

Please Note: This *Class Syllabus* is an important step in updating the format of our distance classes. If for any reason the *Class Syllabus* does not match the print *Course Guide* or online class information, the *Class Syllabus* shall be taken as correct.

## CLASS SYLLABUS

<b>COURSE TITLE:</b>	Fantasy and Speculative Fiction	<b>TERM:</b>	Winter 2015
<b>COURSE CODE:</b>	ENG 226	<b>DELIVERY:</b>	Online
<b>COURSE CREDITS:</b>	3	<b>START DATE:</b>	January 5, 2015
<b>COURSE SECTION:</b>	W02	<b>END DATE:</b>	April 8, 2015

### Course Description

Examines literary genres that explore alternative worlds, experiment with the bounds of the real, and challenge the norms of reading. The course moves from precursors in legend, folktale, and romance, to Victorian fantasy, science fiction, utopian and dystopian fiction, and late 20-Century feminist revisionary narratives.

**Pre-requisites:** 6 credit units of 100-level ENG; or 3 credit units of 100-level ENG and INTS 101.

### Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this class, students should be able to:

1. Read critically both in terms of close reading and understanding fantasy and speculative fiction through contemporary contexts.
2. Write grammatically correct, well-organized, analytical essays with a research component.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the works of literature studied in terms of how and why their alternative worlds connect to larger historical, artistic, scientific, and intellectual trends and movements.

### Class Overview

The class explores classic texts in science fiction, fantasy, utopian and dystopian fiction, First Nations speculative fiction and feminist narratives.

## Your Instructor

Dr. Jesse Stothers

## Contact Information

Phone: 306-966-1464

Email: [jds136@mail.usask.ca](mailto:jds136@mail.usask.ca)

## Contact Hours

Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. by email

## Profile

I have an M.Phil. in Anglo-Irish Literature from Trinity College, Dublin, and a Ph.D. in English from the University of Saskatchewan. My areas of specialization include modern British and Irish Literature, Myth and Religion in Literature, Speculative Fiction, and Cultural History. I have been a Sessional Lecturer with the Department of English, University of Saskatchewan, since 2002, in addition to teaching Business and Technical Writing for the Centre for Continuing and Distance Education. I have also worked extensively in the literary publishing and advertising industries. I reside in Saskatoon.

## Required Resources

### Readings/Textbooks

1. Tolkein, J.R.R., *The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring*, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-00-748830-8.
2. Tolkein, J.R.R., *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-00-748834-6.
3. Tolkein, J.R.R., *The Lord of the Rings: Two Towers*, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-00-748832-2.
4. Martin, George R.R. *A Game of Thrones: A Song of Ice and Fire (Book One)*. Bantam, 1997. ISBN: 978-0-553-57340-4.
5. Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Lathe of Heaven*. Scribner, 2008. ISBN: 978-1-4165-5696-6.
6. Herbert, Frank. *Dune*. Ace, 2002. ISBN: 978-0-441-17271-9.

Textbooks are available from the University of Saskatchewan Bookstore:

[www.usask.ca/consumer\\_services/bookstore/textbooks](http://www.usask.ca/consumer_services/bookstore/textbooks)

## Electronic Resources

Department of English, *Requirements for Essays*,

<http://artsandscience.usask.ca/english/pdf/RequirementsForEssays.pdf>

**Some readings in this course will be available electronically. The links and PDFs will be provided for you in your online course**

## Downloads

Some downloads may require Adobe Reader. To install this software, click this link and follow the download and installation instructions: <http://get.adobe.com/reader>.

## Supplementary Resources

See the modules in Blackboard.

## Class Schedule

Week	Module	Readings	Evaluation Due Date
January 5-16 2015	Module 1 Science Fiction and the Short Story	H.G. Wells, "The Star" pp. 35-58 <a href="http://www.gutenberg.org/files/27365/27365-h/27365-h.htm#Page_35">http://www.gutenberg.org/files/27365/27365-h/27365-h.htm#Page_35</a>  Isaac Asimov, "Reason" <b>[PDF in Blackboard]</b>  James Gunn, "The Man Who Invented Tomorrow" (H.G. Wells biography): <a href="http://www.sfcenter.ku.edu/tomorrow.htm">http://www.sfcenter.ku.edu/tomorrow.htm</a>  NNDB Isaac Asimov biography: <a href="http://www.nndb.com/people/702/000023633/">http://www.nndb.com/people/702/000023633/</a>	Discussion Assignment (2.5% of final grade) due midnight January 16.  Provide an online posting of 100-150 words on one of four topics.
January 19-23 2015	Module 2 <i>Dune</i> : Heroic Future Myth	Frank Herbert, <i>Dune</i> <b>[Textbook]</b>  Frank Herbert Biography at NNDB: <a href="http://www.nndb.com/people/717/000023648/">http://www.nndb.com/people/717/000023648/</a>	Discussion Assignment (2.5% of final grade) due midnight January 23.  Provide an online posting of 100-150 words on one of four topics.

