

ENGL 250: Science Fiction (3 credits)

South Dakota State University

Fall 2017—Instructor: Steven Wingate, Associate Professor

Section 01 (89625) MWF 12:00-12:50 in Avera 027

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Course Description

From its beginnings in the 19th century with works such as *Journey to the Center of the Earth* by Jules Verne and *The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells (1895), the science fiction genre has been a playground for authors to explore essential questions about the capacities of our species, particularly how we may be changed by technology and what effects those changes might bring about in the way we conceive ourselves.

Science fiction is a broad genre with many permutations, definitions, and counter-definitions, and we will not attempt to explore the entire scope of it in this one-semester class. Instead, we will focus on a set of works in fiction and film that bring up immensely important questions about human self-definition and purpose.

This course meets **System Goal #4: Humanities and Arts/Diversity**. It is an introduction to the genre using landmark works from the twentieth century and contemporary works. I freely admit that I have chosen these works subjectively; I do not present them as a comprehensive examination of the science fiction canon.

Though this is not a creative writing course, it will be particularly valuable to students who are interested in writing science fiction and related genres. If you're one of those students, let me know; I may encourage you to focus on the worldbuilding aspects of the work that we read and view so that you can study how accomplished artists do it.

Course Prerequisites

Successful completion of ENGL 101 (or testing out at the university level), sufficient technology skills and access to technology to work with SDSU's Desire to Learn (D2L), media streaming, the Internet, and an SDSU email you check daily.

Description of Instructional Methods/Teaching Philosophy

This course will be discussion-based with some lectures sprinkled in. We will read or watch individual literary and cinematic works, then discuss them in a full-class setting. (Small-group work is also possible depending on how the class goes.) Throughout the class we will continually discuss possible topics for papers that arise from our discussions, as these are the assignments that will determine your grade.

In formulating these assignments you will have a tremendous amount of leeway, and we will have much back-and-forth conversation. Throughout my twenty-two years of college-level teaching, I have frustrated many students by not telling them exactly "what I want." This is by design. I purposely refrain from telling you exactly "what I want" for your assignments, because I do not believe that this is an effective method for teaching you to think critically or creatively. "What I want" is to you to figure out what you have to say about the works we are reading and watching, and articulate that as clearly as you possibly can.

Course Requirements

1. Required Textbooks, Films, and Supplies

We will read several works of science fiction and view several films, all of which we will be discussing in class (and which you'll write about). You'll need the following books, which we will read in this order:

- *The Science Fiction Hall of Fame, Vol. 1: 1929-1964* (978-0765305374), edited by Robert Silverberg. (Abbreviated *HOF* in your syllabus.)
- Phillip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (978-0345404473).
- William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (978-0441007462).
- Octavia E. Butler, *The Parable of the Sower* (978-0446675505).
- Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (978-0441007318).

These should be available at the SDSU Bookstore and Textbooks for Less, as well as other outlets, but **I cannot guarantee this**. You are responsible for getting your own textbooks in a timely manner so that your progress in the class is not interrupted.

We will also be discussing several films (some of which are related to the books above). **It is your responsibility to get hold of these films by renting or streaming them** (via Amazon, iTunes, Hulu, Netflix, etc.).

- *Blade Runner*, Ridley Scott (orig. 1982, but watch director's cut from 1992).
- *AI (Artificial Intelligence)*, Steven Spielberg (2001).
- *The Matrix*, the Wachowskis (1999).
- *Children of Men*, Alfonso Cuarón (2006)
- *Interstellar*, Christopher Nolan (2014).
- *Ex Machina*, Alex Garland (2015).
- *Arrival*, Denis Villeneuve (2016). Note: we will also read the story "Story of Your Life" by Ted Chiang, on which this film is based.

Please note that we may have other readings in addition to your textbooks, which I will post electronically on 2DL as PDF or web links.

