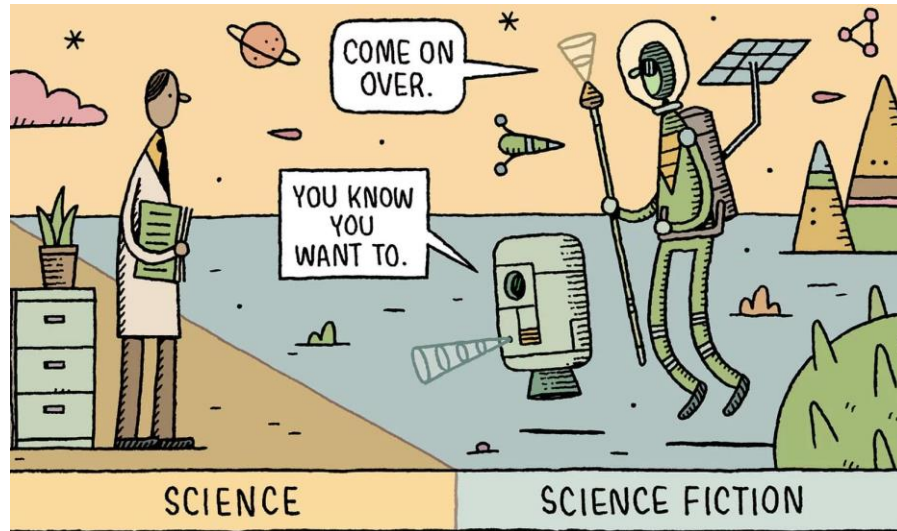


AML 4225—19th c. American Literature and Culture Representations of Science in 19th American Literature

Fall 2022/MWF 3 (9:35-10:25) via Zoom (100% online)

Class # 27354; section #026F



Professor Stephanie A. Smith

100% online Period 3 (9:35-10:25)

Office: 4324 TUR

Office hours: Zoom reserved hours Weds. 2:00-4:00 by individual appointment

ssmith@ufl.edu and www.stephanieasmith.net

Science fiction as genre is regarded as a mid to late twentieth-century invention of popular fiction, sometimes beginning with the pulp magazines of the 1930s like *Astounding* or *Amazing*. But in the 19th century, authors such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, Mark Twain, Herman Melville, Ambrose Bierce, among others were already exploring ‘science’ in their stories, even if some of those representations were of what we would now call pseudo-science. A fascination with scientists and progress (both technological and social) took hold of the 19th-century imagination, and that fascination found its way into literature — specifically, literature that would come to be known as some of the earliest pieces of science fiction. This class will look back at how and why these 19th-century authors represented science in their fiction, while thinking forward to how such representations may still be relevant to a twenty-first century audience.

Bierce, Ambrose, “Moxon’s Master” (orig. 1899) at https://loa-shared.s3.amazonaws.com/static/pdf/Bierce_Moxon.pdf

_____. “An Occurrence at Owl’s Creek Bridge” at https://loa-shared.s3.amazonaws.com/static/pdf/Bierce_Owl_Creek_Bridge.pdf

Hawthorne, Nathaniel, “Rappaccini’s Daughter” at http://www.columbia.edu/itc/english/f1124y-001/resources/Rappaccinis_Daughter.pdf

_____. “Dr. Heidegger’s Experiment” (PDF)

_____. “The Birthmark.”
https://wikis.westchesterlibraries.org/occfles/The_Birthmark.pdf

_____. *The Blithedale Romance*. Again, there are many editions of this novel. I would recommend the Penguin or Dover Thrift edition.

Melville, Herman, “Benito Cereno” at <https://pinkmonkey.com/dl/library1/benito.pdf>

_____ “Bartleby the Scrivener”: <https://www.bartleby.com/129/>

_____ “The Paradise of Bachelors/The Tartarus of Maids”:
<https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/i21/par-tar.html>

Perkins-Gilman, Charlotte, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (orig. 1892). The Feminist Press at CUNY, 1997. ISBN 1558611584.

_____. *Herland*. Dover Thrift editions ISBN 0486404293

Poe, Edgar Allen. “Ligeia.” (orig. 1838): <http://www.online-literature.com/poe/2126/>

_____. “Berenice” (orig. 1835): <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/147/the-works-of-edgar-allan-poe/5230/berenice/>

Some Recommended Secondary Reading and online resources:

American Memory: <http://www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/browse/updatedList.html>

American Literature and Science: <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/37037>

18th c. Science and Literature in America: <https://www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/tracer-bullets/scitech18tb.html>

Scholnick, Robert J. *American Literature and Science*. Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1992.

Society for Literature, Science and the Arts: <https://litsciarts.org/>

Requirements: Final grades will be assigned according to the following numerical breakdown: Attendance/class participation 20%; short reading responses 20% mid-term paper 30% and a final paper 30%.

