SAMPLE SYLLABI

PHI315: PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE FICTION

Class Information: Days, Time, Location

Instructor Information:
Lauren O'Dell
Email: laurenkodell@gmail.com (preferred to Canvas messages)
Office Hours: Days and Time, and by appointment
Location: Office Code

Course Description: Sci-fi has captured the imagination for generations, promising new horizons and perilous futures alike. This course will explore the origins and development of Science Fiction as a genre through the lens of philosophy. Issues of metaphysics, logic, ethics, and epistemology will be analyzed through works of science fiction. In keeping with the mission of Intellectual Inquiry-Arts & Creativity, assignments will have both analytic and creative elements, including a final project that will ask students to create a piece of science fiction. The overall goal of this class is to determine what science fiction can tell us about ourselves and reality on the whole.

Course Objectives:

The goals of this course are:
1. To provide knowledge of the central theories of philosophy in the context of science fiction.
2. To enhance skills in critically assessing arguments related to philosophy.
3. To improve critical and creative thinking, research, and writing skills.
4. To give you a better understanding of the role philosophy plays in science fiction and, in turn, what science fiction can tell us about our world.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, you should be able to:
1. Personally perform, produce, fabricate or generate an artifact or artifacts that demonstrates their engagement with the creative process (e.g. an object, product, installation, presentation, record of a performance etc.) either as an individual or as part of a collaborative. As part of this process students will:
   a. Define and distinguish different approaches (historical, theoretical, and methodological issues) to "creativity" as appropriate to the disciplinary practices specific to the subject, medium, or approach that informs philosophy and science fiction
   b. Apply the logic, laws, or constraints of science fiction, (e.g, "out of the box" thinking, or the masterful, elegant treatment of given rules or forms).
   c. Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze work produced by other students in this course and in co-curricular events using appropriate tools. These analyses

> should utilize relevant information resources to incorporate historical, theoretical, and or cultural factors.
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> d. Evaluate results of their own creative endeavors and, using that evaluation, reassess and refine their work.

2. Identify philosophical themes within works of science fiction while being able to apply theories and critical thinking to analyses and evaluations of said works.
3. Learn to write analytic-style papers about science fiction, in addition to honing creative skills.
4. Work within teams to present material and produce creative content.

Grading, Assignments and Attendance:

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
E	<60%

The course grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation***	15%
Reading Presentation	20%
Short Papers	20%
Essay Exam	20%
Final Project	25%

Participation***: This course is discussion-based and so heavy emphasis will be placed on in-class participation and group work. The grade will be based on attendance, in-class discussion contributions, and peer review of group work effort. Minor in-class assignments or homework may also contribute to this grade as deemed appropriate. Note that if in-class participation standards are not being met, daily reading assignments will be given as stated below. Also, attendance will be taken daily. Only five classes can be missed without penalty.

***Reading Assignments: Students are expected to complete all readings prior to the class time for which they are assigned. If discussions about the reading seem to be lacking (i.e. people are not reading), daily reading assignments will be added to the coursework. To ensure understanding, students will compose a one-page paper before class, analyzing what they feel are the most important points in the text and forming a position on them. Exercises in class may include group discussions, partner exchanges, or even presentations to the class about what you wrote. These will be graded pass/fail.

Short Papers: Throughout the semester, you will be asked to complete analysis papers about the topics discussed in class. These papers will make up 25% of your overall grade. Late papers will not be accepted. More instructions will be posted on Canvas.

Reading Presentations: At the beginning of the semester, groups will be assigned for the reading presentation and the final exam. Each group will do one 15-20 minute presentation on the reading assignment for that day. This will count toward 15% of the final grade. Detailed instructions will be discussed in class..

Exams: There will be an essay exam that will count towards 25% of your overall grade. Topic and instructions will be given at the appropriate time.

Exams may only be missed for excused reasons (as defined by S.R. 5.2.4.2). If you miss an exam for an excused absence, you will be asked to take the exam with me at a mutually agreed upon time outside of class. If you miss the exam for an unexcused reason, you will not have an opportunity to make up the exam. No late take-home exams will be permitted. They must be turned in on time unless discussed with me 48 hours before the exam due date.

Final Project: The final project will be a creative project and accompanying paper. Projects will be presented in class throughout the last week of the semester. The paper will be due on the last day of classes, May 1st 2020. More details will be provided throughout the semester. Projects must be approved by me. This will count towards 25% of your overall grade.

Sustainable Classroom Policy: The University of Kentucky strives to build classrooms that are ecologically sound, socially just, and economically viable, now and for the future. Sustainable classrooms prepare students and empower the campus community to support sustainable development in the Commonwealth and beyond.