2. Attendance/Classroom Behavior Policy

SDSU's full guidelines are available at <<http://catalog.sdsstate.edu/content.php?catoid=16&navoid=1094#Atten>>; see also "SDSU Attendance Policies" and "Student Athlete Class

Attendance Policies" on D2L. My more specific personal guidelines are below. If the student/athlete policy applies to you, inform me immediately. I will run this course like a business—this means that it's important for you to show up on time and follow basic rules:

- Don't listen to music, chat, talk on the phone, read non-class material, email, text, or web surf in the classroom. We will have designated time for your computers and handheld devices to work; at all other times they must be off. **A and B students don't text, tweet, Facebook, etc. in class.**
- You have three "free" absences (for which you will not be penalized) which you should keep track of yourself.
- **Students who miss more than three classes automatically receive 0% for "Attendance, Participation, and Intangibles"** (see "Assignments/Calculation of Grade" below), which reduces the overall grade. For each further class you miss beyond the fourth, your overall course grade will drop by 5%.
- I have the option to fail students who miss six classes. Those who miss more than six classes automatically fail the course except under verified extenuating circumstances that affect attendance in all classes (not just mine). **I expect that a university administrator (such as the Dean of Students or the Office of Academic Affairs) will inform me of such conditions.**
- Consistent lateness will be noted and will adversely affect your course grade. I will track your participation for the course and it will be factored into your grade (see "Grading Criteria" below).
- **You must complete all assignments for the class in order to pass it.** "Skipping" an assignment in an attempt to settle for a lower grade and reduce your workload will result in course failure. This includes the final exam.
- Keep in mind that if you are selected to lead a classroom discussion and have not done the reading, you will have a half-absence for the day as well consequences for your participation.
- Under certain circumstances, travel out of town or out of state for an employment or graduate school interview may be considered a university-excused absence. The University is formulating a policy on this. Please contact me well in advance of your travel if you fall into this category.

3. Academic Honesty Policy

Since you are free to write what you want in this class (hate speech excepted), I anticipate no problems with dishonesty. I will use [TurnItIn.com](#) as I see fit to compare your work to others that have been submitted in academic environments. My one rule beyond SDSU's stated policy (below) is that **you cannot hand in work you do for another class as original work for my class.** This applies both to work from this semester and from previous semesters (including outside SDSU). SDSU policy states that:

In written papers and other class projects (electronic format, hard copy or otherwise) it is unethical and unprofessional to present the work done by others in a manner that indicates that the students is presenting the material as his/her original ideas or work. Cheating, assisting others, or plagiarizing on tests, quizzes, problems, research papers, or other assignments will result in written notification to the student involved, the academic advisor, the department that offers the course, the appropriate College or Administrative Dean, and parent/guardian (when the students is a dependent for financial aid purposes). Plagiarizing is submitting uncited materials as your own work, which was in fact produced by others. Examples include uncited work from journals, books, work of others or electronic sources (World Wide Web (www), CD Rom, video and audio, graphic materials, etc.) In addition, the penalty for academic dishonesty may be one or more of the following, at the discretion of the instructor and based on the seriousness of the situation:

1. a grade of zero on the test, quiz, homework, problem or other assignment for the student(s) involved.

2. a grade of F for the course

3. referral of the matter to the Student Conduct Committee or the Graduate School for disciplinary action.

Students have the right to appeal an academic dishonesty charge. Procedures for this process are available in College Departmental Offices and the Dean's Office. No final course grades will be given until all avenues of appeal have been completed or the case resolved. If repeated offenses occur in either a specific class or in 2 or more different classes, the matter will be automatically referred to the Student Conduct Committee/Graduate School.

4. Key Deadlines

See <<https://www.sdsu.edu/sites/default/files/2017-2018%20Academic%20Calendar.pdf>> for official university calendar.

August 21, Monday: Start Date/Instruction Begins

August 31, Thursday: Last day to drop or add and adjust final fees

September 1, Friday: "W" grade begins

September 4, Monday: Labor Day Holiday

September 8, Friday: Last day to submit a graduation application for Fall 2017

October 9, Monday: Native American Day Holiday

October 13, Friday: First half Fall Term ends

October 18, Wednesday: Deficiency reports due on WebAdvisor by midnight

November 3, Friday: Last day to drop a course

November 10, Friday: Veterans' Day Holiday Observed

November 22-26, Wednesday - Sunday: Thanksgiving Recess

December 6, Wednesday: No classes; Final Exam Preparation

December 7-13*, Thursday-Wednesday: Final exams (*our date and time is Fri. Dec. 8 1:45 - 3:45pm*).

December 18, Monday: Grades due on WebAdvisor by midnight

Course Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

The SDSU 2017-18 catalog <<http://catalog.sdsu.edu>> lists English 250 as "A survey of short stories and novels from the 19th century to the present. Course meets **System Goal #4: Humanities and Arts/Diversity**."

SGR #4: Students will understand the diversity and complexity of the human experience through study of the arts and humanities.

Each course meeting this SGR goal includes student learning outcomes #1 and #2. We will also address #4 and #5.