January 26-30 2015	Module 3  <i>Dune</i> : Human and Ecological Systems	Frank Herbert, <i>Dune</i> <b>[Textbook]</b>	Discussion Assignment (2.5% of final grade) due midnight January 30.  Provide an online posting of 100-150 words on one of four topics.
February 2-6 2015	Module 4  Dystopian Utopias	Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" <b>[PDF in Blackboard]</b>  Shirley Jackson, "The Lottery" <b>[PDF in Blackboard]</b>  William James, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life": <a href="http://www.philosophy.uncc.edu/mleldrid/American/mp&amp;ml.htm">http://www.philosophy.uncc.edu/mleldrid/American/mp&amp;ml.htm</a>	Essay #1 on Modules 1-4 (20% of final grade); 750-1,000 words. Due midnight February 6.  Topics provided on a Word document.
February 10-13 2015	Module 5  Utopian Dreaming	Ursula K. Le Guin, <i>The Lathe of Heaven</i> <b>[Textbook]</b>  Chapter 3 from Sigmund Freud's <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i> <a href="http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Interpretation_of_Dreams/Chapter_3">http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Interpretation_of_Dreams/Chapter_3</a>  Essay on Carl Jung's Dream Theory: <a href="http://www.dreamresearch.ca/pdf/jung.pdf">http://www.dreamresearch.ca/pdf/jung.pdf</a>	Discussion Assignment (2.5% of final grade) due midnight February 13.  Provide an online posting of 100-150 words on one of four topics.
February 16-20 2015	Midterm Break - No Evaluations Due		
February 23-27 2015	Module 6  The Genesis of Modern Fantasy	J.R.R. Tolkien, <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> <b>[Textbook]</b>	Discussion Assignment (2.5% of final grade) due midnight February 27.  Provide an online posting of 100-150 words on one of four topics.
March 2-6 2015	Module 7  Fantasy Heroes	J.R.R. Tolkien, <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> <b>[Textbook]</b>	Discussion Assignment (2.5% of final grade) due

	and Journeys		midnight March 6.  Provide an online posting of 100-150 words on one of four topics.
March 9-13 2015	Module 8  First Nations and Speculative Fiction	Gerald Vizenor, "Custer on the Slipstream" <b>[PDF in Blackboard]</b>  Sherman Alexie, "Distances" <b>[PDF in Blackboard]</b>  Eden Robinson, "Terminal Avenue" <b>[PDF in Blackboard]</b>	Essay #2 on Modules 5-8 (20% of final grade); 750-1,000 words. Due midnight March 13.  Topics provided on a Word document.
March 16-27 2015	Module 9  Speculative Fiction, Politics and the Sword	George R.R. Martin, <i>A Game of Thrones</i> <b>[Textbook]</b>	Discussion Assignment (2.5% of final grade) due midnight March 27.  Provide an online posting of 100-150 words on one of four topics.
March 30-April 8 2015	Module 10  Speculative Fiction and Popular Culture	George R.R. Martin, <i>A Game of Thrones</i> <b>[Textbook]</b>	Discussion Assignment (2.5% of final grade) due midnight April 8.  Provide an online posting of 100-150 words on one of four topics.
	FINAL EXAM		(Exact date/time TBA)

*Note: If for any reason the Class Syllabus Reading List does not match the Module Reading List, the Class Syllabus shall be taken as correct.*

## Grading Scheme

Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	20%
Discussions (8 @ 2.5% each)	20%
Final Exam	40%
Total	100%

Information on literal descriptors for grading at the University of Saskatchewan can be found at: <http://students.usask.ca/current/academics/grades/grading-system.php>

Please note: There are different literal descriptors for undergraduate and graduate students.

