Course title and code: English 395: Science Fiction and Speculative Futures

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Photo (optional): Please attach or insert a photo (jpeg or png) that illustrates the course material. Include image credits or a caption, if applicable.

Course description: (Maximum 150 words; should expand significantly on the calendar description and can use promotional language that is not allowed there. Use “you” or “we” as opposed to speaking generally about “students.”)
Never has the future been more uncertain, for humans and all other species on planet Earth. Global climate change and other ecological crises have thrown futurity itself into question. So why bother imagining the future when our very species survival is so speculative?

Writers of Science Fiction – including sub-genres like speculative fiction, biofiction, and cli-fi (climate fiction) – “bother” for different reasons. Some hope dystopian visions will jolt humans into changing the lethal course they’re on; some paint utopian futures to entice people to dream of alternatives. Some SciFi promotes colonial domination of other worlds, while Afrofuturists and Indigenous futurists strive to decolonize Science Fiction’s default settings.

We’ll approach Science Fiction from a Cultural Studies perspective. CS takes the politics of pop culture seriously, including the politics of Science Fiction (novels, t.v., film). From a CS perspective, the future is an object of cultural struggle between powerful speculators in the future and less dominant players who also want a say in the matter.

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<td>First Short Essay</td>
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<td>Creative “Takes” (2 x 10% each)</td>
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**Proposed reading list:**

**Novels (tentative):**
- Jeff Vandermeer, *Annihilation*
- Robert Repino, *Mort(e): War With No Name*
- Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*
- Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*
- Lauren Beukes, *Zoo City*

**Short stories (tentative):** by Ursula Le Guin, Eden Robinson, Richard Van Camp, Liu Cixin, etc.