**FYP 1001.01: First Year Seminar**

**Robots and Cyborgs and Androids, Oh My!: Artificial Intelligence in Science Fiction**

Tuesdays and Fridays, 10:35 AM – 12:00 PM in Brownson Wing 1

Paired with FYP 1003.01: First Year Writing I, Tuesdays and Fridays, 12:10 PM – 1:35 PM

Instructor: Dr. Liz W. Faber

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Office Hours: Please make an appointment through Starfish.

Tuesdays 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Thursdays 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM

Fridays 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

**Course Description:**

In “Robots and Cyborgs and Androids, Oh My!” we will examine how artificial intelligence is represented in Science Fiction. We will explore a range of Sci-Fi machines, from friendly helper robots like Rosie in *The Jetsons*, to innocent and emotional androids like David in *AI,* and even evil cyborgs in *The Terminator* movies. Through these texts, we’ll discuss themes such as the nature of human intelligence, gender and technology, and the role of robotics in our everyday lives. We’ll also look at how real world AI researchers and ethicists have faced the important ethical questions about how and whether we should create the types of thinking machines that Science Fiction presents.

This is a 3 credit course that fulfills the First Year Seminar, Liberal Arts, and Humanistic Reasoning requirements. The required corequisite course is FYP 1003: First Year Writing I. In order to fulfill the First-Year Program requirement at Manhattanville College, students must achieve a minimal grade of C- in FYP 1001 and FYP 1003. Students who earn below the minimum C- grade requirement will be required to take FYP 4000: College Skills 1.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

* Develop visual and textual literacy skills through the analysis of a range of Science Fiction texts and critical essays
* Interpret Science Fiction representations of artificial intelligence within their historical, cultural, ethical, and scientific contexts
* Locate connections among today’s technology, historical discussions of robotics ethics, and Science Fiction representations
* Articulate interpretations of and ideas about a range of texts using clear logic and thorough evidence, both verbally and in writing
* Work collaboratively to articulate ideas about Science Fiction, using multiple communicative modalities

**Required Books:**

Čapek, Karel. *R.U.R. (Rossum’s Universal Robots)*. Penguin, 2004.

Dick, Philip K. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Del Ray, 2017.

All other stories, essays, audio recordings, and videos will be provided electronically on Blackboard.

**Required Supplies:**

Flashdrive or cloud account (e.g. Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive)

Microsoft Word (free with Manhattanville e-mail address—go to office.com for download)

Writing utensil(s)

Notebook for notes

Journal (provided by instructor)

Folder

**Online Platforms:**

Blackboard

Starfish

**Policies and Procedures:**

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another person and the representation of them as one's own original work. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the definition of plagiarism and the acceptable methods of attribution. You are expected to be aware of, and to conduct yourselves in accordance with the rules regarding academic integrity found in the Manhattanville College Catalog.

All cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported immediately to the Director of Academic Writing and the Board on Academic Standards.

Please note: Confirmed instances of academic dishonesty in this course WILL result in a failing grade for the course.

If you have any questions about what might constitute plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask me.

Attendance

You are required to attend all regular class sessions. Although there are no exams, you are still required to arrive on time and prepared for each and every class session, actively listen, take notes, and participate in discussion.

Failure to attend without prior consent of your instructor will result in an unexcused absence. You may take up to 3 unexcused absences throughout the semester. For each absence after the third, you will lose 10% of your final grade.

Arriving to class late will count as ½ an unexcused absence.

If you cannot come to class or you know you will be arriving late, you must notify the instructor by e-mail or in person before the beginning of the class period.

If you do need to miss class, it is your responsibility to notify your instructor, download any missed assignments from Blackboard, and get lecture/discussion notes from a classmate. Missing class does not excuse you from doing the assigned homework.

Electronic Devices

*Please turn all cell phones to silent and store them in your bag or pocket at the beginning of each class period!* Texting, e-mailing, Instagramming, Facebooking, taking selfies, or any other activity not related to class is strictly prohibited. If you do need to answer an emergency phone call or text, please quietly step into the hallway to do so and return when you are finished. Any in-class material you miss as a result of attending to your phone is your responsibility to make up.