More information on the Academic Courses Policy on course delivery, examinations and assessment of student learning can be found at: <http://policies.usask.ca/policies/academic-affairs/academic-courses.php>

The University of Saskatchewan Learning Charter is intended to define aspirations about the learning experience that the University aims to provide, and the roles to be played in realizing these aspirations by students, instructors and the institution. A copy of the Learning Charter can be found at: <http://policies.usask.ca/documents/LearningCharter.pdf>

## Evaluation Components

### CCDE Writing Centre - Quality writing help for free!

Anyone taking a distance class (online, independent studies, televised, or multi-mode delivery) administered by the CCDE can use this free service. The Writing Centre provides tools and support to help you write effective essays, reports, or reviews. Simply submit a project draft, and a qualified tutor will assess your work and offer advice to improve your project. Contact the CCDE Writing Centre at <http://www.ccde.usask.ca/writing>

### Formal Requirements:

1. Study the required texts.
2. Submit 2 essays and 8 online postings on the appropriate dates. Late penalties of 2% per academic day will apply to essays/assignments submitted after the due dates. No essays/assignments will be accepted after April 8, 2015. Incomplete course work will result in a grade of not exceeding 49%.
3. Write a three-hour final examination online in April.

In this class you are required to submit 2 essays, do 8 online postings, and write a final examination.

## Essay 1

**Value:** 20% of final grade  
**Due Date:** See Class Schedule  
**Purpose:** Write an essay on Modules 1-4.

**Length:** 750 words.

### Description:

For this essay you will choose one of the following literary works to write on:

- H.G. Wells, “The Star”
- Isaac Asimov, “Reason”
- *Dune* by Frank Herbert
- “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson
- “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” by Ursula K. Le Guin

Analyze one of the above texts in terms of one (or more, the choice is yours) of the following general topic areas, and make sure you focus in and be very specific while avoiding merely repeating back the deliberately broad topic. These are simply areas of interest within which you must craft a much more focused, specific, analytical (why) thesis.

1. Analyze your chosen literary text in terms of its exploration of science.
2. Analyze how and why your chosen literary text explores reason and/or religion.
3. Analyze how and why your chosen literary text explores politics.
4. Analyze how and why your chosen literary text explores myth.
5. Analyze how and why your chosen literary text explores the theme of place and/or the science of ecology.
6. Analyze your chosen literary text in terms of its utopian and/or dystopian vision.
7. Analyze the relationship between the human and the non-human or extra-human in your chosen literary text.
8. Analyze the role played by gender in your chosen literary text.
9. Analyze your chosen text in terms of its place in the broader history of its genre.

Be sure to have a clear, specific thesis to argue that is centred on interpreting the literary text and its context. English essays do not merely state what is happening and never summarize the text as you assume your reader has already read it. Instead, analyze in your thesis and throughout the essay **why** the author does what you describe. **Note:** You may ask for feedback from the instructor on your thesis by email at any time up to two days before the due date.

**Your essay must be MLA style and conform to the standards of presentation outlined in the Department of English handbook *Requirements for Essays* (see link in Course Syllabus). Also, please review the Writing Taboos provided in the Additional Information section in this syllabus for further advice.**

You may use secondary sources such as those assigned on the course or others you have found, but this is not a requirement of the assignment. If you use secondary sources be sure to cite them properly according to MLA style to avoid plagiarism.

For the Marking Abbreviations on your graded essays, please see the list of these in the Additional Information section of this syllabus.

## Essay 2

**Value:** 20% of final grade  
**Due Date:** See Class Schedule  
**Purpose:** Write an essay on Modules 5-8.  
**Length:** 750 words.

### Description:

For this essay you will choose one of the following literary works to write on:

- *The Lathe of Heaven* by Ursula K. Le Guin
- *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien
- “Custer on the Slipstream” by Gerald Vizenor
- “Distances” by Sherman Alexie
- “Terminal Avenue” by Eden Robinson

Analyze one of the above texts in terms of one of the following general topic areas, and make sure you focus in and be very specific while avoiding merely repeating back the deliberately broad topic. These are simply areas of interest within which you must craft a much more focused, specific, analytical (why) thesis.

