

The Physics of Hollywood

203-BWT-03 (all sections)

Fall 2013

Teachers	Rim Dib office 7A.20, local 1753, rdib@place.dawsoncollege.qc.ca Maria Dikeakos office 7A.10, local 1758, mdikeakos@place.dawsoncollege.qc.ca							
Pre-requisites	None							
Co-requisites	None							
Ponderation	3-0-3 (3 hours of lecture and 3 hours of work outside class per week)							
Course objectives	The objective of this course is to enable students to understand the general nature of current issues in science and technology and to explain some of these issues. To this end, students should learn how to characterize typical scientific thought processes and methods, illustrate how science and technology are complementary, explain the context and stages involved in some scientific and technological discoveries, and to deduce various consequences and questions arising from certain recent scientific and technological developments.							
Course competencies	At the conclusion of the course, each student will be able to produce a 750-word paper giving a written commentary presenting a scientific discovery or technological breakthrough. This commentary would give a brief explanation of the characteristics essential to scientific thinking, enumerate and briefly describe those of each major step in typical scientific process. It would contain definitions of the terms used and a description of the major relationships and logical and temporal links between science and technology. This commentary would also give a pertinent and coherent correlation of various scientific and technological discoveries and the surrounding context, enumerating the major steps involved in the discoveries. Finally, it would describe briefly the major consequences and challenges currently arising from these discoveries, and formulate pertinent and plausible elements of responses to them.							
Evaluation	<p>The Institutional Student Evaluation Policy (ISEP) is designed to promote equitable and effective evaluation of student learning and is therefore a crucial policy to read and understand. The policy describes the rights and obligations of students, faculty, departments, programs, and the College administration with regard to evaluation in all your courses, including grade reviews and resolution of academic grievance. ISEP is available on the Dawson website.</p> <table><tr><td>Quizzes</td><td>60%</td></tr><tr><td>In-class assignments and homework</td><td>25%</td></tr><tr><td>Final essay</td><td>15%</td></tr></table>		Quizzes	60%	In-class assignments and homework	25%	Final essay	15%
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	<p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At the end of every theme (approx. 2 weeks) there will be a quiz on the material in that theme. Dates for the quizzes will be announced at least one class in advance.• On a regular basis, students will be asked to complete small in-class assignments and activities.• The due date for the final essay will be specified by your teacher in the first week of class. <p>The student should be able to demonstrate a general understanding of the physical principles examined in each topic/theme, and to use this understanding to analyze the science portrayed in selected movies and television shows. Students will also produce one essay that is consistent with the level of a college student. In order to pass the course an average grade of 60% is required, calculated according to the evaluation scheme above.</p>							
Reference materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No required text book. Hand-outs will be distributed in class or posted online.• Reference texts:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Fantastic Voyages: Learning Science through Science Fiction Films (2nd ed.), Dubeck, Moshier & Boss, Springer-Verlag, 2004 (full text available on Google Books)2. The Physics of Star Trek and Beyond Star Trek, L.M. Krauss, Harper, 1995 (partial text available on Google Books)3. The Physics of Superheroes, J. Kakalios, Gotham Books, 2005							

