SHEPAUG VALLEY SCHOOL
Course Syllabus 2022-2023

Grade 12
Science Fiction **Mr. Taylor**

"Science fiction is any idea that occurs in the head and doesn't exist yet, but soon will."
-Ray Bradbury

"Science fiction encourages us to explore...all the futures, good and bad, that the human mind can envision."
-Marion Zimmer Bradley

Overall Course Objective and Description:
In this course, students will explore the science fiction genre from its earliest days in fairy tales to the novels and cinema of the present day. Students will analyze the factors that have contributed to the creation of these stories and the questions about our humanity that they attempt to answer. These themes extend to individuals, societies, and generations to come. Topics may include: conflicts; the struggle for human rights, the impact of technology, the power of innovation. The Shepaug Learner Outcomes of *Defending Conclusions and Judgments* and *Answering a Call to Citizenship* are a focus of this course. Within the curriculum, students use a wide range of reading ,writing and creative strategies to develop and refine their ability to appreciate the relevance of science fiction in our world today. The Shepaug learner outcomes inform all instructional decisions.

Classroom Expectations
- *Diligence*: students are expected to make a serious commitment to consistent effort and to thoughtful revision of their work.
- *Participation*: students are expected to share ideas, to provide positive encouragement to their classmates, and to engage in critical discussion.
- *Respect*: students are to treat everyone in our learning community with kindness and respect at all times.
- *Preparedness*: students should come to every class with a pen or pencil, a writing notebook, a course folder that contains the day's reading and assignments.

Shepaug Learner Outcomes
Everything in this course is rooted in our four Learner Outcomes:
1. *Defending Conclusions and Judgements*
2. *Engaging in the Creative Process*
3. *Solving Problems*
4. *Answering a Call to Citizenship*

Essential Questions
- Does science fiction provide us with ideas, concepts, and/or narratives that can deepen our understanding of society, the self, and/or technology?
- Does science fiction offer useful ideas for human advancement?

- Is technology a great benefit or a threat to human freedom and happiness?
- What should we build and why?
- Does scientific knowledge undermine spirituality?
- How do science fiction writers make use of traditional literary techniques like characterization, plot development, figurative and poetic language, and narrative voice?

Units of Study

1. Researching the Great Writers of Science Fiction (2 weeks)
2. Great Sci-Fi Short Stories (4 weeks)
3. Welcome to Dystopia (3 weeks)
4. Great Science Fiction Novels (10 weeks)

Grading Policy

Your grade will be a reflection of your courtesy, diligence, and punctuality, as well as the quality and thoroughness of your work. Each assignment (formatives, interims, and summatives) will be worth a determined number of points. **Formatives will comprise 20% of your grade, Interims 40%, and Summatives 40%.**

Late Work Policy (Interim and Summative)

Students are expected to complete all assigned work so that learning can be properly assessed and teaching can be properly adjusted. There will be a penalty for late work. For the most part, this penalty will be one-half letter grade up to five days. Late work will be accepted up to five school days after the due date. In the case of extenuating circumstances that require an extension beyond five days, a conference will be held to determine a reasonable, structured timeline.

Late Homework Policy (Formative)

Each homework assignment is given a letter grade. Late or incomplete homework will not result in full credit. In some cases, late homework cannot be accepted, for example, if the teacher has reviewed the work and given all answers in class.

Materials/Resources

1. *The Science Fiction Hall of Fame*, edited by Robert Silverberg
2. *Cosmicomics,* by Italo Calvino
3. Short stories by authors including: Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, Ray Bradbury, Daniel Keyes, Ursula le Guin, Octavia Butler, and William Gibson
4. *Star Trek* episodes (clips), by Gene Rodenberry
5. Nonfiction articles on innovation and the future
6. *Brave New World* and *Brave New World Revisited,* by Aldous Huxley
7. Ted Talks and Interviews with scientists, innovators, and philosophers

Academic Commitment

At the end of each marking period, teachers determine which students have exhibited a strong commitment to their studies. For that marking period, students recognized for their strong commitment, in one or more courses, will receive "Academic Commitment" recognition for each applicable course. Academic Commitment is recorded on the report card and the transcript. Essentially, strong commitment involves:

- Demonstrating purpose
- Setting and pursuing short and long term goals
- Demonstrating perseverance
- Producing quality work

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