You may use a laptop or tablet in class *only* for the purposes of note-taking, reviewing assigned electronic readings, and working on your assigned essays.

**Course Requirements:**

Class Participation

Participation includes completing all assigned readings, providing thoughtful and relevant comments and questions during class discussions, engaging fully in in-class activities, and listening attentively when others are speaking.

All assigned readings should be completed before coming to class so that you can participate fully in class discussions. Further, reading is an active process; you should always highlight/underline important passages, write questions and notes in the margins or on a separate sheet of paper, and summarize key points in the margins. You are, of course, not required to like everything you read, but you should be able to respond to and discuss it in a clear, critical fashion.

Participation is graded holistically based on quality and consistency of reading notes, discussion, in-class activities, and preparedness.

Active Reading/Watching Notes

For each reading, viewing, and listening assignment, you are required to take notes using the notetaking methods discussed in class.

Notes may be legibly handwritten and scanned to PDF or typed and uploaded as a Word or PDF document. They must be uploaded to Blackboard by the date listed in the schedule below. You should also bring a hard or electronic copy of them to class to help you engage in discussion.

Notes will be graded holistically based on completion and quality of notes taken.

Blog Posts

Throughout the semester, you will write short (minimum 250 words) blog posts in response to given prompts. The blog is a reflective space for you to collect your thoughts about the week’s material, practice the analytical tools discussed in class, ask questions, and draw connections between class material and your everyday experiences. These are low-stakes writing assignments that let you brainstorm about the course material; ideally, the blog posts will provide foundational ideas for use in the more formal writing assignments of First Year Writing I.

Please note that everyone in the class will be able to read your posts. As such, treat all blogs as *brave spaces*: be brave enough to post your own original ideas and respectful of the fact that others are being just as brave in posting their own original ideas. In other words, this class is not the regular Internet—trolling, personal attacks, unconstructive criticism, and any other form of bullying will not be tolerated.

Blog posts will be graded holistically, based on clarity of writing and thought as well as thoroughness in engaging the course material.

Midterm Project

For your Midterm Project, you will draw on the themes and tropes we’ve discussed so far in class in order to write your own original Science Fiction story about artificial intelligence.

While we will not workshop the midterm projects in class, you will be required to take at least 2 drafts to the Writing Center and/or our class’s Graduate Assistant for help in crafting and revising your story. You are expected to use the drafting techniques we’ve learned in class in order to work on your story.

The Midterm Project will be graded holistically based on creativity and effective use of the themes and tropes discussed in class.

Final Group Project

For the final Seminar project, you will work in small groups to expand your individual Persuasive Essays into a collaborative, creative project, drawing on course material. You may work in any medium (writing, visual art, video, audio, etc.). The goal of this project is to use a range of rhetorical strategies, explore multiple ways of expressing a single point, and situate persuasive arguments in real-world contexts.

The Final Project will be graded holistically based on the depth of analysis, critical reasoning, and use of textual and other evidence to support the claims.

Extra Credit

You may earn up to 10 points towards the Blog Post grade by submitting an original (made by you, specifically for this class) creative work inspired by one of the texts we’ve read/watched/listened to this semester. You may work in any medium (writing, visual art, video, audio, etc.), and you will be expected to present your project to the class during the “Final Exam” meeting.

Grade Distribution

Blog Posts & Responses – 40%

Midterm Project – 20%

Final Project – 20%

Active Reading/Screening/Listening Notes – 5%

Participation/Discussion – 15%

Grading Scale

A 93-100

A- 90-92.9

B+ 87-89.9

B 83-86.9

B- 80-82.9

C+ 77-79.9

C 73-76.9

C- 70-72.9

D 60-69.9

F 0-59.9

**Additional Resources:**

The Andrew Bodenrader Center for Academic Writing and Composition:

Writing well is not easy, so I strongly encourage you to visit me if you are having difficulties with the reading and/or writing assignments.

