

COURSE OUTLINE - Winter 2025

EN3990(A3): Science Fiction and Fantasy - 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR:	Dr. Anna Lapointe	PHONE:	780-539-2992
OFFICE:	C420	E-MAIL:	alapointe@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS:	Mondays 1:30-2:30 or by appointment		

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: This course explores the genres of science fiction and fantasy in literature, with some reference to works in translation. The two genres will be examined as intersecting literary modes, with particular attention given to their potential for transformative creation.

PREREQUISITE:

Six credits of Junior English

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Butler, Octavia E. *Parable of the Sower*.
- Gaiman, Neil. *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*.
- Le Guin, Ursula. *The Left Hand of Darkness*.
- Miéville, China. *The City and the City*.
- Vandermeer, Jeff. *Annihilation*.
- Vonnegut, Jr., Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five*.

DELIVERY MODE: On-Campus

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of this course, students will be able to

- Identify “source” patterns in science fiction and fantasy (sf/f) writing, and critique those patterns
- Engage with counter-narratives emerging in contemporary sf/f writing
- Critically analyze texts with reference to symbolic language, rhetorical approaches, structure, patterns of language, and modes of representation
- Develop advanced academic writing skills with an emphasis on literary criticism

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferralberta.ca>

** 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**

EVALUATIONS:

Assignments will be evaluated according to senior-level university standards of writing and grammar, and of critical expression. Standards of grading rise over the course of the term.

Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	35%
In-class presentations (2 x 7.5% each)	15%
Attendance and participation	10%
Final Exam	30%

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Grading Chart

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

This schedule is subject to change. Students are expected to have completed reading each text prior to the first class in which it is taken up. This schedule is subject to change. Students are expected to have completed reading each text prior to the first class in which it is taken up.

- Jan 7 - Intro and Welcome
- Jan 9 - Genres: Their history and development
- Jan 14 - essay and presentation instruction
- Jan 16 - Vonnegut
- Jan 21 - Vonnegut
- Jan 23 - Vonnegut
- Jan 28 - Le Guin
- Jan 30 - Le Guin
- Feb 4 - Le Guin
- Feb 6 - Le Guin
- Feb 11 - Butler
- Feb 13 - Butler

Reading week (no classes)
Feb 25 – Butler; essay 1 due
Feb 27 – Butler
March 4 – Flex day
March 6 – Miéville
March 11 – Miéville
March 13 – Miéville
March 18 – Vandermeer
March 20 – Vandermeer
March 25 – Vandermeer
March 27 – Gaiman
April 1 – Gaiman
April 3 – Gaiman
April 8 – flex day; essay 2 due
April 10 – review for exam

Exam date TBA. Please ensure that you are available for the entire exam period.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend class during class times. Attending class and engaging with classmates, discussion topics, and related activities is worth 10% of your final grade. Each class missed to an unexcused absence will result in a significant deduction to the participation grade.
 - If your absence is for a legitimate reason (illness or family crisis), **let the instructor know by e-mail**. In your e-mail, please indicate your **course number and section**. Please **send a new e-mail for each class missed** for a legitimate reason, or clearly state which days will be missed. E-mailed notices of absence do not automatically “roll over” for future missed dates.
- **Participation & Engagement:** 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!
 - In order to participate effectively, **you should have the day's reading completed before class begins**. This will allow you to comment, answer questions, and ask questions of your own. Take notes on the reading (again, before you come to class), both in order to be able to answer questions effectively and to identify questions that you want to ask.
- **Assignment Expectations:** In order to learn about academic writing and to develop better writing skills, it's imperative that you do your own writing, without using Chat-GPT or any other AI or language bot. **Assignments found to have been created using AI/bots will not be graded**. Whether students are permitted to rewrite/resubmit these assignments is at the instructor's discretion. AI-written papers may be subject to further penalties under the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy. Additional penalties may also be applied to your participation grade.
 - In cases in which submitted work exhibits concerning patterns or raises questions for the instructor about its creation and the student's intellectual effort involved, students may be required to submit to an oral examination regarding the work at the discretion of the instructor. Failure to participate in the oral examination will result in an assigned grade of 0 for the assessment. If, following the oral examination, the instructor still has concerns about the work, the academic misconduct provisions of the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy (linked elsewhere in this outline) may be applied.

- Papers which do not meet the basic assignment requirements will not be graded. Before such a paper can be resubmitted (subject to significant deductions for both lateness and resubmission), the student in question must complete the following steps:
 - E-mail the instructor to make an appointment for an in-person meeting (either at office hours or at another time), and then actually come to this meeting.
 - At the meeting, show a plan for completing the assignment appropriately. For essays, the plan (which should be neatly hand-written and presented to the instructor) has these parts:
 - An appropriate thesis statement which meets course requirements.
 - An outline of each body paragraph
 - Quoted evidence to include in each paragraph
 - A timeline for completion
 - Please note that the professor's approval is not automatic. This process is intended to assist students in actually completing assignments. Use of AI, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty are all unacceptable, and will result in the process being suspended, no new paper being accepted, and, potentially, application of the academic misconduct provisions of the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy (linked elsewhere in this document).
- **Missed Material:** Students are responsible for all missed material, including material missed due to legitimate/excused absences. Slideshows are posted to myClass, and further information can be obtained from classmates. If, **after** you have reviewed the class materials, you have questions, please contact me and I'll be pleased to assist you.
- **In-Class Presentations:** each student is required to do two in-class presentations, one in the first half of the term and one in the second half. Each presentation will address a section of the text, an aspect of the author's work, or an associated theme. Presentations require research and preparation. Strong presentations can and should be adapted into essays. (This means that your essays will be "built out" from your presentations.)
 - Presentations can only be delayed due to extreme circumstances. Permission to "make up" a missed presentation is at the instructor's discretion.
 - Students should submit the notes and/or slides accompanying their presentation on the same date that they give their presentations (by 4:00pm).

