker, bombshell, scab, nigger, cyber*

\*Guest speaker: Dr. Stephanie A. Smith

Apr. 11: Chesya Burke, \*"Say, She Toy" (2017)

Apr. 13: Guillermo Gómez-Pena, \*"Ethno-cyborgs and Genetically Engineered Mexicans";  
"Aztechnology"

**Week 15: Genomics, Genetic Engineering, & the Question of Bioethics in SF Film & Television**

Apr. 16: *Gattaca*

Guest Speaker from UF Genetics Institute (TBD)

Apr. 18: *Gattaca*

Apr. 20: *Orphan Black* (Season 1, Episodes 1-3)

**\*Apr. 22: Bioethics Case Study Response 5 due**

**\*Topics: Consent; Social responsibility and health**

**Week 16:**

Apr. 23: *Orphan Black* (Season 1, Episodes 4-8)

Stephanie A. Smith, \*"Genetics" in *Glossalalia*

Apr. 25—*Orphan Black* (Season 1, Episodes 9-10)

**\*May 2: Final Research Papers due**

## Grading Criteria

Generally, the grading guidelines for your papers are based on analytical content (70% of your assignment grade), organization (10% of your assignment grade), style/expression and grammar/mechanics (20% of your assignment grade)

### An “A-level” Paper-

- Follows and meets all the requirements in the assignment guidelines
- The thesis (or argument) is clearly articulated, *original*, and well-supported; the argument is analytical rather than descriptive. ***\*Important note: An “A” paper goes beyond analyses and ideas shared in class.***
- Subsequent paragraphs build on and support the paper’s central thesis or argument
- Examples and evidence from the texts back up (but do not subsume) your own critical analysis
- The writing is clear and dynamic with varied sentence length and structure.
- The paper is free of most grammatical and spelling errors.
- MLA formatting is uniformly (and correctly) followed throughout.
- Should have a distinct and strong conclusion that does not simply rehash the paper’s original thesis

### A “B-level” Paper-

- Follows and meets most of the requirements in the assignment guidelines
- Has a good thesis, but the wording might be less clear and/or fluid or weaker in its argumentation
- Still builds up and supports the paper’s main argument but does not create compelling nor strong connections between the ideas presented in each paragraph
- Does not analyze textual evidence as critically or as in depth as the “A” paper
- Puts forth a solid argument but may have unclear language, spelling, or grammatical errors and superficial or vague analysis in a few places
- MLA formatting is uniformly (and correctly) followed throughout
- Conclusion is strong

### A “C-level” Paper-

- Follows and meets some of the requirements in the assignment guidelines
- Does not clearly articulate or fully develop thesis; it is more descriptive rather than analytical
- Does not wholly engage with or defend the paper’s key argument throughout
- The writing is largely incoherent and disorganized but may have instances of proper analysis and clear argumentation
- Does not incorporate sufficient textual evidence to support the main argument and claims
- MLA formatting is not uniformly (nor correctly) followed throughout
- Lacks a clear conclusion

### A “D-level” Paper and below-

- Does not meet any of the requirements in the assignment guidelines
- Lacks a clearly articulated and well-developed thesis

- Does not engage with or defend the paper’s key argument throughout
- Does not successfully incorporate any textual evidence to support the main argument and claims
- Shows blatant disregard of proper grammar and punctuation
- The writing is vague and has several errors in analysis and argumentation
- Does not follow MLA formatting guidelines
- Lacks a conclusion

**Grading Scale**

A, 4.0, 93-100 (930-1000)	C, 2.0, 73-76 (730-769)
A-, 3.67, 90-92 (900-929)	C-, 1.67, 70-72 (700-729)
B+, 3.33, 87-89 (870-899)	D+, 1.33, 67-69 (670-699)
B, 3.0, 83-86 (830-869)	D, 1.0, 63-66 (630-669)
B-, 2.67, 80-82 (800-829)	D-, 0.67, 60-62 (600-629)
C+, 2.33, 77-79 (770-799)	E, 0.00, 0-59 (0-599)