

Prof. S.A. Smith Office Hours: Mondays 2- 4 p.m. by individual appointment	 <p style="text-align: center;">Representations of AI in Anglo-Literature and Culture 100% online on Zoom</p> <p style="text-align: center;">#27266 and 27373 8SS2 and 8SSA</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ssmith@ufl.edu and www.stephanieasmith.net</p>	Lit 4930 Fall 2025 MWF Period 6 (12:50- 1:40 p.m.)
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From the fictional android *Data* in the *Star Trek* franchise, a valuable member of the Enterprise crew, to the computer *HAL 9000* in *2001: A Space Odyssey* who appears to have its own will thereby depicting “the future birth of a superior intelligent being,” the question of human intelligence being displayed by a mechanical device has been part of American popular culture for decades. However, prior to the foundation of the genre now called Science Fiction (or more broadly Speculative Fiction), American writers explored the question of the relationship between humanity and the tools we build or create. This course will explore those representations beginning in the 19th century and working our way to present day representations of artificial intelligence, using such texts as “Moxon’s Master” by Ambrose Bierce to the existing technology of Sophia, the first robot granted citizenship status by the United Nations.

Required Readings: First, a word about these texts: given that most students now use e-media, I’ve given up trying to get us all “on the same page” even if I still think this is the most effective way of reading in a classroom. That said, I will provide the ISBN number of the hard-copy I will be using.

Asimov, Isaac. *I, Robot* (1950) ISBN 9780553382563 Publisher: NYC: Del Rey
 Bierce, Ambrose. “Moxon’s Master” PDF (on Canvas)
 Clarke, Arthur C. *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) ISBN 9780451457998 Publisher: NYC: Ace
 Dick, Phillip K. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) ISBN 8781524796976 Publisher: NYC: Del Rey
 Gibson, William. *Neuromancer* (1984) ISBN 9780441007462 Publisher: NYC: Ace
 Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Klara and the Sun* (2022) ISBN 9780593311295 Publisher: NYC: Del Rey
 Chiang, Ted. “The Life Cycle of Software Objects” PDF (on Canvas)
 Moore, C.L. “Of No Woman Born” 1944 PDF (on Canvas)

Requirements: We shall be writing an AI Log (see below) and a major project. Final grades will be assigned according to the following numerical breakdown: Attendance/class participation 40% (this includes all in-class work and any asynchronous work we do); AI Log: 30% and major project: 30 %.

You are welcome to track your final grade on Canvas but do keep in mind that not **every** in-class workshop participation exercise is entered onto Canvas. This means that the 40% you will receive for attendance/class participation will likely be a little higher than what Canvas will show you.

1. **Class participation:** we shall be engaged in various modes of discussion, i.e. over Zoom, in writing, in the chat. You will agree to do the work of the class, with due respect to the class and your classmates. Class participation includes:
2. **a. Attendance:** you should try to attend our virtual sessions virtually, preferably with your camera on but the camera being *on* is not mandatory. However, if people don't turn on their cameras to participate, I will turn mine off as well, and cancel any visual content of that day. The participation portion of your grade for this class will be calculated based on your attendance and your participation in class activities. Since the pedagogical approach of this course depends on student engagement and interaction, you are required, **at a minimum**, to participate in class activities through the audio function of Zoom and/or the chat function. I print out the chat after every class and I keep track of who is engaged there.

b. Preparation. You will agree to have PREPARED whatever the day's assignment is. Just turning on your computer in your pajamas does not constitute good class participation.
3. **AI Log:** Artificial Intelligence as it is being explored today is still mostly a bodiless virtual assistant or creatures that mimic animals than it is an embodied humanoid mechanical being, although steps to produce such a thing are ongoing. Across the semester, we shall encounter one version of a mechanical being after another and certainly I imagine you will have encountered AI or used it or exploited it or whatever outside, if not inside, the classroom. Across the semester, I want you to keep a log that records your thoughts and feelings about this technology, which will no doubt have an impact on your future. I ask you to keep a weekly record of your thoughts and feelings that engages two questions:
 1. Did the reading this week change your mind about anything or not?
 2. Did it impact in any way your response to actually existing or potentially existing AI?