Student Learning Outcomes: As a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will:

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of values, beliefs, and ideas embodied in the human experience;
- 2 Identify and explain basic concepts of the selected disciplines within the arts and humanities.
- 4 Demonstrate creative and aesthetic understanding;
- 5 Explain and interpret formal and stylistic elements of the literary or fine arts.

Evaluation Procedures

1. Grading Criteria

I will honestly assess your work in relation to that of other students (past and present) on similar kinds of projects. Neatness, both on a document and a sentence level, are important to me. I expect that students will work all semester to continually improve their mastery of the English language. ***Do not expect anything more than a C if you will not distinguish between "it's" and "its" or consistently make other such errors.***

Here is my basic rubric for determining your grades for projects. Please note that these criteria refer to a +/- system of grading, which I hope SDSU will begin using ASAP. Please also see SDSU's general grading rubric at <http://catalog.sdsu.edu/content.php?catoid=20&navoid=1523#Grad>

A work is stellar, memorable, and stands out from the crowd not only in a given class, but among all the students I have taught. I am stingy with this grade.

A- work is consistently excellent, but falls a bit shy of the highest level. A- students are helpful to their fellow students and leaders in the classroom. Their creative work impresses me and reads cleanly. Through their example, they make it easier for me to teach.

B+ work has strong potential, but doesn't meet it fully; the work often has many "holes" in it and doesn't hang together as well aesthetically. B+ students do most of what A- students do, but they aren't as consistently strong in the work they submit. They also don't quite reach the same "high notes" in their work for the class.

B work is solid, but doesn't excel. It often has issues with the level of polish and detail—it's disorganized, internally inconsistent, etc. B students put forth a solid effort and learn what I'm asking them to learn, but their work is not as fully realized as it ought to be; they may also have problems with consistency, with large gaps between their strongest work and their weakest.

B- work usually suffers from a significant lack of polish, as if the author didn't care to put forth the best work possible. B- students may "get" what I'm teaching, but they haven't put it together. Their work isn't particularly well polished and they frequently don't respond well (or at all) to critique. Many B- students have difficulty managing their time outside of school, and it shows.

C+ work is significantly off the mark: sloppy, aesthetically underdeveloped, etc. C+ students don't seem to "get" some part of the writing process—very often, they can't revise their work meaningfully. They also tend to put forth a lackadaisical effort in class and show up late, both in person and with assignments.

C (or less) work is only partially done and shows little sign of significant effort outside the classroom. It's not fun for me to give a C or less in a creative writing project or class, but I have to do it sometimes in order to preserve the value of the grades above it. Students who get this grade for the course have done something significantly wrong—missed time for no good reason, handed in scantly developed work with major flaws, missed or been irredeemably late with assignments.

F work is plagiarized, never handed in, or has been produced for another class. F students have typically failed to show up or to turn in assignments. They also don't take advantage of the opportunity to withdraw from classes when it is the wisest choice (due to multiple absences, for instance). As in life, you are ultimately on your own recognizance.

2. Assignments/Calculation of Grade

- I will provide more information about assignments as they approach.

- We will have many opportunities to talk (including office hours) as you develop each assignment.
- I strongly encourage you to pick topics of personal interest; it will be easier for you to do the work if you care.
- Remember to keep **all** of your work, including drafts, as computer files.

Short Paper (10%)

This will be a 3-4 page paper comparing at least two (but no more than three) readings from the *HOF* anthology. Citations of external critical sources are appreciated but not required.

Midterm Paper (20%)

You'll write a 6-8 page scholarly paper on a topic of your choice (analyzing a particular work in depth, or comparing two or three works to each other) with specific citations of original texts using outside sources (including those I have suggested about a given text).

Final Paper (30%)

Similar to your midterm paper, but 10-12 pages. I strongly discourage you from writing about the same topic you did for the first assignment, as history tells me that students reach a burnout point on a topic and need to refresh themselves. This project will be workshopped.

Weekly Assignments (20%)

During most weeks (unless there is a holiday or assignment due) you will be required to respond to prompts that I post on D2L (see the "Discuss" section in "Communications"). I will typically post questions by Monday evening, expect responses from you by Wednesday evening, and shut down commentary by Friday (this is to prevent students from avoiding work and going in to "backfill" later).

You should treat these weekly assignments like mini-papers. They will typically ask you to discuss how a given author explores a theme, or to compare different works to each other. I will assess this part of your classroom performance on the clarity of your self-expression and the degree to which to engage the ideas of both the artists we encounter and your fellow students.