Class participation: This online class should belong to you as much as possible by which I mean active, responsible engagement. I expect you to talk in this class and I expect that you will bring your own questions into the classroom—on occasion, I may ask you what *you* want to discuss. You will agree to work during the class, with due respect to your classmates. I know this is difficult for some of us, who may be shy. I ask for a good faith effort. Good class participation includes:

- a. **Attendance.** This should probably go without saying but you will agree to be in class, promptly, at the opening of the class period with the reading assignment. If you are 15 minutes late, you will be marked late; twenty, you are absent. You have three (3) periods of grace to be absent. Only illness or injury will be allowed as exceptions. In such cases, talk to

me *as soon* as possible. If you know that you have a chronic condition, and are likely to miss class periods, please avail yourself of the Disability Resource Center.

b. **Preparation.** You will agree to have **prepared** whatever the day's assignment is. Just showing up does not constitute good class participation.

c. **Participation.** By taking this class, you are agreeing to making your voice heard in the discussions we shall be having. Again, just being in the Zoom room doesn't constitute "A" work, with respect to participation.

Short reading response papers: There will be four units to this course, and each unit will feature one short reading response paper, questions below. Each should be two pages long. Together all four will be worth 20% of the final grade.

Unit I: *Science in the 19th Century*

Unit II: *Mechanizing Man*

Unit III: *Engineering a New Society*

Unit IV: *States of Mind*

Reading Responses 1-4:

1. *Science in the 19th Century*: We will have read four short stories, two by Hawthorne, two by Poe, each of which features some form of potentially immoral or questionable scientific experimentation on human beings. Choose one of the four, and write a one-page response to these questions: do you consider the experiment in the story you've chosen immoral, unjust, or illegal? Explain why, and then consider: does the story itself punish the crime, if you feel a crime has been committed? How or how not? (due; Friday, Sept. 9)
2. *Mechanizing Man*: The fear that people will either be replaced or attacked by the technology they've created is a long-standing fear, going all the way back to the myth of Prometheus. We will have read three short stories about the relationship between men and machines, "Bartleby the Scrivener," "Moxon's Master" and "The Paradise of Bachelors/The Tartarus of Maids." Choose one of the three, and write a one-page response to this question: is the technology presented in the story shown as positive, negative, or as both? What is positive, what negative? What, if anything, do you feel the story gets right about man's relationship to technology, and what seems to you outdated or obsolete?
3. *Engineering a New Society*: After the Civil War, Americans had to contend with a host of challenges: how to reconceive their nation state, how to redefine the mission of the federal government, how to deal with the end of slavery, what to think about a host of new technological inventions, how to process death on a massive scale in war unimagined until then. In other words, America before the Civil War was a different place than ante-bellum America. Hawthorne wrote his novel before the war, Gilman after it—write a short response paper in which you argue that the various effects of the war are evident in Gilman's novel, as compared to Hawthorne's.
4. "Benito Cereno" was picked up to be developed into a TV series based on the story. The series, which was to be adapted to take place in deep space, was created by *The Knick* scribe/co-executive producer Steven Katz, who will write and executive produced project. Inspired by the novella — considered one of Melville's finest works—the series will be a science fiction thriller centered on an accidental encounter between a human

commercial ship and an alien slave freighter. “Benito Cereno” is one of Melville’s most thought-provoking short stories, and Steven has been able to retain its essence, while reimagining it for modern audiences,” said Lisa Leingang, SVP Programming & Content at Topic Studios. “The result will be something so innovative and radical that we can’t wait for audiences to see it.” Having read and discussed the story, why do you think Topic decided to develop this version of story now? What do you see as still relevant to audiences today that would have inspired Katz to take it on as science fiction?

Mid-Term: Although we shall have discussed “Bartleby the Scrivener” in class for your mid-term project, I would like you to write an argumentative paper in which you make a claim as to how this story reinvents, challenges, or revises one or more supposedly settled forms of knowledge. This is a broad topic—I want you to narrow it down to make an argument about a specific type(s) or form(s) of knowledge that the story works hard to reinvent, revise or to challenge—6-10 pages, due Oct. 17.

Final Paper: for your final project, I ask that you write an argumentative paper about some aspect of science in the 19th century that interests you, using either *The Blithedale Romance* or *Herland* as your central text. However, if the issue you choose to consider appears in any of the other texts we’ve read in this course, I expect you to use evidence from some of those texts to support your claim about the novel you chose. For example, here’s a question that might pertain to *all* of the texts we’ve read: perspective is crucial to many if not most of the texts we’ve read. How does the choice of perspective determine one’s faith in or the reliability of knowledge? Again, this is a broad topic so you might want to Zoom and talk to me about how to narrow it down. Due last day of class, 10 pages.

And now for the obligatory UF materials:

Academic Honesty Policy: UF students are bound by the Honor Pledge that states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor of this class.

Plagiarism: I regret having to remind you that plagiarism is a serious offense. All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines, which have been accepted by the University. The academic community of students and faculty at the University of Florida strives to develop, sustain and protect an environment of honesty, trust and respect. Students are expected to pursue knowledge with integrity. Exhibiting honesty in academic pursuits and reporting violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines will encourage others to act with integrity. Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and a student being subject to the sanctions in paragraph XIV of the Student Conduct Code. The conduct set forth hereinafter constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Guidelines (University of Florida Rule 6C1_4.017).

