

WGS 399--Feminist Science Fiction: Monsters, Cyborgs, and Women

Summer 2003 . . . M, T, W, Th—10:00-11:50 . . . 300 VIL . . . 4 credits . . . CRN: 41999

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Science fiction (SF) explores our hopes and fears surrounding technological development and its impact on society. From the inception of the genre, women writers have used SF to articulate their visions of scientific power and its relationship to women. Questions of science's capabilities fill Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, arguably the first SF novel. Like many SF novels by women, *Frankenstein* puts issues of science, creation, monstrosity, and gender at its center. This course will explore the legacy of *Frankenstein* in feminist theory and literature as well as in popular culture and will examine contemporary responses to issues of reproductive technology, genetic engineering, and cybernetics (among others). Although women are usually seen as marginalized in SF, this course seeks to demonstrate that the genre can give women a voice in scientific discourse and imagination.

Readings: The two novels are available at Smith Family Bookstore. Unless otherwise indicated, all readings are on regular and electronic reserve at the Knight Library. (The username for e-reserves is summer03 and the password is beach.) See course bibliography for more detailed information.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*

Piercy, Marge. *He, She, and It*

Reserve materials

Requirements:

Participation: (25%)

Short Responses: (30%) In-class writing assignments

Oral Presentation: (15%) 10-15 minute presentation

Final Paper: (30%) 5-7 page analytic essay (or short story)

Course Schedule: Please complete reading by date listed. Schedule subject to change.

Week 1	6/23	Introduction Reading: Tiptree, "The Women Men Don't See" (handout)
	6/24	FRANKENSTEIN Reading: Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> , Letter 1 - Chapter 6
	6/25	Reading: <i>Frankenstein</i> , Chapter 7 - 16
	6/26	Reading: <i>Frankenstein</i> , Chapter 17 - 24 Video: <i>Frankenstein</i>
Week 2	6/30	FRANKENSTEIN UPDATED Videos: excerpts from films that use "Frankenstein" motif Reading: Moore, "No Woman Born" McCaffrey, "The Ship Who Sang" OR Murphy, "Rachel in Love"
	7/1	FRANKENSTEIN'S CREATURE BECOMES A CYBORG Reading: Piercy, <i>He, She, and It</i> , Chapter 1 - 13
	7/2	Reading: <i>He, She, and It</i> , Chapter 14 - 26 Video: excerpts from <i>Blade Runner</i>
	7/3	NO CLASS
Week 3	7/7	Reading: <i>He, She, and It</i> , Chapter 27 - 49 Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto"
	7/8	CYBERPUNK Reading: Cadigan, "Rock On" Gibson, "Johnny Mnemonic" (optional)

		Video: excerpts from anime—TBA
7/9	STAR TREK: THE FANS, THE BORG	Reading: <i>Star Trek</i> slash (handout)
		Russ, "SF and Technology as Mystification" OR Sobstyl, "We Who Are Borg, Are We Borg?"
		Jenkins, "Television Fans, Poachers, Nomads" (optional)
		Video: <i>Star Trek</i> episode—TBA
7/10	ALIENS	Videos: excerpts from <i>Alien</i> , <i>Aliens</i> , <i>Alien 3</i>
		<i>Alien Resurrection</i>
Week 4	7/14	Video: <i>Alien Resurrection</i> , cont. Guest Speaker: Karelia Stetz
	7/15	REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES—FACT AND FICTION Reading: Butler, "Bloodchild"
	7/16	Presentations
	7/17	Presentations
	7/24	Final paper due no later than 5 pm

Course Bibliography:

- Butler, Octavia. "Bloodchild." *Women of Wonder: The Contemporary Years*. 1984. Ed. Pamela Sargent. San Diego: Harvest, 1995. 123-140.
- Cadigan, Pat. "Rock On." *Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology*. 1984. Ed. Bruce Sterling. New York, Ace Books, 1986. 34-42.
- Gibson, William. "Johnny Mnemonic." *Burning Chrome*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1986.
- Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. 1983. New York: Routledge, 1991. 149-81.
- Jenkins, Henry. "Television Fans, Poachers, Nomads." *The Subcultures Reader*. 1992. Ed. Ken Gelder and Sarah Thompson. London: Routledge, 1997. 506-522.
- McCaffrey, Anne. "The Ship Who Sang." *Women of Wonder: The Classic Years*. 1961. Ed. Pamela Sargent. San Diego: Harvest, 1995. 167-84.
- Moore, C. L. "No Woman Born." *Women of Wonder: The Classic Years*. 1944. Ed. Pamela Sargent. San Diego: Harvest, 1995. 21-64.
- Murphy, Pat. "Rachel in Love." 1987. *Women of Wonder: The Contemporary Years*. 1984. Ed. Pamela Sargent. San Diego: Harvest, 1995. 206-232.
- Piercy, Marge. *He, She, and It*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1991.
- Russ, Joanna. "SF and Technology as Mystification." *To Write Like a Woman: Essays in Feminist and Science Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. 26-40.
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. 1818. London: Penguin, 1994.
- Sobstyl, Edrie. "We Who Are Borg, Are We Borg?" *Athena's Daughters: New Women Warriors on Television*. Ed. Kathleen Kennedy and Frances Early. New York: SUNY Press, 2003. 119-132.
- Tiptree, Jr., James. "The Women Men Don't See." *Women of Wonder: The Classic Years*. 1973. Ed. Pamela Sargent. San Diego: Harvest, 1995. 308-334.
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