Attendance, Participation, Intangibles (10%)

See the "Attendance and Classroom Behavior" section earlier for basic attendance guidelines. Participation refers to your degree of involvement in discussions (both online and in class) and intangibles generally refers to your preparation, classroom leadership, and improvement over the course of the semester. Note that this portion of the overall grade factors in most heavily when a student is straddling the boundaries between two grades (e.g., A and B). A student who has been a solid citizen will get the higher of those two grades, while a student who has not will get the lower.

Final Exam 10%

During exam time (Fri. Dec. 8 1:45 - 3:45pm) you will deliver a **rehearsed** five-minute "pitch" about a science fiction project—fiction, film, television, game, scholarly research project, etc.

You'll also hand in (to me only, during the final) a description of your project of no more than two pages that discusses the precedents of your proposed project and how it relates to the materials and concepts we've covered during the semester. See course schedule for final exam date.

3. Assignment Logistics

For prose assignments that you hand in to me on paper for feedback, use a **12pt font** with **double spacing** and print **single-sided** so that I can read and comment on them.

For projects that the entire class will workshop, we will distribute electronically via D2L as long as students remain responsible about it. Please upload **ONLY PDF FILES** to D2L so that everyone can read your work.

As a backup plan in case D2L does not work well, I may ask you to send me a copy of your work in **.PDF, .RTF, or .DOC format** by the due date/time. I will forward it to the class promptly via regular email. Please notify me of any problems with the D2L component immediately.

I will let you know via email and D2L of any changes to course materials or schedule.

Course Schedule

- This schedule is subject to change; I will notify you of any changes with ample time to prepare.
- Complete assigned readings by the designated date and bring them to class for discussion.
- It's never too early to come up with plans for your projects. Bring me ideas any time.

Monday, August 21

- ◆ Class nuts & bolts (closer examination of syllabus and D2L, etc.) and super-brief student intros.

Wednesday, August 23

- ◆ Slideshow: a completely subjective overview of science fiction and how we'll approach studying and writing about it.
- ◆ Introduction to short paper.
- ◆ Post approximately 200 words on your relationship with science fiction on D2L (see Communications, Discussion) by 5:00pm today and read/respond to each other's posts.
- ◆ Read Le Guin, introduction to Left Hand of Darkness (pp. xxx-xxx)

Friday, August 25

- ◆ Read "Nightfall" by Isaac Asimov (1941) in *HOF* and be prepared to discuss it in class.

Monday, August 28

- ◆ Read "Mars is Heaven!" by Ray Bradbury (1948) in *HOF* and be prepared to discuss it in class.
- ◆ I will post a discussion question for the week by 5:00pm today. (You will have a role in crafting the week's question throughout the semester.)

Wednesday, August 30

- ◆ Read "The Nine Billion Names of God" by Arthur C. Clarke (1953) and "Flowers for Algernon" by Daniel Keyes (1959) in *HOF* and be prepared to discuss them in class.
- ◆ Post your response to this week's question on D2L and read/respond to each other's posts. (Try to do this by class time each week.)

Friday, September 1

- ◆ Prepare to discuss your plans for the short paper (due Wednesday September 6).

Monday, September 4

No class: Labor Day

Wednesday, September 6

- ◆ Short paper due (to me, in class, on paper).
- ◆ Introduction to Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, and *Blade Runner*.

Friday, September 8

- ◆ Read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (pages 1-77) and be prepared to discuss.

Monday, September 11

- ◆ Read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (pages 78-168) and be prepared to discuss.
- ◆ I will post a discussion question for the week by 5:00pm today.

Wednesday, September 13

- ◆ Read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (pages 169-end) and be prepared to discuss.
- ◆ Note: see *Blade Runner* by Friday, September 15.
- ◆ Post your response to this week's question on D2L and read/respond to each other's posts.

Friday, September 15

- ◆ Discuss *Blade Runner* as a stand-alone work.

Monday, September 18

- ◆ Discuss *Blade Runner* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* as a pair.
- ◆ Note: see *AI (Artificial Intelligence)* by Wednesday, September 20.
- ◆ I will post a discussion question for the week by 5:00pm today.

Wednesday, September 20

- ◆ Discuss *AI (Artificial Intelligence)*.
- ◆ Post your response to this week's question on D2L and read/respond to each other's posts.