Teaching methods	The course will explore the scientific method and particular topics in physics by exploring themes. Each theme will last about two to three weeks. Excerpts from movies and TV shows will be used to explore the ideas and misconceptions within a particular theme. Demonstrations and experiments will be performed to verify or refute what was seen in the clips. The bulk of the course material presented in class will be in the form of PowerPoint presentations and students will be asked to take an active role in the classroom.
Attendance & participation	<p>In order to be successful, students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and students are expected to participate actively in classroom discussions. Students should arrive on time for the lectures so as not to miss any part of the movie clips shown - these are central to the understanding of the course material. In the event that a class is missed, the student is responsible for all material covered or assigned during that class. Students who do not have prior permission from the teacher must write the complete assignments and quizzes as scheduled, except in the case of unforeseen emergencies (proper documents may be required for verification).</p> <p>On a regular basis, students will be asked to complete small assignments in class which will be marked for the in-class assignment marks. These small assignments can only be completed in class so attendance is important. The topic and nature of the assignment will be announced ahead of time but the assignment itself must be completed in class.</p> <p>At the end of every theme (approx. 2 weeks) there will be a quiz on the material in that theme. Students must write the quizzes at the scheduled times except for unforeseen emergencies confirmed by proper documents. For additional information students should refer to the Institutional Student Evaluation Policy (ISEP section III-C) regarding attendance.</p>
Literacy standards	It is expected that students will be able to comprehend the course material and express themselves appropriately as a normal part of their academic performance in the course. Marks may be deducted for inadequate communication skills.
Laboratory work	Experimentation is an essential part of science. Students will be expected to perform experiments and report on their results. Your teacher will provide you with instructions for lab experiments and activities (there is no manual to purchase). Information about lab report formats is available in the Science Student Handbook which is available on FirstClass (see folder in 'student info' conference). Students must be present during the entire lab activity to receive credit.
Student conduct	Everyone has the right to a safe and non-violent environment. Students are obliged to conduct themselves as stated in the Student Code of Conduct and in the ISEP section on the roles and responsibilities of students (ISEP section II-D). Disruptions or excessive noise will not be tolerated. Students who do not comply with these rules will be asked to leave the class and may be referred to Student's Services for disciplinary action. Mutual respect is the key to a harmonious learning environment.
Academic integrity	Cheating, copying, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students should acquaint themselves with the policy of the College on plagiarism and cheating. According to ISEP, the teacher is required to report to the Sector Dean all cases of cheating and plagiarism affecting a student's grade (ISEP section IV-C). The usual penalty for the first instance of cheating will be a grade of zero for the piece of work in question to all parties involved (under certain circumstances, even a first offence may be penalized by failure in the course). A second offence may result in the failure of the course. Students should note that using someone else's laboratory data without authorization from the student and the teacher is cheating.
Intensive course conflicts	If a student is attending an intensive course, the student must inform the teacher, within the first two weeks of class, of the specific dates of any anticipated absences.
Policy on religious observance	Students who intend to observe religious holidays must inform their teachers in writing as prescribed in the ISEP Policy on Religious Observance (ISEP Section III-D), within the first two weeks of the semester. Forms for this purpose are available from your teacher. Your teacher will inform you of any modifications to planned course activities resulting from the teacher's own religious commitments.

**Course
content**

Movies and television shows sometimes take great liberties when it comes to the laws of physics or in portraying science, but they also get it right sometimes. When are they right and when are they wrong?

Are they sometimes only partly right and partly wrong? This course will explore science and physics through movies and television shows. Both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of science and physics will be explored however, students are only expected to use basic math and simple calculations (advanced math is *not* required).

Most of the course material will be presented in themes with each lasting about two weeks and involving a specific topic. There will be approximately 5 to 7 themes explored in this course and they will be chosen from the following:

- The scientific method
- How to describe motion
- Gravity, forces and projectile motion
- Energy and laws of conservation
- Atomic, nuclear and particle physics
- Waves (sound waves, light waves, lasers, optics)
- Properties of matter and phase transitions
- Tunneling and quantum physics
- The stars and the universe; cosmology
- Size and scaling
- Time travel, causality and relativity
- Means of transportation

**Questions
outside class**

- All teachers will be available in their respective offices to their students during posted office hours. In the first week, your teacher will inform you of their schedule and will post it outside their office.
- Room 7A.1 is a physics study room. At scheduled times, a teacher or peer tutor will be on duty there to answer your questions. The schedule of teachers and peer tutors will be posted outside of 7A.1 in the 2nd or 3rd week of term.
- Many teachers in the Science Program – including those from the Physics Department – will communicate with their students via FirstClass. This software allows teachers and students to share information, use email and much more. You can download the necessary (free) software at the following website:

<http://www.place.dawsoncollege.qc.ca>

An instruction manual is available at this website that details how to install and use the software. Also note that a FirstClass app is available for iPhone/iPad, Android, and BlackBerry.