



**DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION.**

**COURSE OUTLINE – FALL 2013**

**EN 1220 B2 – TEXTS AND CONTEXTS: SPECULATIVE FICTION**

WEDNESDAYS & FRIDAYS 1:00-2:20

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Anna Lapointe      **PHONE:** 780-539-2992  
**OFFICE:** C420      **E-MAIL:** alapointe@gprc.ab.ca

**OFFICE HOURS:** 11:30 to 12:30 Tuesday & Thursday, or by appointment

**PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:** General College Admission. May not be taken by students with 6 credits in approved junior English.

**REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:**

- William E. Messenger et al. The Canadian Writer's Handbook: Essentials Edition. Oxford University Press (2012). (This is a small, coil-bound book. The larger edition (not listed as "Essentials") is much more expensive. Don't buy it by mistake!)
- Vonnegut, Kurt. Player Piano. Dial (1999)\*
- James, P. D. The Children of Men. Vintage (2005)\*

\*Please note: I selected these editions because they are inexpensive. I will refer to these editions in class, but students should not feel obligated to buy new copies of books they already own. Second-hand copies (any edition) and e-books are acceptable alternatives.

**All other readings will be posted on Moodle.**

**CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:**

This course will explore a specific issue (to be determined by the instructor) using a variety of genres and media. Instruction will include essay writing skills. Because the course content will vary among instructors, it is strongly recommended that students consult an academic advisor or the Department of Arts and Education for more specific descriptions regarding the course focus.

**DESCRIPTION OF THIS COURSE:**

This section of the course will focus on science fiction (SF), and the issues involved in SF about the near future. What does it mean to write about a world almost like this one? How can this kind of SF writing be used as political commentary about the contemporary world? We will read novels and short fiction, and examine one feature film. Students are expected to have workable essay-writing skills, which will be further developed and refined in this course.

**CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS:** 3 (3-0-0) UT 45 Hours

**DELIVERY MODE(S):** Lecture/Discussion

**TRANSFERABILITY:**

Athabasca University: ENGL 2xx (3)

Grant MacEwan University: ENGL 103/1xx (6)

Grant MacEwan University: ENGL 103 (3)

King's University College, The: ENGL 2xx (3)

University of Alberta: ENGL 122 (3)

University of Calgary: Jr. ENGL (3)

University of Lethbridge, The: ENGL 1xxx (3)

**\*\* Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

Grading will assess students' critical grasp of the course material and compositional skills in approximately equal measure. Be aware that extreme deficits in composition may hinder the instructor's assessment of student's critical grasp of the material. (Translation: if the paper is badly written to the point of incoherence, with the result that I can't figure out what you mean, I can't give you content credit!)

All assessments will be given as letter grades.

<b>GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE</b>			
<b>GRADING CONVERSION CHART</b>			
<b>Alpha Grade</b>	<b>4-point Equivalent</b>	<b>Percentage Guidelines</b>	<b>Designation</b>
<b>A<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>90 – 100</b>	<b>EXCELLENT</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>85 – 89</b>	
<b>A<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>80 – 84</b>	<b>FIRST CLASS STANDING</b>
<b>B<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>77 – 79</b>	
<b>B</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>73 – 76</b>	<b>GOOD</b>
<b>B<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>70 – 72</b>	
<b>C<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>67 – 69</b>	<b>SATISFACTORY</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>63 – 66</b>	
<b>C<sup>-</sup></b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>60 – 62</b>	
<b>D<sup>+</sup></b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>55 – 59</b>	<b>MINIMAL PASS</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>50 – 54</b>	
<b>F</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0 – 49</b>	<b>FAIL</b>
<b>WF</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline</b>

**EVALUATIONS:**

Short writing assignments	10% (2 x 5%)
Response papers (1-2 pages each)	10% (2 x 5%)
Critical essay #1 (3-4 pages)	15%
Critical essay #2 (3-4 pages)	20%
Final essay (6-8 pages)	35%
Attendance and participation	10%

Please note: the final essay for this course stands in place of a final exam. It must be submitted to the instructor at the scheduled examination time and date, in the scheduled examination room (both TBA).

**STUDENT PRINTING POLICY:**

It is the responsibility of each academic department to ensure that their students are not required to print more than the amount provided by this policy. If the requirements of the program are such that additional printing cannot be avoided, it is the responsibility of the department to ensure that their students are aware of this policy, and that additional charges for printing should be expected.