Additionally, I strongly encourage you to make use of the Writing Center (Library 122). Beginning the third week of the semester, professional and peer tutors will be available on a walk-in basis (Monday-Thursday from 10 AM- 9 PM; Friday 10 AM- 6PM; Sunday 4-9 PM). Writing tutors can assist you at any stage of the writing process from brainstorming and organizing to sentence-level concerns. If I see that you are having difficulty within a particular area (e.g. sentence fragments) or with a particular assignment, I may require you to meet with a writing tutor. When you go to the Writing Center, please bring a copy of the assignment guidelines as well as a copy of your essay. Please keep in mind that tutors will work with you, but they will not edit or rewrite your papers for you.

Accommodations:

Students must be registered with the Office of Disability Services in order to receive academic accommodations. If you require accommodations and have not registered with the Office please contact the Director of the Disability Office.

**First Year Seminar & Writing Schedule**

All homework assignments are due by the time and date listed. No late assignments will be accepted without the instructor’s prior approval.

This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
| **January** | | | | |
| 22  Week 1 | 23  **Seminar:** Introduction: Definitions  **Writing:** Introduction: Why Write + Active Reading  **Homework Due:** None | 24 | 25 | 26  **Seminar:** *R.U.R.*  **Writing:** Grammar  **Homework Due:**   * Read *R.U.R.* by Karel Capek, Prologue * Active Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) * Write Blog 1 * Write Diagnostic (post to Blackboard + bring 1 hard copy to class) |
| 29  Week 2 | 30 **Last day to add/drop a course**  **Seminar:** *R.U.R*  **Writing:** Grammar  **Homework Due:**   * Read *R.U.R.* Acts 1 & 2 * Active Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) * Write Blog Response 1 | 31 | 1 | 2  **Seminar:** *R.U.R.*  **Writing:** Intro to Analysis  **Homework Due:**   * Read *R.U.R.* Act 3 * Active Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) * Write Blog 2 * Read *Little Seagull Handbook*, W-11—“Tips for Writing a Literary Analysis” |
| **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
| **February** | | | | |
| 5  Week 3 | 6  **Seminar:** *AI: Artificial* Intelligence (Steven Spielberg, 2001)  **Writing:** None (watching film)  **Homework Due:**   * Write Blog Response 2 * Read *Little Seagull Handbook* W-16—“Reading Strategies” | 7 | 8 | 9  **Seminar:** *AI* discussion + The 3 Laws of Robotics  **Writing:** Analysis  **Homework Due:**   * Write Blog 3 * Read “Runaround” by Isaac Asimov * Active Screening and Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) |
| 12  Week 4 | 13  **Seminar:** *Outer Limits* episode “I, Robot”  **Writing:** Analysis  **Homework Due:**   * Write Blog Response 3 * Read *They Say/I Say* Introduction – Chapter 3 * Active Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) | 14 | 15 | 16  **Seminar:** None (Writing Day)  **Writing:** Brainstorming & In-Class Writing  **Homework Due:**   * Write Blog 4 * Read excerpt from *Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott * Active Screening and Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) |
| 19  Week 5 | 20  **Seminar:** None (practice peer review)  **Writing:** Peer Review  **Homework Due:**   * Essay 1 First Draft (upload to Blackboard & bring TWO hard copies to class) | 21 | 22 | 23  **NO CLASS—INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES**  **Homework Due:**   * Essay 1 Second Draft (upload to Blackboard & bring 1 hard copy to conference) |
| 26  Week 6 | 27  **Seminar:** *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*  **Writing:** Blog Response 4 + Creative Writing (intro to Seminar Midterm)  **Homework Due:**   * Read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* By Philip K. Dick, chapters 1-5 * Essay 1 Final Draft (upload to Blackboard & bring 1 hard copy to class) * Active Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) | 28 | 1 | 2  **BRING *LITTLE SEAGULL HANDBOOK* TO CLASS**  **Seminar:** *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*  **Writing:** MLA Citation  **Homework Due:**   * Read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Chapters 6-9 * Write Blog 5 * Active Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) |
| **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