These logs should be compiled across the semester and handed near the end of it, as a completed document of **II pages**. This excludes the first and last weeks of the semester, the Thanksgiving holiday week, and one grace week of your own choosing. **Due date: Weds., Nov. 26, on Canvas by midnight.**

Major Project: Almost all the robots/androids/mechanical humans we will have read about this semester are given masculine names, even if, as in the case of "Moxon's Master" the robot in question is questionably gendered, i.e. you can't tell from the way Bierce describes the chess-player whether it is constructed to be male or female (as we will have discussed in class). This wasn't intentional on my part, most imagined robots in fiction are male. There are very few who are female or ungendered. The notable exceptions are the androids in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* *Klara and the Sun* and "Of No Woman Born." Your project is to think critically about how these three authors represent and construct their robots as female as compared to all the other male androids or robots and write a paper about how gender is imagined as embodied AI. Does gender a mechanical body change how gender is imagined? Does the mechanical body render gender superfluous, null and void, or does gender get emphasized or overemphasized? You must use the three texts mentioned here, but you are free to use as many or as few texts from the rest of the class, or outside sources, so long as you cite them all properly, to help you make your point. **6-10 pages due Monday Nov. 17 by midnight on Canvas.**

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [Academic Policies & Resources](#).

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: If you need to leave the Zoom room during class, please be sure to leave with discretion. You will be marked absent if you are gone more than 10 minutes; if you need to sleep, please stay offline and sleep; please do not be rude, either to me, or to your fellow students. 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 based on 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>

Course Delivery: UF Admin. has designated this course as a 100% online. The class will largely be synchronous, but we will have a few asynchronous sessions.

Final Grade Appeals: If you want to appeal the final grade you receive for this course, you should contact Professor Roger Maoli, Associate Chair of the English Department. You will submit your course materials for evaluation by a committee assembled by Professor Maoli. 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.

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 try to give ample warning.

Week 1 *Unit I: Early Imaginings: Late 19th-Mid-20th Century*

Aug. 22 Introduction: syllabus, policies, overview of the semester, grading system
HMW: read the short story "Moxon's Master" by Ambrose Bierce (PDF)

Week 2

M. Aug. 25 "Moxon's Master"
HMW: Read C.L. Moore's "Of No Woman Born" (1944)

W. Aug. 27 "Of No Woman Born"
F. Aug. 29 Con't
HMW: Read the novel *I, Robot* by Isaac Asimov (1950) and write AI Log #1

Week 3

M. Sept. 1 Labor Day: OFF
W. Sept. 3 *I, Robot*
F. Sept. 5 *I, Robot*
HWM: write AI Log #2

Week 4

M. Sept. 8 *I, Robot* (1950)
W. Sept. 10 con't
F. Sept. 12 con't
HMW: read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) and write AI Log #3

Week 5

M. Sept. 15 *Androids*
W. Sept. 17 con't
F. Sept. 19 con't
HMW: write AI Log #4

Week 6: *Unit II: Latter Half of the 20th Century*

M. Sept. 22 con't
W. Sept. 24 con't
F. Sept. 26 con't
HMW: read *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and write AI Log #5

Week 7:

M. Sept. 29 *Odyssey*
W. Oct. 1 con't
F. Oct. 3 con't
HMW: write AI Log #6

Week 8.

M. Oct. 6 *Odyssey*
W. Oct. 8 con't
F. Oct. 10 con't
HMW: Read *Neuromancer* and write AI Log #7

Week 9

M. Oct. 13 *Neuromancer*
W. Oct. 15 con't
F. Oct. 17 **Homecoming: DAY OFF**
HMW: write AI Log #8

Week 10

M. Oct. 20 *Neuromancer*
W. Oct. 22 con't
F. Oct. 24 con't
HMW: read *Klara and the Sun* and write AI Log #9

Week 11

M. Oct. 27 *Klara*

W. Oct. 29 con't

F. Oct. 31 con't BOO!



HMW: write AI Log #10

Week 12

M. Nov. 3 con't

W. Nov. 5 con't

F. Nov. 7 con't

HMW: work on your major project, which is due **Monday Nov. 17 by midnight** on Canvas and read Ted Chiang's "The Life Cycle of Software Objects"

Week 13

M. Nov. 10 "Life Cycle"

W. Nov. 11 con't

F. Nov. 14 con't

HMW: write AI Log #11

Week 14

M. Nov. 17 **Mental Health Day: OFF due date for Major Project by midnight tonight**

W. Nov. 19 con't "Life Cycle"

F. Nov. 21 con't

HMW: write AI Log #12



Week 15 *Thanksgiving Week Off*

M. Nov. 22 gobble, gobble

W. Nov. 26 gobble, gobble...**your AI Log is due tonight by midnight.**

F. Nov. 28 gobble, gobble and weep...you ate too much!

Week 16

M. Dec. 1 Reconsiderations

W. Dec. 3 Last Day of Class