OPEN ELECTIVE: INTRODUCTION TO SCIENCE FICTION HS30054

DEFINITION & THEMES

DEFINITION OF

SCIENCE FICTION

Science fiction (**sci-fi** or **SF**) is a genre of speculative fiction which typically deals with imaginative and futuristic concepts e. g. advanced science and technology, space exploration, time travel, parallel universes, and extraterrestrial life

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- Science fiction, though imaginative, is based on real-life understanding of contemporary developments in science and technology
- Science fiction explores science and technology in different ways, such as human responses to theoretical new advancements, or their consequences
- Science fiction influences literature, film, TV, and culture at large, providing entertainment, criticizing present-day society, exploring alternatives and inspiring a 'sense of wonder'

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▷ Subgenres include hard science fiction, which emphasizes scientific accuracy, and soft science fiction, focusing on social sciences

▷ Other notable subgenres are cyberpunk, which explores interface between technology and society, and climate fiction, addressing environmental issues

TIMELINE OF SCIENCE FICTION

TIMELINE

	Lucian: *A True Story*	106–117: Roman Empire at largest extent under Emperor Trajan after conquering modern Romania, Iraq and Armenia 126: Hadrian completes Pantheon in Rome 161: Marcus Aurelius becomes emperor of Roman Empire
	One Thousand and One Nights has several proto-science fiction stories	962: Otto the Great crowned Holy Roman Emperor; first to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor in nearly 40 years 987: Succession of Hugh Capet to French Throne and beginning of Capetian dynasty
c. 1270	Ibn al-Nafis: *Theologus Autodidactus*, which incorporates science fiction elements	1204: Sack of Constantinople during Fourth Crusade; beginning of decline of Byzantine Empire 1209: University of Cambridge founded 1215: Magna Carta sealed by John of England 1274: Thomas Aquinas' work, *Summa Theologica* is published, after his death (main staple of theology during Middle Ages)

TIMELINE

1420	*Vraye ystoire du bon roy Alixandre* (*The True History of the Good King Alexander*, Anonymous) has stories about him going underwater in a submarine

1516	Thomas More*: Utopia*

TIMELINE

1619	Johann Valentin Andreae: *Christianopolis*	1619: Dutch East India Company, English East India Company, and Sultanate of Banten fighting over port city of Jayakarta
1623	Tommaso Campanella: *The City of the Sun*	1620: Brownist Pilgrims arrive in the *Mayflower* at Cape Cod 1626: St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican completed
1627	Francis Bacon: *New Atlantis*	1632: Taj Mahal building work started in Agra, India 1633: Galileo Galilei arrives in Rome for his trial before the Inquisition 1633–1639: Japan transforms into 'locked country'

TIMELINE

1634	Johannes Kepler: *A Dream*	1636: Harvard University is founded in Cambridge, Massachusetts
1638	Francis Godwin: *The Man in the Moone*	1643: Louis XIV is crowned King of France 1649: King Charles I is executed for High treason, the first and only English king to be subjected to legal proceedings in a High Court of Justice and put to death
1657	Savinien de Cyrano de Bergerac: *Histoire Comique par Monsieur de Cyrano Bergerac, Contenant les Estats et Empires de la Lune* (*Cyrano Bergerac's Comical History, containing the States & Empires of the Moon*) published posthumously	1658: After his father Shah Jahan completes Taj Mahal, his son Aurangzeb deposes him as ruler of Mughal Empire 1663: Robert Hooke discovers cells using a microscope 1687: Isaac Newton publishes *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*

TIMELINE

1726 1733	Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver's Travels* Samuel Madden: *Memoirs of the Twentieth Century*	1735–1739: Russo-Turkish War 1739: Nader Shah defeats the Mughals at Battle of Karnal and sacks Delhi
1741	Ludvig Holberg: *Niels Klim's Underground Travels*	1740: Frederick the Great comes to power in Prussia 1740–1741: Famine in Ireland 1748: The Treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle ends the War of the Austrian Succession
1752 1765	Voltaire: *Micromégas* Marie-Anne de Roumier-Robert: *Voyage de Milord Céton dans les Sept Planètes (Journeys of Lord Seton in Seven Planets)*	1760: George III becomes King of Britain 1761: Marine chronometer invented 1762–1796: Reign of Catherine the Great of Russia 1769–1770: James Cook explores and maps New Zealand and Australia 1769–1773: Bengal famine of 1770 kills one-third of the Bengal population

TIMELINE

1771	Louis-Sébastien Mercier: *The Year 2440*	1771: Richard Arkwright builds the first water-powered mill at Cromford 1775–1783: American Revolutionary War 1776: United States Declaration of Independence is adopted by the Continental Congress in Philadelphia 1778: James Cook becomes the first European to land on Hawaii
1780	Anonymous*: The Passage from the North to the South Pole*	1783: Montgolfier brothers invent hot air balloon 1785–1795: Northwest Indian War is fought between the United States and Native Americans 1787: United States Constitution is written in Philadelphia 1789: George Washington is elected the first President of US 1789–1799: French Revolution

