In this class we will be looking at science fiction of the “hard” variety as novels, short stories, and movies. We will examine artificial intelligence, time travel, star travel, aliens, nuclear destruction, ‘last man on earth’ scenarios, and run-away science.

Sci-fi is speculative fiction, often of the ‘cautionary tale’ variety. We’ll see if we can determine whether the science is, indeed, ‘hard’ enough to be probable, and why this particular author has opted to tell his/her tale in the way we find it at the historical moment the tale was written/published.

You will write two papers 8–10 pages on a topic of your choosing, approved by me. Your second paper will incorporate three or more outside, critical sources (i.e., fiction does not count towards the three). If you are a week or more early with a serious, thorough draft, you can revise. And you will be talking about the readings a lot! Participation counts!

Books (available at Stony Books):

Heinlein, *Starship Troopers*
Asimov, *I, Robot*
Miller, *A Canticle for Leibowitz*
Forward, *Dragon’s Egg*
Crichton, *Prey*

There will be a course packet of short stories, plus a short novel and a LONG short story to download from the net.

Absence and lateness

Please try to be on time and to curb those pesky cell phones from warbling their siren calls in class! You can be absent twice without having your grade suffer, but after that there will be points off. Also, please don’t be late with papers.

Grade:

Papers: 2 x 25%
Participation: 25%
Randomly timed quizzes: 25%
Plagiarism:

…is a bad thing! Always give credit to all your sources. If plagiarism is discovered, the best thing that can happen is F for the course… And there’s that BORING Q course one has to take. SBU subscribes to a plagiarism-detection website, and it is really easy for instructors to use. Moreover, the time spent searching for lovely things to plagiarize is arguably longer than what it will take to craft a personal paper. Again, please don’t!

Americans with Disabilities Act:

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Academic Integrity:

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/

Critical Incident Management:

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Read texts closely with attention to nuances of language, content and form.

2. Write focused, organized and convincing analytical essays in clear, standardized English prose, making use of feedback from instructor.

4. Participate in discussions by listening to others’ perspectives, asking productive questions, and articulating ideas with nuance and clarity.

5. Communicate complex ideas clearly.

6. Know a broad range of English and American literatures with an understanding of how texts emerge from, respond to and shape historical and cultural contexts.

7. Develop and hone critical thinking skills.

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**Syllabus (subject to change...):**

January 28: Introduction and a look at the wormholes of *Timeline*, just because we can!

January 30: *The Time Machine*, a bit more than first 1/2

February 4: *The Time Machine* and “To Serve Man”

February 6: Watch *Deep Impact*

February 11: Continue and discuss *Deep Impact* with a view to “last survivor” scenario

February 13: *I, Robot*, first 3 stories

February 18: *I, Robot*, next 3 stories

February 20: *I, Robot*, last 3 stories

February 25: Cuts from *I, Robot*, the movie. Comparison to book

February 27: *Dragon’s Egg*, pp. 1–79

March 4: *Dragon’s Egg*, pp. 79–171

March 6: *Dragon’s Egg*, pp. 172–242

March 11: *Dragon’s Egg*, pp. 242–end

March 13: *Canticle* Part I

Spring Break

March 25: *Canticle* Part II
March 27: *Canticle* Part III

April 1: Watch *Planet of the Apes*

**FIRST PAPER DUE**

April 3: Continue with and discuss *Planet of the Apes*

April 8: “Lungfish”

April 10: *Starship Troopers*, pp. 1–97

April 15: *Starship Troopers*, pp. 98–201

April 17: *Starship Troopers*, pp. 202–end, plus a few cuts from the movie

April 22: *Prey*, from front material–129

April 24: *Prey*, 130–240 (... and then Thanksgiving)

April 29: *Prey*, 245–end

May 1: “Nightfall”

**SECOND PAPER DUE**

May 6: More “Nightfall and “Desertion”

May 8: “The Cold Equations.” Taking up the slack,