

LIT 4930: Verne, Wells & Co.: European SF of the Late Nineteenth Century

Professor Terry Harpold

Spring 2020, Section 4E67

Time: MWF, per. 6 (12:50–1:40 PM)

Location: Anderson Hall (AND) 21

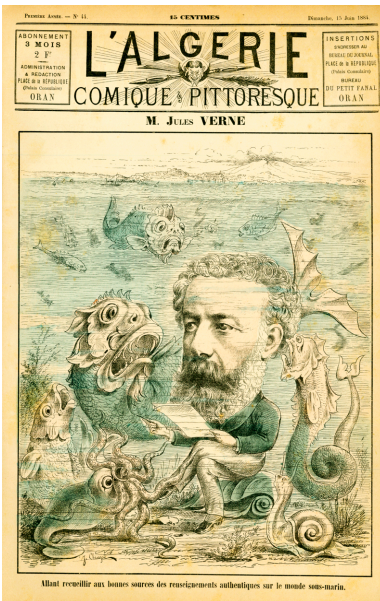
office hours: M, 2:30–4:30 PM & by appt. (TUR 4105)

email: tharpold@ufl.edu

home page for Terry Harpold: <http://users.clas.ufl.edu/tharpold/>

e-Learning (Canvas) site for LIT 4930 (*registered students only*): <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>

Course Description



Jules Verne “gathering from the best sources authentic information about the underwater world.” Caricature by J. Chape, *L’Algérie*, June 15, 1884.

Defining the canon of nineteenth-century European science fiction (SF) seems to lead, inevitably, to also embracing doubtful analogies and inventive anachronisms. American editor Hugo Gernsback’s 1926 endorsement of “the Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, and Edgar Allan Poe type of story” as the model for what Gernsback christened “scientifiction” – later “science fiction” – is telling in this regard. Verne, Wells, and Poe *are* among the precursors of modern SF, but in most respects they are dissimilar from each other. Many other, equally dissimilar, figures also contributed to the incunabular period of SF, the complexity of which confounds such comparisons.

Labels such as “proto-SF,” “early SF,” or “Victorian SF” – the last of which is too closely associated with one national tradition to be really useful – may help to mark the field’s development. But they also beg the question of what SF was, really, during this early phase when it had no widely-accepted name and the distinctive traits of its

national traditions in the twentieth century were equally undefined.

During the late nineteenth century “SF” is at best a placeholder for a radically diverse, inconsistent field of literary production that emerged, haltingly, out of traditions of utopian fiction, satirical *contes*, and imaginary voyages, and in relation to other literary movements, such as romanticism, realism, naturalism, and early modernism.



“Mr. H.G. Wells Foreseeing Things.”
Caricature by Max Beerbohm,
London Spectator Supplement,
February 14, 1931.

In this course we will read long and short works of fantastic fiction by mostly British and French authors of the period whose names are known to you (such as Verne and Wells), some (such as Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Florence Dixie, Enrique Gaspar, Richard Jefferies, Albert Robida, J.–H. Rosny *ainé*) who may be unfamiliar, and others, major literary figures of the period whom you probably didn’t know wrote fantastic fiction (Guy de Maupassant, George Sand).

Our aim will be not to solve the taxonomic problems noted above. I’m not sure that we will settle on one definition of “science fiction,” so much as we will survey the landscape of an adventurous, nuanced, messy proto-canon that was then – and still is – in search of its meaning and place in the modern literary, technological, and ecological imaginations.

All assigned readings will be in English or English translation. Writing requirements include a take-home midterm and a final research paper.

Required Texts to Purchase

These texts are available at the UF Bookstore and from online vendors. Used and electronic editions (Apple Books, Amazon Kindle, etc.) are acceptable – indeed they are encouraged¹ – so long as the version of the text you read is *otherwise identical to the editions noted below*. Note that widely available electronic editions of several of the required texts are based on public domain versions lacking editorial apparatus. **Those editions are unacceptable.** Take care when purchasing an electronic version that it is the specific edition and from the publisher that I have stipulated below.²

Only the translations indicated below are acceptable. Other translations are very likely to be incomplete and of poor quality.

¹ See my “Policy on environmentally unsustainable activity in the classroom,” below.

² Amazon’s Kindle WWW site and Apple’s Books “Library” search functions can easily lead you astray in this regard. Badly-edited and –translated public domain versions of several of the required readings abound. The editions I have assigned are the most complete and authoritative. When buying electronic texts for this course be sure to verify that you have purchased the correct edition.

I encourage you whenever possible to buy from independent booksellers. If you choose to buy your texts online, I recommend sources such as Abebooks.com and Alibris.com that serve independent booksellers.

