



Course Syllabus

Course Number / Meeting Times / Location:

ENGL 450-01 / MW 3:30-4:45 / A106

Course Title:

Senior Seminar – Cyborgs & Gender, Readings in Speculative Fiction

Instructor: Dr. Hanan Muzaffar

Office Location: B530

Email: hmuzaffar@auk.edu.kw

Office Hours: UTR 9-10 & 12-1

Available also via [chat](#) or by [appointment](#)

AUK Mission Statement:

The American University of Kuwait is a liberal arts institution dedicated to teaching, learning, and scholarship. The University offers programs that provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for lifelong learning and professional success. AUK enriches society by fostering an environment that encourages critical thinking, effective communication, personal growth, service, and leadership.

Department/College Mission Statement:

In keeping with the American University of Kuwait's liberal arts tradition, the English Department provides students with the ability to use the English language effectively, think critically, cultivate a lifelong process of inquiry, and reach their full potential as creative individuals and engaged citizens. Through its emphasis on developing cultural awareness, rhetorical flexibility, information literacy, and appreciation for literary traditions, the department prepares students for the increasingly complex challenges of the 21st century.

Catalog Course Description:

This capstone course is the culminating opportunity for English majors to demonstrate skills of literary interpretation, critical thinking, research and analytical writing. Widely varied topics are addressed in the context of current critical discourse. Students are required to make a scholarly presentation and write a long research paper. Senior standing. Co-requisite: ENGL 415

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):

PLO1	Recognize a wide range of literary words of world cultures, sub-cultures, and minority groups.
PLO2	Compare and contrast texts produced in different periods and genres.
PLO3	Identify and discuss representative authors, works and movements.
PLO4	Analyze cultural and literary texts using theory.
PLO5	Develop independent thought and judgment to carry out research projects.
PLO6	Develop and communicate ideas clearly in writing.
PLO7	Evaluate cultural and literary texts within socio-political, historical, and economic contexts.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs):**Corresponding PLO:**

CLO1	Account for the current state of scholarship about the chosen topic through the preparation of a bibliography and/or literature review	PLO1, PLO3,
CLO2	Demonstrate critical and creative thinking through informed seminar discussions and formal responses to readings, lectures, and presentations	PLO2, PLO4
CLO3	Evaluate cultural and literary texts within socio-political, historical and economic contexts	PLO7
CLO4	Make a major, lengthy, definitive presentation to a well-informed audience	PLO6
CLO5	Write an intellectually valuable, meticulously researched, and technically competent paper	PLO4, PLO5, PLO6
CLO6	Demonstrate mastery of communication in oral and written forms using appropriate rhetorical and literary conventions	PLO4, PLO5, PLO6

Course Delivery/Methodology:

The course focuses on the study of speculative fiction as seen in its sub-genres: sci fi, fantasy, horror and alternate history, with a focus on cyborg manifestations in these works seen through the study of gender theory. We begin by reading Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* to set the theme for our future readings, then proceed with a selection of novels and movies in the genre of speculative fiction, starting with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and ending with Margaret Atwood's *Oryx & Crake*. In between, we alternate theoretical article with novels in the genres of sci-fi, horror and fantasy.

Required Textbooks:

1. [The Gendered Cyborg](#), by Gill Kirkup
2. [Frankenstein](#), by Mary Shelley – 1818 edition
3. [Interview with a Vampire](#), by Anne Rice
4. *Stardust*, by Neil Gaiman (AUK eCampus Store – print only, requires 2 weeks to arrive)
5. [The Left Hand of Darkness](#), by Ursula le Guin
6. *Mist*, by Stephen King (AUK eCampus Store – available online and in print)
7. [Oryx & Crake](#), by Margaret Atwood

Optional Textbooks:

1. [Body Drift](#), by Arthur Broker
2. [Science, Gender and History](#), by Suparna Banerjee
3. [How We Became Posthuman](#), by N Katherine Hayles (ACLS Humanities via AUK Library)

Other Media: (on vampires, robots, superheroes, fairies, aliens, ghosts, etc)

1. Movies/TV Shows: *A Space Odyssey*, *All Systems Red*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, *Planet of the Apes*, *Matrix*, *Terminator*, *RoboCob*, *The Stepford Wives*
2. TV Shows: *Star Trek*, *Battlestar Gallactica*, *Game of Thrones*
3. Video games: *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Zelda*

Unless indicated, all books are available through ProQuest at the AUK library. I recommend creating a folder for this class to save them all there (it will ask you to sign in to create a folder).

Evaluations and Grading:

Evaluation Type	Weight	Corresponding CLO
In-class Work & Participation	10%	CLO2
Reflection on Novel 500-800 words (best 4 out of 6)	10%	CLO2, CLO3, CLO6
Forum Post on Article 50-150 words (best 4 out of 6)	10%	CLO2, CLO6
Group Presentation on Movie in 10 minutes	10%	CLO3
Midterm Essay 1000-2000 words (comparative analysis of novels, movies, and articles read so far, with a focused theme/thesis)	20%	CLO6
Research Proposal & Bibliography	10%	CLO1
Research Presentation in 10 minutes each	10%	CLO6
Final Research Paper 3000-4500 words (analysis of class-related theme in a speculative fiction or other media of choice, supported by 5 peer-reviewed resources)	20%	CLO5, CL6
Total	100%	

AUK Official Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage	University Points
A	94-100	4.0
A-	90-93	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	84-86	3.0
B-	80-83	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	74-76	2.0
C-	70-73	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	64-66	1.0
D-	60-63	0.7
F	0-59	0.0

AUK Attendance Policy:

Any student who misses more than 15% of class sessions of any course during a semester should expect to fail, unless she/he submits documented evidence to the course instructor of inpatient medical care, death of an immediate family member, academic instructional activities, or national athletic activities. If excused, students are required to satisfy all coursework due or assigned during their absence as determined by the course instructor. If a student does not submit documented evidence for her/his absence exceeding the limit, it is the student's responsibility to withdraw from the course by the specified deadline, as indicated on the academic calendar. Students who withdraw from a course receive a grade of "W". Students who do not withdraw from a course nor submit supporting documents for excessive absences will receive a grade of "FN" (failure for non-attendance).

Code of Academic Honesty and Integrity:

Upon admission to the American University of Kuwait, students agree to act responsibly in all areas of academic, personal and social conduct and to take full responsibility for their individual and collective action. Such regulations are found in the American University of Kuwait Catalogue, Student Handbook, and the AUK website at www.auk.edu.kw. Any question of interpretation regarding the code of academic honesty and Integrity shall be reported to the

appropriate academic dean. The Code shall be reviewed annually at the discretion of the academic deans. Any student or student organization found to have committed the cited violations or misconduct, either on or off campus, is subject to the disciplinary sanctions outlined in adjudication procedures.

Plagiarism:

The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, an attempt of an individual to claim the work of another as the product of his or her own thoughts regardless of whether that work has been published. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, quoting improperly or paraphrasing text or other written materials without proper citation on an exam, term paper, homework, or other written material submitted to an instructor as one’s own work. Plagiarism also includes handing in a paper to an instructor that was purchased from a term paper service or downloaded from the Internet and presenting another person’s academic work as one’s own.

Cheating:

The term “cheating” includes but is not limited to, copying homework assignments from another student; working together with another individual on a take-home test or homework when not approved by the instructor, looking at and/or copying text, notes or another person’s paper during an examination when not permitted to do so. Cheating also includes the giving of work information to another student to be copied and/or used as his or her own. This includes but is not limited to giving someone answers to exam questions either when the exam is being given or after having taken an exam; informing another student of specific questions that appear or have appeared on an exam in the same academic semester; giving or selling a term paper, report, project or other restricted written materials to another student.

Academic Support:

- **Library:** The AUK Library provides you with the necessary support to conduct research and find additional readings for your class work. Need to research but don’t know where to start? Not sure how to find and use online resources (books, data, articles...etc.)? Not sure how to cite a source or develop a reference list? Ask a librarian! Research help is available through email, MS Teams, Zoom. Contact the library at: library@auk.edu.kw or go to <https://www.auk.edu.kw/academics/Library> to begin your search!
- **Writing and Tutoring Center:** The Writing and Tutoring Center (WTC) focuses on empowering students to become independent and successful learners by developing their literacy skills, enhancing their understanding, and helping them improve their academic and study skills. WTC offers tutoring and writing consultations to all AUK students. Students can schedule appointments through the [TutorTrac](#) online appointment system, or email wtc@auk.edu.kw for assistance.
- **Disability Accommodations:** AUK provides equal and inclusive educational environment in order to enable all students to meet and perform requisite academic standards and to participate in the opportunities and activities of its community. If you believe you can benefit from accommodations for a learning, physical, or mental health disability, [click here to book a session through the Counseling Center/Disability Services Booking Page](#), to ask about disability services at AUK, initiate an accommodation plan, or receive disability services. You can also email counseling@auk.edu.kw if you need assistance in booking a session.

Course Policies:

- Taking pictures or videos in class is prohibited, unless you get permission in advance.
- Argue well, for or against, but never demean or insult another person's opinion.
- Your grades and other class-related issues are a private matter between teacher and student. I will not discuss your grades or class performance with family, friends, or acquaintances.
- Arrive to class on time; repeated late arrivals will not be accepted.
- Guide to academic writing & grading rubric provided in class.