Friday, September 22

- ◆ Introduction to William Gibson, *Neuromancer*, and *The Matrix*.
- ◆ Introduction to paper #1 (due Friday, October 13)

Monday, September 25

- ◆ Read *Neuromancer* (pages 1-95) and be prepared to discuss.
- ◆ I will post a discussion question for the week by 5:00pm today.

Wednesday, September 27

- ◆ Read *Neuromancer* (pages 99-193) and be prepared to discuss.
- ◆ Post your response to this week's question on D2L and read/respond to each other's posts.

Friday, September 29

- ◆ Read *Neuromancer* (pages 194-end) and be prepared to discuss.
- ◆ Note: see *The Matrix* by Monday, October 2.

Monday, October 2

- ◆ Discuss *The Matrix*.
- ◆ I will post a discussion question for the week by 5:00pm today.

Wednesday, October 4

- ◆ Discuss *Neuromancer* and *The Matrix* as related works (though there is no direct adaptation).
- ◆ Post your response to this week's question on D2L and read/respond to each other's posts.

Friday, October 6

- ◆ In-class work on paper #1 (which you should have drafted by now).

Monday, October 9

No class: Native American Day

Wednesday, October 11

- ◆ Strategies for project completion and in-class work on paper #1.

Friday, October 13

- ◆ Paper #1 due (to me, in class, on paper).
- ◆ Introduction to Octavia Butler, *The Parable of the Sower*, *Children of Men*, and the fiction of environmental change.

Monday, October 16

- ◆ Read *The Parable of the Sower* (pages 1-99) and be prepared to discuss.
- ◆ I will post a discussion question for the week by 5:00pm today.

Wednesday, October 18

- ◆ Read *The Parable of the Sower* (pages 101-224) and be prepared to discuss.
- ◆ Post your response to this week's question on D2L and read/respond to each other's posts.

Friday, October 20

- ◆ Read *The Parable of the Sower* (pages 225-end) and be prepared to discuss.
- ◆ Note: See *Children of Men* by Monday, October 23

Monday, October 23

- ◆ Discuss *Children of Men*.
- ◆ I will post a discussion question for the week by 5:00pm today.

Wednesday, October 25

- ◆ Discuss *The Parable of the Sower Children of Men*, focusing on theme and worldbuilding.
- ◆ Post your response to this week's question on D2L and read/respond to each other's posts.

Friday, October 27

- ◆ Introduction to Ursula K. LeGuin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, and feminist science fiction.

Monday, October 30

- ◆ Read *The Left Hand of Darkness* (pages 1-96) and be prepared to discuss.
- ◆ I will post a discussion question for the week by 5:00pm today.

Wednesday, November 1

- ◆ Read *The Left Hand of Darkness* (pages 97-199) and be prepared to discuss.
- ◆ Post your response to this week's question on D2L and read/respond to each other's posts.

Friday, November 3

- ◆ Read *The Left Hand of Darkness* (pages 201-end) and be prepared to discuss.

Monday, November 6

- ◆ Introduction to recent science fiction film.
- ◆ Note: see *Interstellar* by Wednesday, November 8.
- ◆ I will post a discussion question for the week by 5:00pm today.

Wednesday, November 8

- ◆ Discuss *Interstellar*.
- ◆ Note: see *Ex Machina* by Monday, November 13.
- ◆ Post your response to this week's question on D2L and read/respond to each other's posts.

Friday, November 10

No class: Veterans' Day

Monday, November 13

- ◆ Discuss *Ex Machina*.
- ◆ Note: see *Arrival* and read "Story of Your Life" by Ted Chiang (see D2L) by Monday, November 15.
- ◆ Note: By this point you should have a clear idea of what you want to write for paper #2.

Wednesday, November 15

- ◆ Discuss *Arrival* and "Story of Your Life" (we will talk a bit about the adaptation).
- ◆ Post your response to this week's question on D2L and read/respond to each other's posts.

Friday, November 17

- ◆ Open discussion: Science Fiction in Television and Games continued. This is a great time for you to lead discussions about your favorite contemporary works.

Monday, November 20

- ◆ Open discussion: Science Fiction in Television and Games continued.

Wednesday, November 22-Friday November 24

No class: Thanksgiving

Monday, November 27

- ◆ We'll work on your papers in class. Bring a computer and whatever questions you have for me. Beyond this point we are completely dedicated to finishing your paper #2.

Wednesday, November 29

- ◆ I will meet with the second half of the class alphabetically (times/groups TBA) to discuss your paper #2. If not scheduled to meet with me, use this time to work on your paper.