Be aware: because the majority of readings for this course are posted on Moodle, if you choose to print them out, you will exceed the amount provided by this policy. Printing readings out is not required.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:****1. Requirements for Essays:**

All essay-assignments in this course must be written in academic essay format, which we will study throughout the course. Spelling and grammar, structure, and comprehension and analysis of the course material are key grading elements. Expectations for the quality of writing will rise in the course of the term.

Formatting expectations are posted on Moodle, and will be distributed as a handout. All essays must be typed, double-spaced, and stapled together. **Assignments not meeting these criteria will not be accepted.**

## 2. Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are crucial to this course. More than two unexcused absences in the course of the term will result in a serious deduction from your participation grade.

Hit by a bus? That's a different matter. But let me know about it.

That said, simply showing up is not sufficient. You are expected to comment, respond to questions, interact with classmates, and otherwise contribute to the class dialogue. Questions are welcomed and encouraged. If you're wondering about something, most likely several classmates are as well, only they're afraid to speak up. So ask!

**Students are responsible for all missed material**, including material missed due to legitimate/excused absences. Do not ask me to “just quickly tell me what we covered.” If I could sum up a lecture in 5 minutes, I promise you I wouldn't take 80 minutes to deliver it. All handouts will be posted on Moodle.

Take a moment early in the class to find a “note buddy” who is willing to share notes with you in the event of your absence. Take a moment to be a note buddy as well!

## 3. Late Assignments

Assignments are due **in class, and on paper. No paper may be submitted by e-mail.** Papers submitted outside of class will be considered late. Late papers may be left in the mailbox on my office door (C420). It is the student's responsibility to confirm I have received assignments left on my door.

Late papers are penalized at the rate of **one third of a letter grade every two days** (ie. Submitting two days late reduces a grade from a B+ to a B, or from a B to a B-). Weekends count as one day. If your paper is extremely late, come talk to me; I may take pity and cap the deducted marks.

I grant extensions for the following reasons: computer failure (may be used only once), sick children/family crisis, illness or injury of student (with doctor's note), alien abduction (documentation required). **Extensions are not open-ended**; rather, we will agree on a new deadline, after which late penalties apply. The time to let me know you will need an extension is **before** the assignment is due.

#### 4. Moodle

Students are responsible for checking Moodle regularly for updates, announcements, and handouts. Ensure you check Moodle each morning before coming to class.

All handouts are posted on Moodle after they have been distributed in class. If you miss a class or lose a handout, go online to access it.

The majority of readings for this course are also posted on Moodle in .pdf format. This has been done to save you (the student) money. Ensure you can access and read these files well in advance of the class in which we take up each one.

If you have trouble accessing Moodle, contact the technical support office **immediately**. Students are responsible for ensuring they have access to the course material.

#### **STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:**

Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, submission of work in one course which has already been submitted in another, failure to cite sources, attempts to communicate

with other students during exams, impersonating another student, and purchasing papers online. (This is not a complete list. See the GPRC Academic Calendar pp. 44-45 for details and a list of penalties.\*)

\*Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

Academic dishonesty devalues your education and the education of your classmates. It is disrespectful of the institution and (particularly) of your instructor. I take this issue very seriously.

Never fear: you will be specifically instructed on how to avoid “accidental” dishonesty. And when in doubt, cite!

### **COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:**

Sept 6 – Intro

Sept 11 – Margaret Atwood – “Freefall”

Sept 13 – Octavia E. Butler – “The Evening and the Morning and the Night”

Sept 18 – Ray Bradbury – “I Sing the Body Electric!”

Sept 20 – Ted Chiang – “72 Letters”

Sept 25 – Player Piano; assignment #1 due

Sept 27 – Player Piano

Sept 30 – Player Piano

Oct 4 – Player Piano; essay #1 due

Oct 9 – Player Piano

Oct 11 – Martha Soukup – “Fetish”

Oct 16 – Gattaca (view film)

Oct 18 – Gattaca (view film, begin discussion)

Oct 23 – Gattaca

Oct 25 – Gattaca

Oct 30 – The Children of Men

Nov 1 – The Children of Men

Nov 6 – The Children of Men; essay #2 due

Nov 8 – Fall Break (no classes)

Nov 13 – The Children of Men

Nov 15 – The Children of Men

Nov 20 – The Children of Men

Nov 22 – William Gibson – “The Winter Market”; assignment #2 due

Nov 27 – Gabriel García Marquez – “Light Is Like Water”

Nov 29 – Max Brooks – “Turning the Tide”

Dec 2 – Max Brooks – “Turning the Tide”

Dec 6 – last day of class

Final Exam date/location TBA – final essay due