Late/Missing Work Policy:

If you have circumstances that result in delays towards due dates for submission, request a meeting to explain these circumstances. If the reason is valid, you will be allowed one late work only during the semester, with a penalty that can go up to 10% of the grade for the delay. Late work will not be accepted if one full week passes from due date.

Communication Policy:

Please be sure to use your official AUK email account, write your full name, and indicate which class and section you are taking when you send me an email. If you have a question, please check the syllabus first and if your question is not answered there, then please feel free to send an email and I will be happy to clarify. I respond to questions via email within 24 hours of receiving them; if I do not respond within 24 hours, please re-send the email. Emails sent on weekends will be responded to on Sunday.

Technology Issues:

All assignments must be submitted through Moodle. However, you may experience trouble submitting an assignment due to technology or internet issues. If such a situation does arise and you are unable to submit your assignment through Moodle, please send me an email at hmuzaffar@auk.edu.kw and include the **completed** assignment. Please make sure that you email me the assignment **before** the deadline as this documents that you did finish everything by the due date and time, but that you just had a technology issue. This will ensure that your assignment will be accepted. Once the technology or internet issue is resolved, please upload the assignment to Moodle. In general, always be sure to frequently save your files and keep backups of your assignments.

Syllabus Changes:

There may be changes to the schedule and syllabus during the semester. When this happens, I will inform you in class and over email.

Course Schedule: (refer to Moodle for the latest updates)

• 6 February - 12 February
• Intro & Syllabus
• Start reading <u>Mary Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> (1818)</u>
• 13 February - 19 February
• Read/discuss: <u>Haraway's <i>Cyborg Manifesto</i> – in textbook (1:3)</u>
• Read/discuss: Freud's <i>The Uncanny</i>
• Post in Forum on Haraway/Freud - in class
• 20 February - 26 February
• Discussion: <i>Frankenstein</i> , sci-fi, horror, monster/cyborg/creation
• Group 1 Movie Presentation: <i>Alien</i>
• Reflection 1 on <i>Frankenstein</i> - in class
• Start reading <u>Anne Rice's <i>Interview with a Vampire</i> (1976)</u>

• <u>27 February - 5 March</u>
HOLIDAY
• <u>6 March - 12 March</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: <i>Interview</i>, horror, goth, vampires • <u>Reflection 2</u> on <i>Interview</i> due before Monday class • Start reading Neil Gaiman's <i>Stardust</i> (1997)
• <u>13 March - 19 March</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read/discuss: <u>Lykke</u> – in textbook (1:5) • Group 2 Movie Presentation: <i>Dracula</i> • Post in Forum on Lykke due before Monday class
• <u>20 March - 26 March</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: <i>Stardust</i>, fantasy, fairies • <u>Reflection 3</u> on <i>Stardust</i> due before Monday class • Start reading Ursula le Guin's <i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i> (1969)
• <u>27 March - 2 April</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read/discuss: <u>Balsamo</u> – in textbook (2:5) • Post in Forum on Balsamo due before Monday class • <u>Midterm Essay</u> due end of Wednesday
• <u>3 April - 9 April</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: <i>Left Hand</i>, sci-fi, space, planetary, androgynous • <u>Reflection 4</u> on <i>Left Hand</i> due before Monday class • Start reading Stephen King's <i>The Mist</i> (1980)
• <u>10 April - 16 April</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read/discuss: TBD • Group 3 Movie Presentation: TBD • Post in Forum on TBD due before Monday class
• <u>17 April - 23 April</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: <i>The Mist</i>, horror, creatures • <u>Reflection 5</u> on <i>The Mist</i> due before Monday class • Start reading Margaret Atwood's <i>Oryx & Crake</i> (2003)
• <u>24 April - 30 April</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read/discuss: TBD • Group 4 Movie Presentation: TBD • Discuss Research Paper • Post in Forum on TBD due before Monday class
• <u>1 May - 7 May</u>
HOLIDAY
• <u>8 May - 14 May</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: <i>Oryx</i>, speculative fiction, creature/cyborg/creation • <u>Reflection 6</u> on <i>Oryx</i> due before Monday class
• <u>15 May - 21 May</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read/discuss: TBD • Group 5 Movie Presentation: TBD • Post in Forum on TBD due before Monday class • Proposal & Annotated Bibliography due end of Wednesday
• <u>22 May - 28 May</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper Presentations
• <u>29 May - 4 June</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper Presentations • Final <u>Research Paper</u> due end of Wednesday