Friday, December 1

- ◆ I will meet with the second half of the class alphabetically (times/groups TBA) to discuss your paper #2. If not scheduled to meet with me, use this time to work on your paper.

Monday, December 4

- ◆ Hand in paper #2 (in class, to me, on paper).
- ◆ Introduction to final exam.

Final Exam: (date Fri. December 8)

You will meet for your final exam from 1:45 - 3:45pm. See the project's description above in the section *Assignments/Calculation of Grade*.

ADA Statement

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact Nancy Hartenoff-Crooks, Coordinator of Disability Services (605-688-4504 or Fax, 605-688-4987) to privately discuss your specific needs. The Office of Disability Services is located in room 065, the Student Union.

Diversity and Inclusion

In this class, people of all ethnicities, gender identities, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and nationalities are strongly encouraged to share their perspectives and experiences. Over the course of the semester, please honor the uniqueness of your fellow classmates and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. If you feel your differences may in some way isolate you from South Dakota State University's community or if you have any specific accommodations, please speak with me about your concerns and what we can do together to help you become an active and engaged member of our class and community.

Freedom in Learning Statement

"Students are responsible for learning the content of any course of study in which they are enrolled. Under Board of Regents and University policy, student academic performance shall be evaluated solely on an academic basis and students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any courses of study. Students who believe that an academic evaluation is unrelated to academic standards but is related instead to judgment of their personal opinion or conduct should first contact the instructor of the course. If the student remains unsatisfied, the student may contact the department head and/or dean of the college which offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation."

Student Academic Integrity and Appeals

The University has a clear expectation for academic integrity and does not tolerate academic dishonesty. University Policy 2:4 sets forth the definitions of academic dishonesty, which includes but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, misrepresentations, and other forms of dishonesty relating to academics. The policy and its procedures also set forth how charges of academic dishonesty are handled at the University.

Academic Dishonesty is strictly proscribed and if found may result in student discipline up to and including dismissal from the University.

Final Exam Policy

Beginning Fall 2013, SDSU instituted new policies and procedures in regard to final exams containing the following language. "Final examinations are an integral part of the instructional program and should be given in all courses except in some cases such as laboratory, studio, capstone courses, seminars, colloquia and other independent learning credits, where a final examination may not be appropriate. Any instructor wishing to waive the rights to a final examination must do so by submitting a request as outlined under Procedures. The right to waive the final examination does not, however, preclude the requirement to hold class during final examination week for an alternative learning experience. The discipline is responsible for defining appropriate alternative learning experiences."

See <<https://www.sdsu.edu/policies/upload/Final-Examination.pdf>> for full details of this policy.

The final exam is a requirement for passing the class. Since students regularly ask to take their exams early so they can leave for vacations, I have included the following text from the official examination policy (with relevant text bolded).

Individual students may petition in writing for a variance from these policies, provided the instructor is satisfied that the exception is based on good and sufficient reasons, and that such an exception for an early or late examination will not prejudice the interests of other students in the course. **Reasons for individual students missing a scheduled examination will be handled by the department. Each department will decide what will, or will not, be an acceptable excuse and deal with individual hardship cases. Note that the SDSU Attendance Policy should be consulted for excused absences.** In the event of a department approved excuse, the instructor will decide the procedure necessary to complete the course requirement.

The English Department will not grant requests to reschedule exams so students can leave early because it against SDSU policy to excuse absences based on personal travel. Our attendance policy (which is posted in the "Nuts & Bolts" section of our D2L page) of 2010 states as follows.

Absence due to personal reasons: Any exceptions to the faculty member's written attendance policy due to verified medical reasons, death of a family members or significant other, or verified extenuating circumstances judged acceptable by the instructor or the Office of Academic Affairs, will be honored. If a student has an accident, falls ill, or suffers some other emergency over which he/she has no control, the student needs to gather whatever documentation is available (e.g., copies of repair or towing bills, accident reports or statements from health care provider) to show the instructor. Such exceptions must be communicated and negotiated between the student and faculty member prior to the absence whenever possible. ***Absences for vacations or breaks, personal interviews do not constitute a valid reason for absence.***

Academic Success/Early Alert

As your professor, my goals are to support your success in this course and provide a meaningful learning experience. For that reason, if there are academic performance concerns that may impede your success, I will communicate with you and those dedicated to supporting your success using ConnectState. Notifications will be sent to your jacks email account and can be reviewed in the ConnectState platform. If you receive a notification, please come see me or seek assistance from your advisor, the Student Success Center, or other campus resources.