Bulwer-Lytton, Edward. *The Coming Race*. Edited by David Seed, Wesleyan University Press, 2007. ISBN 9780819567352. 280 pp. (print). Orig. pub. 1871. *Available electronic editions are **not** acceptable.*

Gaspar, Enrique. *The Time Ship: A Chrononautical Journey*. Illustrated by Francesc Soler, edited and translated by Yolanda Molina-Gavilán and Andrea Bell, Wesleyan University Press, 2012. ISBN 9780819572936. 240 pp. (print). Orig. pub. 1887. *Also available in a Kindle edition.*

Maupassant, Guy de. *The Horla*. Translated by Charlotte Mandell, Melville House, 2005. ISBN 9780976140740. 96 pp. (print). Orig. pub. 1887. *Also available in Books and Kindle editions.*

Robida, Albert. *Electric Life*. Translated by Brian Stableford, Black Coat Press, 2013. ISBN 9781612271828. 216 pp. (print). Orig. pub. 1892. *Also available in a Kindle edition.*

Sand, George. *Laura: A Journey into the Crystal*. Translated by Sue Dyson, Pushkin Press, 2018. ISBN 9781782274148. 128 pp. (print) Orig. pub. 1864. *Also available in Books and Kindle editions. The Books edition has slightly different pagination but is still acceptable.*

Verne, Jules. *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas*. Rev. ed., edited and translated by William Butcher, Oxford University Press, 2019. ISBN 9780198818649. 496 pp. (print). Orig. pub. 1870. *Note that this is the 2019 **revised** edition of the Butcher translation, originally published in 1998. Also available in Books and Kindle editions.*

Verne, Jules and Adolphe Ennery. *Journey Through the Impossible*. Illustrated by Roger Leyonmark, translated by Edward Baxter, Prometheus Books, 2003. ISBN 1591020794. 180 pp. (print). Orig. pub. 1882. *Available in print only in a hardcover edition, which is out of print and is frightfully expensive from vendors such as Amazon.com. TH has access to copies of the book at reasonable cost and will discuss how best to secure them for students in the course. Also available in a Kindle edition.*

Wells, H.G. *The Time Machine*. Edited by Patrick Parrinder, Marina Warner, and Steven McLean, Penguin, 2005. ISBN 9780141439976. 128 pp. (print). Orig. pub. 1895. *Also available in Books and Kindle editions.*

———. *The War of the Worlds*. Edited by Patrick Parrinder, Brian Aldiss, and Andy Sawyer, Penguin, 2005. ISBN 9780141441030. 240 pp. (print). Orig. pub. 1897. Available electronic editions are **not** acceptable.

Other required texts

These texts are available in electronic formats via the WWW or will be distributed via Canvas or the course's electronic reserves (Ares, <https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu>). To retrieve a text from HathiTrust, you must log into <http://hathitrust.org> with your GatorLink id and password. Unless instructed otherwise, when multiple editions of a text are available you should download the earliest published edition.

Dixie, Florence. *Gloriana; or, The Revolution of 1900*. Henry and Co., 1890. 350 pp. (print). Available via HathiTrust (<http://hathitrust.org>).

Harpold, Terry. "European Science Fiction in the Nineteenth Century." *The Cambridge History of Science Fiction*, edited by Gerry Canavan and Eric Carl Link, Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 50–68. Available via Ares.

Hay, William Delisle. *The Doom of the Great City; Being the Narrative of a Survivor, Written A.D. 1942*. Newman & Co., 1880. 50 pp. (print). Available via HathiTrust (<http://hathitrust.org>).

Jefferies, Richard. *After London; or Wild England*. Duckworth and Co., 1905. 311 pp. (print). Orig. pub. 1885. Available via HathiTrust (<http://hathitrust.org>).

Rosny (aîné), J.–H. "The Xipéhuz." *Three Science Fiction Novellas: From Prehistory to the End of Mankind*, edited and translated by Danièle Chatelain and George E. Slusser, Wesleyan University Press, 2012, pp. 1–28, 127–34. ISBN 9780819569455. Orig. pub. 1887. Available via Ares.

