

Department of English  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

**ENGE3220/UGED3143 Literature and Film**

Instructor: Dr. Carolyn Lau, [carolynlau@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:carolynlau@cuhk.edu.hk).

**About the Course**

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the visions and representations of end times in science fiction literature and film. What is the appeal of post-apocalyptic stories and what do they offer us? What are some of the possible futures that emerge from catastrophe? Topics covered will include time and memory, survival and endurance, and kinship and community. By the end of this course, you will have a broader understanding of what speculative fiction can do, and how strategies of extrapolation and world-building unique to the genre serve as transferable skills in both intellectual and everyday practices.

**Learning Outcomes**

Having successfully completed this course you should be able to:

- acquire an advanced and interdisciplinary grounded vocabulary of the speculative fiction genre
- relate the significance of context to the production and reception of literature and film
- apply aesthetic and theoretical approaches in the interpretation of cultural texts
- investigate, discuss and write critically, reflectively, and analytically

**Set Text (On Course Reserve at the University Library)**

Butler, Octavia E. *Parable of the Sower*. London: Headline, 2019.

Note: Please purchase a copy of this specific edition of the text from the University Bookstore or online bookstores (e.g. bookdepository.com, amazon.com). All page references in class will be based on it.

**Films (On Course Reserve at the University Library)**

*12 Monkeys* (Terry Gilliam, 1995)

*Children of Men* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2006)

*La Jetée* (Chris Marker, 1962)

*Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1984)

## Recommended Readings

Braidotti, Rosi. *The Posthuman*. London: Polity, 2013.

Cox, Alex. *Alex Cox's Introduction to Film: A Director's Perspective*. Harpenden: Kamera Books, 2016.

Francis, Conseula. *Conversations with Octavia Butler*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013.

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Heise, Ursula K. *Imagining Extinction: The Cultural Meanings of Endangered Species*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Paik, Peter Y. *From Utopia to Apocalypse: Science Fiction and the Politics of Catastrophe*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Solnit, Rebecca. *A Paradise Built In Hell: The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster*. New York: Penguin, 2010.

Vint, Sherryl. *Science Fiction: A Guide for the Perplexed*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.

## Online Resources

Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing about Film (9th Edition)*. Boston: Pearson, 2015. (E-book on CUHK Library website)

Writing About Film: Terminology and Starting Prompts

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject\\_specific\\_writing/writing\\_in\\_literature/writing\\_about\\_film/terminology\\_and\\_starting\\_prompts.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_literature/writing_about_film/terminology_and_starting_prompts.html)

The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction

<https://sf-encyclopedia.com/>

## Assessment

Tutorial attendance, preparation and participation 10%

Tutorial presentation 20%

Mid-term paper 30%

Final paper 40%

## Grade Descriptors

**Grade A / Excellent: Outstanding performance on ALL learning outcomes.**

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would surpass the normal expectations at this level and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study. The 'A' grade should be reserved for truly excellent work that exceeds the level expected for the majority of students and are

expected to be achieved only by a small minority.

**Grade A- / Very Good: Generally outstanding performance on ALMOST ALL learning outcomes.**

Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would fully fulfill the normal expectations at this level and occasionally reaches standards that may be common at higher levels of study.

**Grade B+ / Good (Plus): HIGH performance on all learning outcomes, OR HIGH performance on some learning outcomes which compensates WELL for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.**

Demonstrates the ability to apply WELL the principles or skills learned in the course in a comprehensive manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level WELL.

**Grade B / Good: SUBSTANTIAL performance on all learning outcomes, OR SUBSTANTIAL performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.**

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a MORE COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

**Grade B- / Good (Minus): GOOD performance on all learning outcomes, OR GOOD performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.**

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a COMPREHENSIVE manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.

**Grade C+ / Fair (Plus): VERY SATISFACTORY performance on the majority of learning outcomes.**

Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a SOMEWHAT SUSTAINED manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

**Grade C / Fair: SATISFACTORY performance on the majority of learning outcomes.**

Demonstrates the ability to partially apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

**Grade C- / Fair (Minus): SOMEWHAT SATISFACTORY performance on A NUMBER OF learning outcomes.**

Demonstrates the ability to SOMEWHAT apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the BARE basic requirement at this level.

**Grade D+ / Pass (Plus): BARELY SATISFACTORY performance on A FEW learning outcomes.**

Addresses the course inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in some areas while responding minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

**Grade D / Pass: ALMOST BARELY satisfactory performance on VERY FEW learning outcomes.**

Addresses the course inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in very few areas while responding very minimally with possibly tangential content in others.

**Grade F / Failure: Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.**

Fails to address the course and likely does not understand what the course requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point.