

English 389R: Special Topics—Myth, Fantasy, Science Fiction
Professor Gretchen Schulz

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Texts:

Frankenstein. Mary Shelley.
Dracula. Bram Stoker.
He, She, and It. Marge Piercy.
The Vampire Lestat. Anne Rice.
The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring. J.R.R. Tolkien.
Snow Crash. Neal Stephenson.
The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. Douglas Adams.
Dune. Frank Herbert.
The Eye of the World. Robert Jordan.
Masterpieces: The Best Science Fiction of the Century. Ed. Orson Scott Card.

Jan. 14 introduction to the course
Jan. 16 Frankenstein on film

Jan. 19 Martin Luther King's Birthday
Jan. 21 Frankenstein
Jan. 23 Frankenstein

Jan. 26 Dracula
Jan. 28 Dracula
Jan. 30 Dracula on film

Feb. 02 Masterpieces
Feb. 04 Masterpieces
Feb. 06 Masterpieces; possible essay 1 due

Feb. 09 He, She, and It
Feb. 11 He, She, and It
Feb. 13 He, She, and It

Feb. 16 The Vampire Lestat
Feb. 18 The Vampire Lestat
Feb. 20 The Vampire Lestat; possible essay 1 due

Feb. 23 Masterpieces
Feb. 25 Masterpieces
Feb. 27 Masterpieces

Mar. 01 The Fellowship of the Ring
Mar. 03 The Fellowship of the Ring
Mar. 05 The Fellowship of the Ring; possible essay 2 due

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 8-12

Mar. 15 Snow Crash
Mar. 17 Snow Crash
Mar. 19 Snow Crash

Mar. 22 Masterpieces

Mar. 24 Masterpieces
 Mar. 26 Masterpieces; possible essay 2 due

Mar. 29 Masterpieces
 Mar. 31 sci fi on film
 Apr. 02 sci fi on film

Apr. 05 Dune
 Apr. 07 Dune
 Apr. 09 day for sharing your material

Apr. 12 The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
 Apr. 14 The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
 Apr. 16 sci fi on film

Apr. 19 day for sharing your material
 Apr. 21 The Eye of the World
 Apr. 23 The Eye of the World

Apr. 26 The Eye of the World
 Apr. 28 reading day; essay 3 due

Apr. 29 final exam: Thursday, 9:00-12:00

Course Requirements:

The successful completion of English 389R will require the following of each student enrolled in the course:

1. close reading of the literary works assigned
2. numerous brief quizzes on these works
3. frequent intelligent contribution to in-class discussion of these works
4. occasional facilitation of in-class discussion of these works
5. preparation of three critical or creative essays on these works
6. preparation of a fantasy or sci fi work of your own (to be shared with all)
7. completion of a comprehensive final exam

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, you should have developed your ability to read closely and analytically, to think critically and creatively, and to write persuasively, in critical or creative modes, selecting, organizing, and presenting evidence sufficient to support (or suggest) meaningful theses in clear, correct, and effective prose, while acknowledging any sources used with appropriate documentation. You should also have developed your ability to contribute meaningfully to class discussion about the works we're dealing with and to facilitate that discussion upon occasion. Finally, you should end the semester familiar with some of the best mythic material in the genres of fantasy and science fiction, from earlier times down to the present day.

Policy on Attendance:

You may have two absences with no penalty (though you will be considered responsible for work done or due in class on any day you miss for any reason and responsible for informing yourself about any assignments or announcements made on days which you miss). Absences three and four will count 1 point each off of your final grade in the course. Absences five and six will count 2 points each off. Further absences will count 3 1/3 points each off. Only significant illness, major emergency, or required religious observance will excuse an absence. And you should inform me of the latter ahead of time. Students who come to class late are responsible for asking me to correct the attendance record right after class. I will not change that record at a later date. Frequent tardiness will result in penalty, too.

Policy on Late or Missing Work:

Only significant illness or major emergency will excuse late essays. Essays whose lateness is unexcused will lose one letter grade for each calendar day they are late. After four days, unexcused late essays will not be accepted at all. Furthermore, please note that essays undone or done too late to count may not be made up by means of the make-up essay. Only an essay which has been done and properly submitted (in time to count) may be made up.

Missed quizzes may not be made up at all—unless the absence is excused. Quizzes missed during an unexcused absence will receive a zero.

Missed facilitations will lower your class participation grade significantly —unless you offer a valid excuse. And if you know you're going to miss a facilitation, I will expect you to make every effort to have someone else facilitate for you.

Determination of Final Grade:

three essays @ 18% each	54%
a work of fantasy or sci fi	10%
class participation (including regular participation in and occasional facilitation of discussion)	18%
reading quizzes	08%
final exam	10%

You will be graded (in part) on three essays (of a minimum of 1000 words each). Each of the three essays may be submitted on one of two possible due dates for the essay. See the syllabus for the possible due dates. Topics for each due date will be distributed well ahead of time. The instructor will be available to advise you well ahead of time, too. Each of these three essays will be worth 18% of your final grade in the course.

Should you be dissatisfied with your performance on any one of these essays, you may submit a fourth essay, a make-up essay, on any course work or works about which you have not already written an essay. If the make-up essay receives a higher grade than an earlier essay, the higher grade will be substituted for the lower one. The make-up essay may be submitted at any time during the semester, up to and including the morning of the final exam, April 29. Again, please note that only an essay which has received a grade earlier in the semester may be replaced with a make-up essay. An undone/ungraded essay may not be made up in this way.

Each of you will also be expected to write a work of fantasy or science fiction or to describe what you would write if you could (and you will also be expected to share what you have written and/or would write with the rest of the class). We will talk more about this assignment later. It will be worth 10% of your grade.

Another 18% of your grade will reflect the quantity and quality of your regular contributions to the in-class discussion of the works assigned in the course as well as the success with which you facilitate the class discussion on the occasions when you are expected to do so.

You will also be graded on a series of short-answer quizzes, usually given on the first day a particular work is to be discussed. Your average on these reading quizzes will constitute another 8% of your grade in the course.

The final exam for the course is scheduled for Thursday morning, April 29, between 9:00 and 12:00. It will be a comprehensive exam involving identification of and commentary upon passages from works we have read

and one or more longer essays, pulling together the reading and thinking we have done during the semester. The exam will be worth 10% of the final grade.

You may also earn up to 2 points of extra credit in the course by seeing videos and films that relate to the material we're dealing with in the course—other than any videos and films required as a part of the course. We may wish to schedule some group viewings, but you are welcome to attend or to rent things on your own, as well. You will earn 1/2 point for each such item seen. Just keep track of what you see and report it to me at the end of the term.

I will be grading the work you submit to me-- and assigning your final grade in the course-- using the plus/minus grading system.

Please note that all work for the course must be done in accordance with the dictates of the Honor Code of the College. Your name on any work you do for the course constitutes an Honor pledge.