Course Calendar

Deadlines outside of normal class meeting times are marked with an asterisk ().*

Science Fiction in the Century

- M, Jan 6 *Course introduction*
- W, Jan 8 *Signature reading exercise described*
Harold, "European Science Fiction in the Nineteenth Century"

The Novel of the Future

- F, Jan 10 Hay, *The Doom of the Great City*
- M, Jan 13 Jefferies, *After London*
- * Tu, Jan 14 *Signature reading exercise due by 5 PM*
- W, Jan 15 Jefferies, *After London*
- F, Jan 17 *No class meeting – TH is planting trees on Florida Arbor Day³*
- M, Jan 20 *No class meeting – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*
- W, Jan 22 Jefferies, *After London*
- F, Jan 24 Dixie, *Gloriana; or, The Revolution of 1900* (Preface + "Maremna's Dream")
- M, Jan 27 Dixie, *Gloriana; or, The Revolution of 1900*
- W, Jan 29 Dixie, *Gloriana; or, The Revolution of 1900*
- F, Jan 31 Dixie, *Gloriana; or, The Revolution of 1900*
- M, Feb 3 Robida, *Electric Life*

³ ... and you are welcome to join me! See the *Trees! extra-credit option*, below.

W, Feb 5	Robida, <i>Electric Life</i>
F, Feb 7	Robida, <i>Electric Life</i>
M, Feb 10	Robida, <i>Electric Life</i>
W, Feb 12	Gaspar, <i>The Time Ship</i>
* Th, Feb 13	Midterm prompts posted to Canvas
F, Feb 14	In-class review of midterm prompts <i>No assigned reading</i>
M, Feb 17	Gaspar, <i>The Time Ship</i>
W, Feb 19	Gaspar, <i>The Time Ship</i>
F, Feb 21	Gaspar, <i>The Time Ship</i>
M, Feb 24	Wells, <i>The Time Machine</i>
W, Feb 26	Wells, <i>The Time Machine</i>
F, Feb 28	Wells, <i>The Time Machine</i> Completed midterm due by 5 PM
MWF, Mar 2, 4, 6	<i>No class meetings (UF Spring Break)</i>

Journey Through the Impossible

M, Mar 9	Verne, <i>Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas</i> <i>Recommended listening: Rajan Datar, Terry Harpold, Marie-Hélène Huet, Jean-Michel Margot, and Laurence Sudret, "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas: Why Verne's Celebrated Novel is More Than Just a Boys' Own Adventure." BBC World Service, April 4, 2019. Available online: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3csyp4h .</i>
W, Mar 11	Verne, <i>Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas</i>

F, Mar 13 Verne, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas*

M, Mar 16 Verne, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas*

W, Mar 18 Verne, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas*

F, Mar 20 No class meeting – TH is away

M, Mar 23 Verne & Ennery, *Journey Through the Impossible*

W, Mar 25 Verne & Ennery, *Journey Through the Impossible*

F, Mar 27 Sand, *Laura: A Journey Into the Crystal*

M, Mar 30 Sand, *Laura: A Journey Into the Crystal*

Contact

W, April 1 Bulwer-Lytton, *The Coming Race*

F, April 3 Guest lecture by Erin Prophet (Visiting Assistant Professor, UF Department of Religion) on Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race*, Theosophy, and Esoterism. Note: this class meeting will take place in Marston Science Library L-136.

M, April 6 Bulwer-Lytton, *The Coming Race*

W, April 8 Bulwer-Lytton, *The Coming Race*

F, April 10 Maupassant, "The Horla"

M, April 13 Rosny, *aîné*, "The Xipéhuz"

W, April 15 Wells, *The War of the Worlds*

F, April 17 Wells, *The War of the Worlds*

M, April 20 Wells, *The War of the Worlds*

W, April 22 *Final class meeting – course debriefing*

* M, April 27 ***Completed research paper is due by 5 PM***

Evaluation of Performance, Attendance Requirements & Other Course Policies

Your final grade in this course will be determined by the average of three assignments:

Signature reading exercise: 3% of final grade

Midterm exam: 37% of final grade

Research paper: 60% of final grade

Signature reading exercise. This is a brief writing exercise that will help me and your classmates to understand your reading interests and habits; it's a good way to start off our conversations this semester and to identify shared interests. I will explain the method of the exercise at the start of the second class meeting. The exercise is due at the beginning of the second week of class. Students who register for the course nearer to the end of drop/add will be able to make up this assignment during the second week of class. If you complete this exercise and meet its (very) basic requirements, you will receive a grade of 100 on the assignment. In effect, the assignment is worth three points toward your final grade. The procedure for the signature reading assignment will be reviewed in the first class meeting.

The midterm exam. This is an open-book, take-home exam consisting of short essay responses to detailed prompts concerning assigned texts we have read to the date the exam is due. The exam will consist of three prompts, to which you must reply to two. The exam does not require you to do any research beyond assigned readings. The completed exam will be between 2400 and 3000 words in length (\approx 9–11 double-spaced pages with 1 inch margins), not including a bibliography.