This is a sustainable classroom. Here your instructors aim (1) to create the healthiest, most collaborative and innovative learning environments possibe, (2) to reduce your costs and improve your intellectual development through thoughtful resource conservation and waste reduction, (3) to foster a culture of involvement in sustainability through education and engagement, and (4) to enable UK students, faculty, our campus, and our Commonwealth to become more sustainable through the use of University resources.

Sustainability starts with you taking care of yourself so that you can be at your best in this class. Do the readings and homework assignments. Come to class. Join in the discussion. Get enough sleep, water, food, and coffee beforehand. If you are facing challenges securing classroom materials, food, or housing, and this is affecting your performance in class, please contact the Dean of Students, Nicholas Kehrwald, at nkehrwald@uky.edu or 859-257-3754. Furthermore, please notify your instructor if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable her to provide any resources that she may possess.

Required Course Texts:
There will be movies that you will need to access throughout the semester.

Any additional required readings will be provided for you or available through the UK Libraries.

Course Schedule

Topic	Primary Readings	Additional Readings
Course Introduction and Syllabus	Syllabus	
Unit I- Understanding the Basics of Philosophy and Science Fiction		

Reason and Argument, What to Expect	*Almossawi:* An Illustrated Book of Bad Arguments. https://bookofbadarguments.com/ (Links to an external site.)	
Defining Sci-fi	https://io9.gizmodo.com/the-philosophical-roots-of-science-fiction-5932802 *Tucker:* Science-Fiction as a Bridge to Philosophy (Canvas)	
Philosophy Basics	*MAE* Ch. 2-5 (Canvas) *Plato:* The Allegory of the Cave (Canvas)	
Unit II- Metaphysics: Reality		
What is Real?	*MAE* Ch. 6-7 (Canvas)	
Existence	Selections from Descartes' "Meditations" (Canvas) *Group Presentation 1	
Brain in a Vat	*MAE* Ch. 48 (Canvas)	
Virtual Reality	Watch "The Matrix" (1999)-Rated R (sci-fi violence and brief language) *Available on HBO Max or Prime/Youtube $3.99 (2021)* *Group Presentation 2	
Sim Theory	*Bostrom:* Are You Living in a Computer Simulation? (Canvas) *Group Presentation 3	Optional: "The Thirteenth Floor" (1999)-Rated R (sex and nudity, violence and gore, language) *Available on Prime $2.99 (2021)*
Unit III- Metaphysics: Space and Time		
Time	Watch "Arrival" (2016)-Rated PG-13 (brief strong language) *Available on Prime/Youtube $2.99 (2021)* Stanford Encyclopedia on Time https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/time/ *Lewis:* The Paradoxes of Time Travel (Canvas)	*Boccardi:* Recent Trends...http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0100-60452016000400005&lng=en&tlng=en
Space	Watch "Interstellar" (2014)- Rated PG-13 (intense perilous action and brief strong language) *Available on Hulu or Prime/YouTube $2.99 (2021)* Interdimensional Travel (Canvas) *Group Presentation 4	Philosophy of Interstellar https://www.huffpost.com/entry/philosophy-interstellar_b_6215542
Unit IV- Metaphysics: Philosophy of Mind: Consciousness and AI		
AI	Watch "Ex Machina" (2015)- Rated R (graphic nudity, language, sexual references, some violence) *Available on Hulu or Prime/YouTube $2.99 (2021)*	

	Turing: Computing Machinery and Intelligence (Canvas) *Group Presentation 5-6	
Personhood	*MAE* Ch. 23; 29 (Canvas)	*Pollock:* Philosophy and Artificial Intelligence (Canvas)
Consciousness	Watch "Transcendence" (2014)- Rated PG-13 (sci-fi action and violence, language, sensuality) *Available on Hulu or YouTube $2.99 (2021)* *Group Presentation 7	*Astakhov:* Continuum of Consciousness (Canvas)
Intelligence and Knowledge	*MAE* Ch. 37; 50-52; 62 (Canvas) *Group Presentation 8	
Unit V- Ethics: Technology and Rights		
Genetics	Watch "Gattaca" (1997)- Rated PG-13 (violence, language, and some sexuality) *Available on Hulu or Prime/YouTube $3.99 (2021)*	
Surveillance and Profiling	Watch "Minority Report" (2002)- Rated PG-13 (violence, brief language, some sexuality and drug content) *Available on Prime or YouTube $2.99 (2021)*	
Unit VI- Ethics: The Apocalypse and Utopia		
Apocalyptic Futures	Watch "Wall-E" (2008)- Rated G *Available on Disney+ or Prime/YouTube $3.99 (2021)*	
Perfect Society	Watch "Elysium" (2013)- Rated R (sci-fi action and violence, language, sensuality) *Available on Hulu or Prime $2.99 (2021)*	
Unit VII- Ethics: Student Choice		
Final Project Presentations		