1. Analyze the role played by Eastern religion and philosophy in Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Lathe of Heaven*.
2. Analyze dreaming and its connections to utopian and dystopian world creation in Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Lathe of Heaven*.
3. Analyze social engineering in one of the above-listed literary texts.
4. Analyze a specific historical source or context for J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*.
5. Analyze J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* in terms of its subsequent impact on the development of fantasy fiction and/or film.
6. Analyze a central myth-pattern in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*.
7. Analyze the relationship between actual history and its re-writing in Gerald Vizenor’s “Custer on the Slipstream”, Eden Robinson’s “Terminal Avenue”, or Sherman Alexie’s “Distances”.
8. Analyze Gerald Vizenor’s “Custer on the Slipstream”, Eden Robinson’s “Terminal Avenue”, or Sherman Alexie’s “Distances” in terms of how it engages with the political realities faced by the First Nations in the past and/or the contemporary world when the story was first published.



9. Analyze Gerald Vizenor's "Custer on the Slipstream", Eden Robinson's "Terminal Avenue", or Sherman Alexie's "Distances" in terms of how and why it subverts the dominant Western narrative concerning the First Nations.

10. Create your own thesis addressing one of the above literary texts. If you choose this option, you must clear the topic and thesis with the instructor no less than three days before the essay due date.

Be sure to have a clear, specific thesis to argue that is centred on interpreting the literary text and its context. English essays do not merely state what is happening and never summarize the text as you assume your reader has already read it. Instead, analyze in your thesis and throughout the essay **why** the author does what you describe. **Note:** You may ask for feedback from the instructor on your thesis by email at any time up to two days before the due date.

**Your essay must be MLA style and conform to the standards of presentation outlined in the Department of English handbook *Requirements for Essays* (see link in Course Syllabus). Also, please review the Writing Taboos provided in the Additional Information section in this syllabus for further advice.**

You may use secondary sources such as those assigned on the course or others you have found, but this is not a requirement of the assignment. If you use secondary sources be sure to cite them properly according to MLA style to avoid plagiarism.

For the Marking Abbreviations on your graded essays, please see the list of these in the Additional Information section of this syllabus.

## Discussions

**Value:** 20% of final grade

**Due Date:** See Class Schedule

**Purpose:** One 100-150 word paragraph responding to one of the assigned discussion topics. For Modules 1-3, 5-7, and 9-10.

**Description:** See the Discussion Forums in Blackboard for details.

## Final Exam

**Value:** 40% of final grade

**Date:** See Class Schedule

**Length:** 3 hours

**Purpose:** The exam is comprehensive.

**Description:** You will write two essays on works of literature for which you have not previously submitted an essay in the course (but one essay must be on the material covered in Modules 9 and 10). The exam will be delivered, written, and submitted online through Blackboard, is open-book, and you will have three hours to complete it.

Term 2 examination period runs from April 11-30, 2015. Date and time of your online final examination will be posted in the Final Examination schedule in your PAWS account in early February. More details will also be posted in your online class.

## **Submitting Assignments**

Electronically to your instructor in the Blackboard Learn system or by email attachment.

You should keep a personal copy of all assignments submitted.

## **Additional Information**

### **Must Pass Information**

Any components of course evaluation not completed will receive a grade of zero.

All assignments must be completed and submitted no later than April 8, 2015. Competence must be shown in critical analysis, language skills and composition; see the Standards for Composition later in this syllabus.

### **Expectations**

Students are expected to complete all written assignments and examinations. The university regulations concerning examinations are available at <http://students.usask.ca/academic/exams>. See especially sections 1.47a.i and iii.

Please notify the instructor beforehand whenever possible of any significant circumstances that might interfere with your academic progress

### **Extensions and Late Assignments**

Late penalties of 2% per academic day will apply to essays and Module postings submitted after the due dates. No assignments will be accepted after April 8, 2015.

The student is responsible for submitting all the assignments. Assignments not submitted will count as zero in the calculation of the final grade, and no term work will be accepted after the date of the final examination. Essays and Module postings must be submitted on the date specified, and no extensions will be given without a documented reason. If a student wishes to hand in an essay or Module posting late, she or he must obtain the permission of the instructor and provide evidence (such as a doctor's certificate) of a good reason. Late assignments will be docked 2% per day.

Note: Students should keep copies of all assignments submitted until the course is completed.