TIMELINE

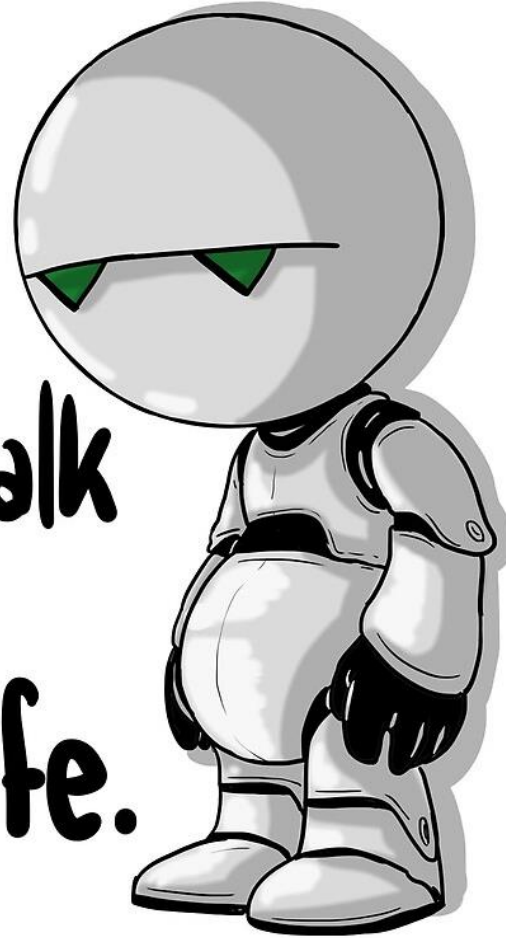|		
1805	Jean-Baptiste Cousin de Grainville: *The Last Man*	1800 & 1804: Napoleon becomes First Consul of France and then Emperor 1801: Giuseppe Piazzi discovers the dwarf planet Ceres 1804: First steam locomotive begins operation 1805: Battle of Trafalgar
1818 1826 1844	Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein* Mary Shelley: *The Last Man* Nathaniel Hawthorne: *Rappaccini's Daughter*	1815: Napoleon is defeated at Waterloo 1817: Jane Austen dies 1822: Charles Babbage develops the concept of the difference engine, the world's first computer
1851 1864 1865	Jules Verne: *A Voyage in a Balloon* Camille Flammarion: *Real and Imaginary Worlds* Jules Verne: *From the Earth to the Moon*	1861-1865: American Civil War is fought, introduces mechanized warfare and ironclad ships to battle

TIMELINE

1859	Hermann Lang publishes *The Air Battle: a Vision of the Future*
1864	Camille Flammarion publishes *Real and Imaginary Worlds*
1865	Jules Verne publishes *From the Earth to the Moon*
1868	Edward S. Ellis publishes *The Steam Man of the Prairies*, the first SF dime novel
1870	Jules Verne publishes *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas*
1871	Edward Bulwer-Lytton publishes *The Coming Race*
1872	Samuel Butler publishes *Erewhon*
1874	Jules Verne publishes *The Mysterious Island* in serial form from 1874 to 1875
1886	Robert Louis Stevenson publishes *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*
1888	Edward Bellamy publishes *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* in January
1888	H. G. Wells publishes *The Chronic Argonauts*
1889	Mark Twain publishes *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*
1895	H. G. Wells publishes *The Time Machine*
1896	H. G. Wells publishes *The Island of Doctor Moreau*
1897	H. G. Wells publishes *The Invisible Man*
1898	H. G. Wells publishes *The War of the Worlds*

SCIENCE FICTION THEMES

Life. Don't talk to me about life.

1. ENTITIES

▷ ROBOTS/ ANDROIDS

▷ CYBORGS/ REPLICANTS

▷ ARTIFICIAL LIFE CREATION/ CLONES

▷ ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

▷ SIMULATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

▷ HYPOTHETICAL BIO-ORGANISM

▷ ALIEN LIFEFORMS

▷ HIVEMIND, INFOMORPH, MUTANT, SYMBIONT, SUPERHUMAN

2. BODY/ MIND ALTERATIONS

▷ BIOHACKING/ BIOPUNK

▷ ARTIFICIAL ORGANS/ PROSTHETICS

▷ ENHANCED SENSES

▷ GENETIC MODIFICATION/ CLONING

▷ BRAIN-COMPUTER INTERFACE/ NEURAL IMPLANTS

▷ INVISIBILITY

▷ CRYONICS/ DIGITAL IMMORTALITY

▷ MIND/ MEMORY CONTROL/ SWAP

3. HABITAT

▷ ALIEN PLANET/ COLONIZATION

▷ ARTIFICIAL WORLD/ DOME/ FLOATING CITY/ ARCOLOGY

▷ MEGACITY

▷ TERRAFORMING

▷ SPACE STATION/ SPACESHIP

▷ UNDERGROUND CITY

▷ UTOPIA/ DYSTOPIA

▷ CYBERSPACE

4. TECHNOLOGY

▷ ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY

▷ ASTEROID/ PLANET MINING

▷ NEURAL INTERFACE

▷ SELF-REPLICATION (VIRUS/ CLONE)

▷ SIMULATION/ VIRTUAL REALITY/ AUGMENTED REALITY

▷ NANOTECHNOLOGY

▷ SF WEAPONS/ MECHA

▷ SINGULARITY

5. TRAVEL

▷ TIME TRAVEL/ TIME LOOP

▷ SPACE TRAVEL/ EXPLORATION/ FASTER THAN LIGHT

▷ COLONIZATION

▷ GENERATION SHIP

▷ TERRAFORMING/ HOLLOW EARTH

▷ HYPERSPACE/ SLIPSTREAM, WARP DRIVE/ WORMHOLES

▷ PARALLEL UNIVERSE/ ALTERNATE PAST OR FUTURE

▷ TELEPORTATION

6. POLITICS

▷ ANARCHY

▷ EXTREME CAPITALISM/ ANY 'ISM'

▷ MEGACORP/ EVIL MASTERMIND

▷ UTOPIA/ DYSTOPIA

▷ POLLUTION/ OVERPOPULATION

▷ GALACTIC EMPIRE/ INTERSTELLAR WAR

▷ MASS SURVEILLANCE/ MIND CONTROL

▷ POST-SCARCITY ECONOMY

▷ TECHNOPHOBIA

▷ ECO/ BIOTERRORISM/ BIOETHICS

THANK YOU!