

FOLSOM CORDOVA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Science Fiction as Literature

Date: January 2015

Course Length: 1 Term/Year

Proposed Grade Level(s): 11-12

Subject Area/Credits: Elective

Grading: A-F

Prerequisites: English 9-10

Intent to Pursue 'A- G' College Prep Status: Yes No

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Science Fiction as Literature is a one-term class in which students will define, analyze, and interpret the genres of Science Fiction through influential works in novels, short stories, and films. This English 11/12 class will include expository, persuasive, and descriptive writing as well as analysis of both fiction and non-fiction materials related to the overall genre of Science Fiction. Students are expected to respond to course works critically and creatively as well. Students will do outside of class reading from an approved list, generally aligned to the sub-genres being studied. By the end of the course, students are expected to have an understanding of the genres, be able to engage critically with science fiction texts, and identify their broad cultural impact.

GENERAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course students will:

- Recognize science-fiction as a complex, diverse, and intellectual genre of storytelling.
- Have read a variety of texts, traditional and nontraditional, within the science-fiction genre.
- Understand the nuance of the science-fiction genre.
- Analyze authorial intent in variety of texts.
- Make connections between subgenres and the world we live in.
- Publish an original piece of science-fiction that displays an understanding of the characteristics of subgenres of science-fiction

CCSS READING COMPONENT:

- Students will read a variety of multi-genre texts.

CCSS WRITING COMPONENT:

- Multi-draft analytical, expository, and argumentative writing.
- Revising, editing, and publishing

CCSS SPEAKING AND LISTENING COMPONENT:

- Class discussions
- Discussions in literary circles
- Socratic seminars
- Presentation of culminating project

DETAILED UNITS OF INSTRUCTION:

Unit 1: The Vocabulary of Science Fiction:

Big Idea: This genre bears with it specific features and vocabulary that are not necessarily characteristic of other genres of writing.

- **Cognitive Estrangement**
- **Existentialism**
- **Utopian Ideals**
- **Dystopian Reality**
- **Science and Technology**
- **Feminism and Women in Science Fiction** (*Alien, The Hunger Games, Divergent, Voyager, Outlander, The Handmaid's Tale*)
- **Traditional Expectations of the genre** (extraterrestrials, other worlds, futuristic settings).

Unit 2: Dystopian/Post-Apocalyptic Lit:

Big idea: Authors use this genre of fiction to predict or warn of eventual consequences of human behavior. These stories speculate on human progress or the lack thereof and usually emphasize an individual in a hostile or indifferent universe. The hard science of this genre allows readers to observe how some element of science or technology has affected societies and cultures.

Themes: Individual Choice & Responsibility vs. Unilateral political powers

- *Anchor text: 1984*
- *Student choice: Ender's Game, I, Robot, Do Android's Dream of Electric Sheep?, The Road, The Handmaid's Tale, World War Z*
- *Supplemental "texts": Blade Runner, Minority Report, Twelve Monkeys, Total Recall?, Movie Versions, Minority Report, Star Wars, Star Trek, Total Recall, 2001 a Space Odyssey, Back to the Future*

Unit 3: Heroic/Fantasy Fiction and the Anti-Hero:

Big Idea: The stories that we produce in the present are the product of centuries of storytelling, rooted in archetypal plots, characters, etc. Some authors intentionally subvert these archetypes in order to emphasize a new way of thinking.

Fantasy fiction allows readers to observe worlds whose natural laws are inherently contrary to our own (Cognitive Estrangement)

- *Anchor Texts: Star Wars, The Watchmen (Graphic Novels)*
- *Student Choice: The Lord of the Rings Trilogy, Harry Potter, Chronicles of Narnia, Tales of Earth sea, Beowulf, Arthurian Legend Stuff, V for Vendetta, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, A Song of Ice and Fire, Star Wars*
- *Supplemental "texts": Film versions, Willow, The Never-ending Story, Labyrinth, Pan's Labyrinth, The Princess Bride, Hellboy, Donnie Darko, Edward Scissorhands*

Unit 4: Cult Classics/Horror:

Big Idea: Authors use horror to play on the fears that humans naturally hold and readers value horror because it allows an audience to experience true evil or ugliness and be set apart from it to reaffirm the audience's own goodness, beauty, and humanity.

- *Anchor text: The Shining*
- *Student Choice: It, The Stand, Dracula, Interview with the Vampire, Frankenstein, Something Wicked This Way Comes, The Silence of the Lambs, The Exorcist, The Turn of the Screw, The Sphere*
- *Supplemental "texts": Film Versions, Black & White Horror, Addams Family, Twilight Zone, etc.*

Culminating Assignment: Create an original piece of science fiction that illustrates key concepts of at least two sub-genres of science-fiction and indicate how each concept is evident within the piece. (*How does the piece qualify as fantasy? Technological fiction? Political and social science fiction? Speculative fiction?*)

TEXTBOOKS AND READING MATERIALS:

Teacher created materials, focused novels, anchor texts, and supplemental texts.

COMMON CORE AND STATE CONTENT STANDARDS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry); evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grades 11-12 [here](#).)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

DISTRICT ESLR'S TO BE ADDRESSED:

- **Self-Directed Learners:** Students will be responsible for independent reading and participation in literature circles, reading high-interest texts, which will foster discipline and time management.
- **Effective Communicators:** Students will actively participate in class wide and small group discussions as well as use blogs to critique each other's work, thus reinforcing the importance of communication.
- **Quality Producers/Performers:** Students will publish an original piece of science fiction that represents a culmination of their learning throughout the semester.
- **Constructive Thinkers:** Students will translate what they have learned about science fiction to look at the world through a more critical lens.
- **Collaborative Workers:** Students will work together as a class to better understand the nuances of science fiction, its importance in and connection to the real world, and how those concepts are evident in their independent reading.
- **Responsible Citizens:** Students will hone academic skills and develop responsibility through regular, active participation in classroom discussions and activities which will stimulate student appreciation for a respectful and intellectual learning environment.

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