

Other Worlds and the Age of Wonder Required Reading for “Future I”

The Honors College
Florida International University
IDH 3035 – Spring 2023

Contact Information

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Course Description

In *Future Shock*, Alvin Toffler argued for the study of science fiction as a means of leading “young minds through an imaginative exploration of the jungle of political, social, psychological, and ethical issues that will confront” them in the future. This course explores the ways in which alternate worlds and futuristic times are imagined, and how these visions at once radically transform our models of reality and identity and prepare us to confront such radical transformations. Students will read (and watch) some of the great works of science fiction from the past 100 years. These will serve as subjects for an imaginative exploration of a host of issues: from changes in technology and the environment to transformation of lifestyles and relationships — indeed, even of our very humanity. They will explore boundaries of our experience of our world and others. Finally, they will apply their own powers invention to the creation in as means to confront the shock of the future.

Course Requirements

Please take the time to read through the description of each course requirement. If you have any questions, talk to me early in the semester. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments are to be turned in as a **hard copy at the start of class** on the date it is due.

All written assignments should be printed double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman font. Margins for the pages should be 1 inch on all sides and the style should conform to some standard (preferably the [Chicago Manual of Style](#)). You may use either footnotes or endnotes. No cover page is necessary. You are advised to carefully **proofread all papers** before submitting them.

Class Participation (20%) As with all Honors seminars, class participation and discussion is an essential component. While there is no attendance requirement, missing class will limit your participation time and thus affect your participation grade. However, merely showing up for attendance does not constitute an A in class participation. You are expected to come to class prepared and to participate intelligently and fully.

Short Fiction Assignment (20%) Early in the semester, you will write an original piece of flash fiction (250-500 words) during a workshop in class. Using the tools learned during the workshop, you will flesh out the story by writing a world-building back story. Finally, you will rewrite the

original piece with the world-building elements in mind. The final writing may be longer than the original, without however exceeding 1,000 words.

Annotated Bibliography (20%) You will locate, cite, and annotate three scholarly articles relevant to this course. Annotations will consist of a brief summary of the author's thesis, an analysis of how well the author supported that thesis, and your assessment of how the article contributes to the understanding of the future. Each annotation should be 500-750 words. **The bibliography is due at the start of class on 2/16.** All written assignments should be printed double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman font. Margins for the pages should be 1 inch on all sides and the style should conform to some standard (preferably the *Chicago Manual of Style*). You may use either footnotes or endnotes. No cover page is necessary.

Infographic (20%) An infographic is a detailed, visually attractive representation of information, data or knowledge intended to present information quickly and clearly. For this assignment, you will create a visual graphic organizer that highlights a major idea discussed in class this semester. The type of organization is up to you, and you may propose your own topic; but all topics must be approved by me. (Examples of organizations/topics include: timeline of an event/age, cartography, linguistics, genealogical chart, main ideas of a work, etc.) **A proposal for your infographic is due at the start of class on 2/23.** We will go over examples of infographics in class, and topics can focus on regions, cities, journeys, or any other compelling theme that ties the components together. **The final infographic must be emailed to me by 11:59 PM on 3/23.**

Futurism Essay (20%) For this assignment you will be working with a partner to produce a forecast of the future based on your researched understanding of the present. Teams will choose one topic and submit a proposal early in the semester. I will try to make teams interdisciplinary — that is, composed of students with different majors. Each team member will draw on his or her expertise, and utilize the research methods, of his or her discipline to complete the paper.

A proposal for your essay is due at the start of class on 3/30. The completed essay is due at the start of class on 4/20. All written assignments should be printed double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman font. Margins for the pages should be 1 inch on all sides and the style should conform to some standard. You may use either footnotes or endnotes. No cover page is necessary.

Course Texts

Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (Bantam 1984) | ISBN 978- 0553277371

Additional readings will be provided as PDFs on the Canvas site.

We do not have a literature *of* the future for use in these courses, but we do have literature *about* the future, consisting not only of the great utopias but also of contemporary science fiction . . . Science fiction has immense value as a mind-stretching force for the creation of the habit of anticipation. Our children should be studying Arthur C. Clarke, William Tenn, Robert Heinlein, Ray Bradbury, and Robert Sheckley, not because these writers can tell them about rocket ships

and time machines but, more important, these children as adults. Science fiction should be required reading for Future I.

Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock*

Honors College Policies and Requirements

Academic Misconduct Procedures and Policies

In The Honors College, the term “honor” refers both to academic accomplishment and character. Students in Honors should therefore adhere to and be held to the highest standards of personal academic accountability. Academic dishonesty in any form, including plagiarism, is antithetical to the very definition of being an Honors student at FIU. Consequently, an Honors College student found responsible for academic misconduct will be dismissed from the College.

An Honors faculty member may bring charges of academic misconduct against an Honors student if the faculty member suspects plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct. The faculty member will decide whether to pursue informal resolution, file formal resolution charges, or take no further action, and will follow the procedures outlined in the Academic Misconduct Procedures available at <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/academic-integrity/index.php> . Please refer to the following documents for additional information: FIU Student Handbook: <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/about/student-handbook/index.php>

Student Portfolios

The Honors College will be using a portfolio method to assess students’ learning outcomes. The portfolio allows for maximum flexibility in gauging student learning. Students decide (with instructor consultation) what “artifacts” or assignments to include for consideration in their portfolios to demonstrate successful achievement of each of five key student learning outcomes over the 4-year Honors experience. Portfolios provide a rich context for students to show what they have learned and to explain their learning process. Because the Honors curriculum is meant to be thought-provoking and reflective, student self-assessment through portfolios will facilitate learning and provide in-depth assessment. Each Honors College course includes at least one assignment that could potentially fit portfolio requirements. <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/portfolio/>

Honors Education in the Arts (HEARTS)

The HEARTS program is designed to give Honors College students opportunities to “explore and appreciate different artistic and cultural traditions and modes of artistic expression. HEARTS will also serve as a clearinghouse (and curatorial framework) for our students to experience the arts on campus and in the community by providing them with information about cultural activities and access to performances with free or discounted tickets. <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/hearts/>

Resources:

Panthers Care & Counseling & Psychological Services

If you are looking for help for yourself or a fellow classmate, Panthers Care encourages you to express any concerns you may come across as it relates to any personal behavior concerns or worries you have, for the classmate’s well-being or yours; you are encouraged to share your concerns with FIU’s Panthers Care website.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers free and confidential help for anxiety, depression, stress, and other concerns that life brings. Learn more about CAPS at caps.fiu.edu. Professional counselors are available for same-day appointments. Don’t wait to call 305-348-2277 to set up a time to talk or visit the online self-help portal.