For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and collusion, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>

Civility: Please turn off or put cell-phones on vibrate during class time; if you need to leave the room during class, please be sure to and leave with discretion. You will be marked absent if you are gone more than 10 minutes; if you need sleep, please stay home and sleep; and please do not be rude, either to me, or to your fellow students—by which I also mean, don't deliberately waste anyone's time. It is the policy of The University of Florida to provide an educational and working environment for its students, faculty and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and individuals who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The University encourages students, faculty, staff, and visitors to promptly report sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about the University of Florida policies regarding harassment, see the University of Florida Student Conduct Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/conductcode.php> and policies regarding harassment at <http://wwwhr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.html>

The Disability Resource Center: The Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. Staff at the Disability Resource Center will assist any student who registers as having a disability. Official documentation of a disability is required to determine eligibility for appropriate classroom accommodations. The professional employees at the Disability Resource Program serve as full-time advocates for students with disabilities ensuring students have physical and programmatic access to all college programs. For more information about Student Disability Services, see: <http://www.ufl.edu/disability/>

In response to COVID-19: the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit one.ufl.edu for screening / testing and vaccination opportunities.
- If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated. As with any excused absence, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work.

Online Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <http://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Final Grade Appeals: If you want to appeal the final grade you receive for this course, you should contact Professor Kenneth Kidd Associate Chair and Undergraduate Coordinator of the English Department. You will submit your course materials for evaluation by a committee assembled by Professor Kidd. The committee may decide to raise, lower, or leave unchanged your final grade for the course. Its decision is final.

Grading Scale A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; E = 0-59

UF Grading Policies for Assigning Grade Points

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

Schedule of Classes

The following schedule of readings is a working plan. If it becomes necessary to alter the schedule for whatever reason, I will give ample warning.

Week 1 **Unit I: Science in the 19th Century**

W Aug. 24—Introductory matters and getting the rusty wheels turning again

F Aug. 26—con't

HMW: read Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter"

Week 2

M Aug. 29—Mad Scientists and their Experiments

HMW: read Hawthorne's "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" and "The Birthmark"

W Aug. 31—con't

F Sept. 2—con't

HMW: read Poe's "Ligeia" and "Berenice"

Week 3

M Sept. 5—LABOR DAY OFF

W Sept. 7—Poe's Optical Obsessions

F Sept. 9—con't and **RR#1 due**

HMW: read Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener"

Week 4 **Unit II: Mechanizing Man**

M Sept. 12—Mechanical Monstrosities to AI: "Bartleby"

W Sept. 14—con't

F Sept. 16—con't

HMW: read Bierce's "Moxon's Master"

Week 5

M Sept. 19—con't

W Sept. 21—con't

F. Sept. 23—con't

HMW: read Melville's "Paradise of Bachelors/Tartarus of Maids"

Week 6

M Sept. 26—con't

W Sept. 28—con't

F Sept. 30—Asynchronous: **your job is to complete RR#2 due at the end of the day**

HMW: read Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance*

Week 7 **Unit III: Engineering a New Society**

M Oct. 3—Hawthorne's Dystopia

W Oct. 5—con't (over the long holiday, finish your mid-term)

F Oct. 7—HOMECOMING DAY OFF

Week 8 (mid-term)

M Oct. 10—con't with Hawthorne

W Oct. 12—con't

F Oct. 14—con't

Week 9

M Oct. 17—MENTAL HEALTH DAY OFF **midterm due**

W Oct. 19—con't

F Oct. 21—con't

HMW: Read *Herland*

Week 10

M Oct. 24—Gilman's Utopia

W Oct. 26—con't

F Oct. 28—Asynchronous: your job is to complete RR#3 due at the end of the day.

Week 11

Unit IV: States of Mind

M Oct. 31—Boo! con't

W Nov. 2—con't

F Nov. 4—con't

HMW read "Benito Cereno"

Week 12

M Nov. 7—con't

W Nov. 9—con't

HMW: over the long weekend, read "The Yellow Wallpaper"

F Nov. 11—**VETERAN'S DAY OFF**

Week 13

M Nov. 14—Wallpaper

W Nov. 16—con't

F Nov. 18—con't

Week 14

M Nov. 21—Asynchronous: your job is to complete RR#4 due at the end of the day

W Nov. 23—THANKSGIVING OFF

F Nov. 25—THANKSGIVING OFF

Week 15

M Nov. 28—Occurrence

W Nov. 30—con't

F Dec. 2—con't

Week 16

M Dec. 5—Wrapping up the semester

W Dec. 7—Last day of classes; final papers due.

Sonnet--To Science

By Edgar Allan Poe

Science! true daughter of Old Time thou art!
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise,
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car,
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star?
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

(1829)

Faith is a fine invention (202)

Emily Dickinson

"Faith" is a fine invention
When Gentlemen can see-
But Microscopes are prudent
In an Emergency.

(1860/1891)