Final research paper. The capstone writing assignment of the course is a research paper of between 2400 and 3200 words in length (\approx 9–12 double-spaced pages with 1 inch margins), not including a bibliography. The paper may be on any text(s) or topic(s) of your choosing, so long as it includes substantial discussion of at least one long text (novels) or two short texts (novellas, short stories, plays) assigned in the second half of the semester, i.e., after the midterm is due. The bibliography of your paper must include at least three outside scholarly sources (e.g., journal articles or books relevant to the paper's topic).

You are not required to submit a proposal or abstract for the paper in advance. However, I **strongly** recommend that you avail yourself of my office hours to discuss possible essay

topics and approaches with me. I will post technical requirements of the research paper and recommendations regarding appropriate scholarly sources to the course Canvas site early in the semester.

Trees! (extra-credit option). Several of the texts we will read – works by Hay, Jefferies, Verne, and Wells – were shaped by an emerging ecological discourse that viewed accelerating urbanism, industrialization, and consumerism with alarm, fearful of their long-term effects on environmental stability, biodiversity, and human survival. The continuing relevance of these concerns in our present moment is clear; we will find in these writers visions of possible ethical-ecological futures that are more reparative and resilient than those that have actually come to pass. I invite you to take part in a local initiative that will put the lessons of these texts into the contemporary context of climate crisis.

A growing body of scientific research has shown that planting new trees outside of existing forests and agricultural lands has the potential to increase global forest canopy by more than 25% and to reduce atmospheric carbon by as much as 25% at tree maturity. Tree restoration is among the most effective climate change mitigation solutions available to us.⁴ I encourage you to participate in a local initiative to increase tree cover in our region.

The Office of the Alachua County Arborist, Department of Parks and Conservation Lands, supervises volunteer tree plantings in and around the city of Gainesville. The plantings emphasize high-value tree species appropriate for site conditions on County owned right-of-ways, developed County properties, and properties directly influencing the public sphere. Of priority are trees that provide shade for bicycling and human pedestrians, provide erosion control, and support and contribute to wildlife biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

Tree plantings are fun, low-effort undertakings to beautify our community and to help foster a sustainable local ecosystem for decades to come. Pretty much, you help to dig a hole a few feet deep, drop in a juvenile tree, refill, brace, bank the tree with mulch, water, and repeat. No prior tree planting experience is necessary. Needed tools, gloves, reflective safety vests, potable water, and vegan snacks are provided. You should wear lightweight but sturdy outdoor clothing and closed-toed shoes. A hat, sunscreen, and insect repellent are recommended. Typically, a planting takes 3–4 hours, usually beginning around 9 AM. You must complete a volunteer release form before the planting begins. See <http://imagining-climate.clas.ufl.edu/trees> for planting dates and locations and for a

⁴ Bastin, Jean-François, *et al.*, “The Global Tree Restoration Potential.” *Science* 365, 76–79 (2019) <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/365/6448/76>.

photographic gallery of previous plantings. *The Office of the Alachua County Arborist is unaffiliated with the University of Florida.*

You will receive extra credit for participating in up to two sponsored plantings during the semester. For each planting, you will earn 2.5 points of extra credit applied *after* the calculation of your final grade. In other words, a student with a final average of 85 (a B+) who takes part in two plantings will have her or his grade raised to a 90 (an A).

If you are unable participate in the tree plantings, you may receive comparable extra credit for completing up to two short critical essays, as per requirements I will distribute separately. If you wish to pursue this option please arrange to meet with me to discuss it.

Course reading load & warning. The course reading load is substantial but not onerous. The pace of our discussions will vary according to the complexity of texts we read and the need to focus on selected portions of the texts. The page counts shown above are fair measures of reading load but they may be deceiving. Some of the texts we will read are illustrated, some – especially the electronic facsimiles of original editions – use larger margins and font sizes than would modern editions, some include extensive scholarly apparatus. (Which of course you *should* also read.) You should always aim to have completed reading each text by the last class period in which it is scheduled to be discussed.

A few of the texts we will read include representations of class, race, and gender that are by contemporary standards outdated and mildly offensive. Depictions of violence are limited to well-worn science fiction tropes (invading aliens, death rays, etc.).

Guest lecture by Erin Prophet. On April 3, the [Science Fiction Working Group](#) will sponsor a guest lecture by Erin Prophet (UF Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion), "From Theology to Fiction and Back Again: Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race* and Helena P. Blavatsky." **You are required to attend the lecture, which will be held during our usual Friday class meeting time but in a different location: Marston Science Library L-136.**

Grading scheme and graded assignments. The evaluation method in this course is consistent with UF's policies on grading

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

Grades are calculated on a numeric scale, as below:

A	90–100	A–	87–89		
B+	84–86	B	80–83	B–	77–79
C+	74–76	C	70–73	C–	67–69
D+	64–66	D	60–63	D–	57–59

A grade of 56 or below is a failing grade (E). A minimum final grade of C is required for General Education Credit.