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- **Essay Submission:** Essays are due at 4:00pm Alberta time on the due date. At 4:01pm, they become late, so you might as well take a few hours and polish your work to offset the penalty.
 - Assignments must be submitted via myClass. **Essays must be typed, in pdf format, and double-spaced.** Improperly submitted work will not be accepted/graded. If myClass will not accept the assignment, check whether it meets all formatting requirements.
 - **Late Papers:** Late papers are penalized at the rate of 1% per day, to a maximum deduction of 15%/15 days. After 15 days (ending at 4:00pm), late papers will no longer be accepted, and missing assignments will receive grades of 0%. Students with extenuating circumstances (illness, family crisis) for critically late papers must question must complete the following steps:

- E-mail the instructor to make an appointment for an in-person meeting (either at office hours or at another time), and then actually come to this meeting.
 - At the meeting, show a plan for completing the assignment appropriately. For essays, the plan (which should be neatly hand-written and presented to the instructor) has these parts:
 - An appropriate thesis statement which meets course requirements.
 - A timeline for completion
 - Please note that the professor's permission to submit a critically late paper is not automatic. This process is intended to help students with good-faith crises to complete the course.
- **No essay will be accepted after 11 April 2025 at 4:00pm, even if the 15-day window has not elapsed.** Essays not received by that date receive grades of 0%, without exception,
- **Extensions: Students must contact the instructor directly regarding extensions.** I grant extensions for the following reasons: technological failure (may be used only once), sick children/family crisis, illness or injury of student, alien abduction (documentation required). Extensions are not open-ended; rather, we will agree on a new deadline, after which late penalties apply.
 - **Extensions are not given because of workload.** Due dates across classes tend to come in clusters. Plan ahead and be prepared to deal with the schedule.
- **Parents and Caregivers:** If you are a parent or caregiver (not a paid sitter), please let me know. I'm aware that childcare comes with responsibilities which supersede the requirements of university classes. (Keeping human beings alive is a major responsibility!) I am happy to work with you to help you keep up in the course/manage your course requirements.
- **Children in the Classroom:** If your childcare fails, you are welcome to bring your child/children to class, provided that they can be reasonably quiet. (Providing them with entertainment will help with this. If their entertainment is an electronic device, please provide them with headphones or turn off sound generation.) Exclusively breast-fed infants are welcome in class as often as necessary.
- **Office Hours:** My office hours are listed on the first page of this course outline.
 - You don't need an appointment to meet with me during office hours. I meet with students in the order that they show up.
 - This is your time, as much as class is. Please don't feel you're imposing.
 - Office hours are cancelled if the instructor is sick. But I'll post an announcement to that effect, and re-schedule when I'm better.
 - If you make an appointment to meet with me outside of regular office hours, please actually attend that meeting, or notify me that you won't be able to make it.
- **Pre-Assessments:** Students often request that I "look over" an assignment and offer feedback before the assignment is due. I regret that I cannot do this, simply because of the time commitment involved, and the number of students I teach.
 - However, I am always pleased to review your thesis statement, and even to review several drafts of it. Please send your thesis statement for feedback by email, pasted into the body of the e-mail.
 - Thesis statements are not reviewed in person, because I need time to consider and give you the best feedback I can. E-mail them to me for best results!
- **Preferred Names & Pronouns:** At the course's outset, my list of students' names is based on the register. If you would prefer to be called something else, please let me know, and I will adjust my list accordingly, and use your preferred name from that point on. You should feel free to use your preferred given name on all essays and submitted assignments, as well as on your Zoom. (If your preferred surname varies from the name under which you are registered, I may need occasional reminders.)

- If you want to tell me your pronouns, you should feel free to do so. I will respect your pronouns.
- All students are expected to respect their classmates' preferred names and pronouns.
- **Crisis Management:** I'm not a monster, but I'm not psychic, either. If something goes wrong in your life, I won't automatically know. If you let me know, I will work with you to help you keep up/catch up in the course. You are human, and entropy affects us all: crises happen. I will happily work with you to ensure they don't derail your academic career.

Important Note: How you do in the class has no effect on how much I like and respect you. If you submit an assignment late, I will not be ashamed of you or look on you with disgust. If your work is imperfect, it's a sign that there are things you need to learn/I need to help you with; it is not a sign that you are a bad, lazy, or unworthy person.