| **March** | | | | |
| 5 Week 7 | 6  **BRING *LITTLE SEAGULL HANDBOOK* TO CLASS**  **Seminar:** *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*  **Writing:** MLA Citation  **Homework Due:**   * Read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Chapters 10-15 * Write Blog Response 5 * Active Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) | 7 | 8 | 9  **Seminar:** *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*  **Writing:** Comparison/Contrast  **Homework Due:**   * Read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Chapters 16-end * Seminar Works Cited Page (upload to Blackboard & bring 1 hard copy to class) * Active Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) |
| 12 | 13  **SPRING BREAK** | 14 | 15 | 16  **SPRING BREAK** |
| 19  Week 8 | 20  **Seminar:** clip from *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, 1969)  **Writing:** None (watching film)  **Homework Due:**   * None! Happy Spring Break! 😊 | 21 | 22 | 23  **Seminar:** *Electric Dreams* (Steve Barron, 1984)  **Writing:** Comparison/Contrast  **Homework Due:**   * Write Blog 6 * Seminar Midterm (upload to Blackboard & bring 1 hard copy to class) * Active Screening Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) |
| 26 Week 9 | 27  **Seminar:** Robot Religion  **Writing:** Brainstorming  **Homework Due:**   * Read “Gus” by Jack McDevitt * Write Blog Response 6 * Active Reading & Screening Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) | 28 | 29 | 30  **Seminar:** *Doomsday Book* vignette “The Heavenly Creature”  **Writing:** Peer Review  **Homework Due:**   * Essay 2 First Draft (upload to Blackboard & bring TWO hard copies to class) |
| **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
| **April** | | | | |
| 2 Week 10 | 3  **NO CLASS—INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES**  **Homework Due:**   * Essay 2 Second Draft (upload to Blackboard & bring 1 hard copy to conference) * Active Screening Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) | 4 | 5 | 6  **Seminar:** *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode “The Measure of a Man”  **Writing:** Persuasion: the rhetorical triangle  **Homework Due:**   * Essay 2 Final Draft (upload to Blackboard & bring 1 hard copy to class) |
| 9 Week 11 | 10  **Seminar:** Can Machines Think? (Alan Turing’s “Computing Machinery and Intelligence)  **Writing:** Persuasion: reading scholarly arguments  **Homework Due:**   * Active Screening Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) | 11 | 12 | 13  **Seminar:** Can Machines Think?  **Writing:** Persuasion: knowing the audience  **Homework Due:**   * Read “Why People Think Computers Can’t” by Marvin Minsky * Blog Post 7 * Active Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) |
| 16 Week 12 | 17  **Seminar:** Should Machines Think?  **Writing:** Persuasion: Choosing evidence  **Homework Due:**   * Read “The Coming Technological Singularity” by Vernor Vinge * Blog Response 7 * Active Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) | 18 | 19 | 20  **Seminar:** Human Rights & Robot Rights  **Writing:** Persuasion: Devil’s Advocate  **Homework Due:**   * Read *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* * Blog Post 8 * Active Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) |
| 23 Week 13 | 24  **Seminar:** Human Rights & Robot Rights  **Writing:** Brainstorming  **Homework Due:**   * Read “Human Rights vs. Robot Rights” by Jennifer Robertson * Blog Response 8 * Active Reading Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) | 25 | 26 | 27  **Seminar:** *TED Radio Hour* episode “Cyborgs Today”  **Writing:** Peer Review  **Homework Due:**   * Essay 3 First Draft (upload to Blackboard & bring TWO hard copies to class) |
| **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** |
| **May** | | | | |
| 30 Week 14 | 1  **NO CLASS—INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES FOR ESSAY 3**  **Homework Due:**   * Essay 3 Second Draft (upload to Blackboard & bring 1 hard copy to conference) * Active Listening Notes (upload to Blackboard + bring to class) | 2 | 3 | 4  **Seminar:** *Robot & Frank*  **Writing:** None (watching film)  **Homework Due:**   * Essay 3 Final Draft (upload to Blackboard & bring 1 hard copy to class) |
| 7 Week 15 | 8  **FINAL “EXAM” DAY/TIME TBA**  **Seminar: Wrap-up + choosing summer novel**  **Writing: Wrap-up**  **Homework Due:**   * Seminar Final Project * Extra Credit Projects | 9 | 10 | 11 |