### **Writing Taboos**

- Develop ideas fully and logically and do not summarize the plot. Interpret and argue.
- Avoid generalizations.
- Do not speculate on possibilities outside the text unless directly relevant to your thesis.
- Avoid irrelevant comparisons between the text and today, as well as vapid, politically correct conclusions. You are not writing an after-school TV special.
- Do not get into over-simplified “this vs. that” constructions.
- Avoid pointing out mere similarity and difference.
- Do not think, state. In other words, avoid weakening your ideas by using words like “possible”, “seems”, “perhaps”, “maybe”, etc. These reduce your analysis to mere opinion.
- For the same reason, do not use “I” in your writing.
- Use specific, relatively short quotations from the text to support your ideas. Introduce quotes fully and proceed to explain their relevance.
- Do not begin or end paragraphs with quotes.
- Avoid rhetorical questions.
- Avoid repeating words, phrases and ideas.
- Avoid always describing events in the text as “starting”, “beginning”, etc.
- Use gender-neutral language.
- Use language accurately and precisely, and avoid clichés.
- Do not overuse the verb “to be”.
- Refer to an author initially by full name, then only by last name afterwards.
- Do not use contractions.
- Do not insert an extra space after periods and between paragraphs.
- Proofread thoroughly and repeatedly.

## Marking Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Grammatical Error
AWK	awkward phrasing or poor syntax
SF	sentence fragment
CS	comma splice
PE	punctuation error
SP	spelling error
REP	repetition of words, phrases or ideas
VOCAB	poor vocabulary
RUN-ON	run-on sentence
FS	fused sentence
SI	split infinitive
COLL	colloquial diction/slang
VT	verb-tense error

## Standards for Composition

To pass English 226.3, a student must by the end of the class have shown competence in the following:

1. organizing an essay on a set topic, developing ideas logically and systematically, and supporting these ideas with the necessary evidence, quotations, or examples;
2. organizing a paragraph;
3. documenting essays using the MLA method;
4. writing grammatical sentences, avoiding such mistakes as the following:
  - i. comma splices, run-on sentences, and sentence fragments
  - ii. faulty agreement of subject and verb or pronoun and antecedent
  - iii. faulty or vague reference (e.g., vague use of this, that, or which)
  - iv. shifts in person and number, tense, or mood
  - v. dangling modifiers;
5. spelling correctly; and
6. punctuating correctly.

## Students with Disabilities

Students who have disabilities (learning, medical, physical, or mental health) are strongly encouraged to register with Disability Services for Students (DSS) if they have not already done so. Students who suspect they may have disabilities should contact DSS for advice and referrals. In order to access DSS programs and supports, students must follow DSS policy and procedures. For more information, check <http://www.students.usask.ca/disability/>, or contact DSS at 966-7273 or [dss@usask.ca](mailto:dss@usask.ca).

## A Friendly Reminder about Plagiarism

You are plagiarizing if you present the words or thoughts of someone else as if they were your own (exceptions are proverbial sayings or common knowledge), or if you submit without approval of the instructor any work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course.

Avoid charges of plagiarizing by acknowledging your sources in the essay and including them in the list of works cited. When quoting, make sure that all words and phrases from the source are in quotation marks. When paraphrasing, acknowledge the source of the idea but rewrite in your own language. For further information see the Department of English *Requirements for Essays*.

Plagiarism, whether from the Internet, from other students, or from published sources, is a serious academic offense that bears severe consequences. Instructors will report such offenses to the dean of the student's college, and any allegations will be reviewed by the university's committee on Student Academic Dishonesty. Penalties can range from a "0" on an essay to a reduced mark for the course to expulsion from the University. Records of penalties assessed are kept on file by the University Registrar; penalties become more severe for subsequent offences. For more information on plagiarism, see [http://www.usask.ca/university\\_secretary/honesty/](http://www.usask.ca/university_secretary/honesty/)

## Integrity Defined (from the Office of the University Secretary)

"Integrity is expected of all students in their academic work – class participation, examinations, assignments, research, practica – and in their non-academic interactions and activities as well." (Office of the University Secretary)

It is your responsibility to be familiar with the University of Saskatchewan *Guidelines for Academic Conduct*. More information is available at <http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/student-conduct-appeals/IntegrityDefined.pdf>

## **Acknowledgements**

### **Class Author**

Dr. Jesse Stothers, B.A. Hons., M.Phil., Ph.D.(Department of English, University of Saskatchewan)

### **Instructional Design and Class Development**

Kristine Dreaver-Charles, B.Ed., M.Sc.Ed., (Instructional Designer, Centre for Continuing & Distance Education, University of Saskatchewan)