If you do not complete an assignment, you will receive a grade of 0. If you feel that you've been unfairly graded on an assignment, you may make a case in writing for a better grade. I will consider no grade changes without this written rationale.

You may make up a missed exam only if you have a written medical excuse from a doctor, a signed letter from a judge or law enforcement officer (if you are called for jury duty or to testify in court, for example), or if a death or serious illness or injury occurs in your family. You should contact me as soon as possible when you anticipate a delay in submission of graded work.

Attendance & lateness. The texts and concepts we will review are complex and challenging. You cannot reasonably expect to master them if you do not keep up with required reading assignments and come to class prepared and on time. I do not give reading quizzes and I expect you to adhere to the calendar of assigned readings. Course lectures will often include discussion of materials not among the assigned readings. For these reasons, your presence in class is essential and is required. **I take attendance. After four missed class periods, I reserve the right to lower your final course grade by five points for each additional class period that you miss.** I treat excused and unexcused absences alike in this regard. It is your responsibility to keep track of your absences and to make sure that you complete all required work. If you must miss class, make sure that you turn in any assignments due for that day, and that you are ready if another assignment is due on the day you return to class. In the event of a prolonged illness or other emergency you should notify me as soon as possible so that we may make provisions to insure that you do not fall behind.

Lateness is disruptive to others in the classroom, and is strongly discouraged. If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, this will be considered an absence.

If you have special classroom access, seating, or other needs because of disability, do not hesitate to bring those to my attention so that I may make appropriate accommodations. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the UF Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) by providing appropriate documentation.

If you are unable to attend any part of a class meeting or work on a course assignment because these coincide with the timing of religious observances, you must notify me of this conflict well in advance, so that we may make appropriate adjustments to relevant assignment deadlines.

Use of computers and other electronic devices in class. You may use personal computers and other electronic devices in class for purposes related to class discussion and collaboration. Casual WWW browsing, emailing, chatting, texting, etc., unrelated to classroom activities will not be tolerated. In the event of a violation of this policy, I reserve the right to prohibit your individual use of all electronic devices in class. Apart from those times when I have approved their use in advance, cell phones, pagers, and similar communication devices may not be used during class meetings, and must be set to silent ring at the start of class.

Course evaluation. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Policy on academic honesty. The University community's policies and methods regarding academic honesty, your obligations to me and mine to you with regard to academic honesty, are clearly spelled out in the UF Student Honor Code, which is available online at <http://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>.

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in this course. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or oral information in the preparation of graded assignments submitted for this course.
- Substitution of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another individual or individuals.
- False claims of performance or work submitted by a student for requirements of this course.

I am obliged to act on any suspected act of academic misconduct. This may include a reduced or failing grade for the course as a whole or other disciplinary proceedings, as per the recommendation of the Dean of Students. If you have any concern that you may not have made appropriate use of the work of others in your research or writing for this course, please confer with me before you submit the assignment. You should retain all graded materials that you receive from me until you receive your final course grade.

Emergency services. U Matter, We Care serves as the umbrella program for UF's caring culture and provides students in distress with support and coordination of a wide variety of appropriate resources. Contact umatter@ufl.edu seven days a week for assistance if you are in distress. Call 352-392-1575 for a crisis counselor overnight and during weekends. Note also these support services:

- The University Counseling Center – 301 Peabody Hall, 352-392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu>
- Student Health Care Center – 352-392-1171
- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union – 352-392-1601
- Center for Sexual Assault/Abuse Recovery and Education (CARE), Student Health Care Center – 352-392-1161
- University Police Department – 352-392-1111 (non-emergency); *call 9-1-1 for emergencies*

Policy on environmentally unsustainable activity in the classroom. When possible I will distribute all course materials via paper-sparing digital media. I encourage you to purchase e-book editions of assigned texts when they are available, or used copies of print texts, and to return those to circulation if you choose not to keep them at the end of the course. (Donating your unwanted books to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale is a good way to get them into other readers' hands and to help raise a bit of cash for our county's excellent but criminally underfunded public libraries.) If you do elect to keep your books, share them with others after the course is over. And a final appeal to your common sense: bring food and/or beverages to the classroom only in reusable containers. Please, no food or beverages in single-use containers and no single-use, unrecyclable cutlery or straws.