

Speculative Fiction and Cultures of Science (SFCS) Minor Requirements Worksheet

The minor in Speculative Fiction and Cultures of Science explores intersections among speculative fiction, science and technology studies (STS), and traditions of speculative thought. We study the pervasive role of speculative discourses in public culture, investigating the complex and reciprocal exchanges among futuristic discourses, research agendas, public policy decisions, media texts, and daily life in technologically saturated societies.

Using the combined perspectives of cultural studies and STS helps students develop critical literacy about their media-dominated landscape through which to understand its discourses of science and the future. Bringing speculative fictions and STS into dialogue, our scholars focus on understanding technological change in specific contexts by analyzing the texts and practices that have responded to, critiqued, and build upon the ways science shapes our cultural, material, and economic milieu. Speculative thinking and speculative fictions are central to many of the most compelling contemporary research concerns, such as the Anthropocene, climate change, genetic engineering, and discourses of the posthuman. We examine the histories and cultures of science, technology, and medicine to understand the role culture plays in the production of science and the reciprocal way changes in science and technology shape culture. Our program uniquely emphasizes the role of popular culture and the genres of speculative fiction, in particular, for serving as an imaginative testing ground for technological innovation, articulating hopes and anxieties regarding technological change, and mediating public understandings of science and its applications.

1. Requirements (24 units)

a) Four (4) units from

SFCS 001 or from the approved substitutes ENGL 146(E-Z)/MCS 146 (E-Z) or ENGL 179C or ANTH 162.

b) Sixteen (16) additional units, selected from the following groups. Students must take at least four (4) units from two of the three groups.

GROUP ONE:

Fine Arts; selected from

CRWT 162; CRWT 172; MCS 146;

MCS 133; MCS 151G; MCS 153 (E-Z);

MCS 170; TFDP 166C.

GROUP TWO: Humanities; selected from

CPLT 118; CPAC 132; ENGL 179A; ENGL 179B;

ENGL 179C; ENGL 179D; ENGL 179T; JPN 184;

HIST 105; HIST 107; HISA 147; MCS 147; MCS 149; MCS 157; MCS 158; MCS 166; PHIL 137; PHIL 167.

GROUP THREE: Social Sciences; selected from ANTH 144F; ANTH 144E; GSST 106; GSST 161; GSST 185; GSST 187; GSST 189.

c) Four (4) units from SFCS 193 (senior seminar) or CPLT 193 or ENGL 189 or MCS 193 or PHIL 193

All students must take the introductory course (SFCS 001) and the senior seminar or approved equivalents listed above. There is no required order in which elective courses must be taken but credit in SFCS 001 is required for entry into SFCS 193.

Lower-Division Courses

SFCS 001 Introduction to Speculative Fiction and Cultures of Science 4 Lecture, 3 hours; extra reading, 3 hours. Prerequisite(s): none. Investigates the relationship among science, technology, medicine, and the genre of science fiction. Emphasizes exchanges between technology and popular culture. Covers fiction by H.G. Wells, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Nancy Kress and critical readings by Steven Shafer, Donna Haraway, and Bruno Latour.

SFCS 193 Senior Seminar in Speculative Fiction and Cultures of Science 4 Lecture, 3 hours; extra reading, 3 hours. Prerequisite(s): SFCS 001; or consent of instructor. Develops skills in the formulation and investigation of research questions in science fiction and technoculture studies. Synthesizes and integrates knowledge and skills obtained in the minor. Includes a major research project and presentations by guest speakers.