Syllabus

SCIENCE FICTION AND (INTERNATIONAL) POLITICS - 58530

Last update 07-12-2014

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: International Relations

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr Oded Lowenheim

Coordinator Email: oded.lowenheim@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Monday 10:30-12:00

Teaching Staff:
Dr. Oded Lowenheim
Course/Module description:
The literary genre of science fiction (SF) can be used as a critical futuristic mirror. Since the 19th century, science fiction writers dealing with various aspects of social and political criticism are using fantasy literature, "speculative" and futuristic descriptions. This course introduces students to the field of science fiction by discussing several genres within it, such as utopia - dystopia, alternate history, encounters with alien civilizations, technology and politics, and more. We will explore the political aspects found in science fiction and ask how we can highlight and understand aspects and directions of contemporary "realistic" politics through these stories. To this end we will focus on several works of science fiction, both written and filmed. We'll ponder about the power and influence of social and political criticism like this, and see how we can learn about different historical periods from science fiction written during them. The purpose of the course is not necessarily to provide an answer to the big question of "life, the universe, and everything" (this answer, of course, has been given elsewhere...), but to raise more specific questions for discussion, and present different approaches discussed in the context of science fiction literature.

Course/Module aims:
Expansion of political thinking ability and familiarity with the science fiction genre introducing narrative tools. Similarly, thinking about fundamental political issues through allegorical and literary tools.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
Submit a seminar paper that will be an analytical article on an issue which illustrates a link between politics SCI-FI, or write a SCI-FI story / screenplay which will be informed by political thought and terms.

Attendance requirements(%):
80

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: discussions in class, watching parts of movies, reading SCI-FI novels.

Course/Module Content:
(1) IR as narrative and political imagination.
(2) What is the relationship between science fiction IR?
(3) Science Science Fiction and Politics: SETI, UFO and the world state.
(4) Friendly aliens? "Childhood's End" and Independence Day
How to write a seminar paper and research proposal in this course

Miserable aliens and the state of emergency: scenes from the movie District 9

The lack of ability to communicate with Extraterrestrial Intelligence? "Solaris"
and "Roadside Picnic"

The tragic vision of human political destiny: A Canticle to Leibowitz by Walter
Miller

(nano) technology and international politics

War, peace and Nano - Technology: The Forever Peace by Joe Haldeman.

The deep internalization of War: A Taste of Armageddon, Star Trek

Alternate History of the Jews in America: "The Plot Against America" by Philip
Roth and "The Yiddish Policemen's Union" by Michael Chabon

Alternate History of Israel

"Manuscripts do not burn"? Read "Fahrenheit 451" by Ray Bradbury.

**Required Reading:**

1. Carol Cohn, “Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defence Intellectuals,” Signs
Vol.14 No.4 (Summer 1987), pp. 687-718.

2. Oded Lwenheim, “The 'I' in IR: An Autoethnographic Account,” Review of

- Howard E. McCurdy, “Fiction and Imagination: How They Affect Public
Administration,” Public Administration Review, Vol. 55, No. 6 (Nov. - Dec., 1995),
pp. 499-506.
- Benjamin J. Muller, “Securing the Political Imagination: Popular Culture, the
199-220.

- Barry Buzan, “America in Space: The International Relations of Star Trek and
647-667.
- Richard Devetak, “The Gothic scene of international relations: ghosts, monsters,
terror and the sublime after September 11,” Review of International Studies 31(4)
(October 2005), pp. 621-643.

- Abigail E. Ruane and Patrick James The international relations of Middle
- Daniel W. Drezner, Theories of International Politics and Zombies (Princeton


Day Independence- (4) תיירות מיטיבים? "קר היילדות" ו("קץ הילדות") עם עובד


Humanities (February 2012), pp. 1-24.


(1) חוסר היכולת להת커ץ עם אנטייליגנציה חוץ-ארץ? מה"ב שמברר למסטר המוביל. קיראו את ספרו של מרלו קאוסר "מרו נל ג'ו הלברג".

(2) ההזדוי התגרני של הגרל הפוליטי האנושי: המנון ליליבורי מאתו וולטר מילר "הליב וייב".

(3) "苓ן, טכנולוגיה לשון טכנולוגיה. שלום לצלצול בין הנשים. קיראו את הספר.

(4) "苓ן, טכנולוגיה לשון טכנולוגיה. שלום לצלצול בין הנשים. קיראו את הספר.

OR


Additional Reading Material:


Abigail E. Ruane and Patrick James The international relations of Middle Earth: Learning from The Lord of the Rings (University of Michigan Press, 2012).


Raymond Duvall and Jonathan Havercroft, "Taking sovereignty out of this world: space weapons and empire of the future," Review of International Studies 34

- David N. Samuelson, ""Childhood's End": A Median Stage of Adolescence?" Science Fiction Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring, 1973), pp. 4-17.


9 District- (חייזרים אומללים והצ.Look at: Bare Life's Bare Essentials: When All You've Got is Hope The State of Exception in The Road, District 9, and Blindness, Law, Culture and the Humanities (February 2012), pp. 1-24.

* Stanislaw Lem, Peter Engel, John Sigda, "An Interview With Stanislaw Lem," The
Missouri Review, Volume 7, Number 2, 1984, pp. 218-237

The theme of the novel is the conflict between human and technological power: the struggle for power between humans and technology.


Course/Module evaluation:
End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 20 %
Participation in Tutorials 0 %
Project work 70 %
Assignments 0 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 10 %
Other 0 %

Additional information: