

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ENG 245 BC: SCIENCE FICTION—FALL 2019

DR. HAROLD WILLIAM HALBERT

MWF 9:05 AM—10:00 AM, Parkhouse Hall 122



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Office Hours CENTRAL CAMPUS: Parkhouse Hall 441 Central Office Hours: MWF 8:30 AM to 9:00 AM WEST CAMPUS: South Hall 228, Second Floor, Cubicle G West Office Hours: TTh 11 AM to 11:45 AM Additional appointments can be schedule individually via email request.	Writing Center Hours : CENTRAL CAMPUS: M: 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM W: 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This survey course introduces students to the genre of science fiction and its unique ability to examine cultural issues by placing them outside reality. The speculative nature of the genre allows writers to explore the future, alternate histories, and scientific, moral, and political controversies. Starting with early historical works, the course surveys mainstream science fiction and major literary science fiction works.

PREREQUISITES:

Students may take this course after completing the composition requirement of their curriculum.

COURSE GOALS:

- To develop the students' sensitivity to literature and language so that they read with insight and enjoyment.
- To increase the students' self-awareness through a development of their critical abilities.
- To develop the students' writing skills and information literacy through writing both traditional literary analyses and research papers. .
- To improve students' reading skills.
- To show how science fiction has influenced and been influenced by mainstream literature.

COURSE CONTENT

My courses are designed to deal with adult issues often centering on controversial cultural and historical conflicts. At times, the class readings, lectures, and discussions may question ideas or beliefs that individual students hold dear. In addition, the language used in the course may range from highly technical jargon to the vernacular, including profanity. Students who wish to avoid such a classroom environment should seek another section of the course.

TEXTBOOK AND REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- *Science Fiction: Stories and Content* edited by Heather Masri ISBN: 978-0312450151
- *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood ISBN: 9780385490818
- *Watchmen* by Allan Moore and Dave Gibbons ISBN-10: 093028923
- *1984* by George Orwell (Plume; Centennial edition (May 6, 2003)) ISBN-10: 0452284236
- *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams ISBN-10: 0345391802
- Numerous individual stories and essays in the Course Documents section of the class web page
- Post-It Brand book marking tabs
- Access to the MLA Style Guide with the 2009 Update
- Pen and paper for each class

English 245 will be one of the most challenging courses of your academic career because it moves quickly, requires a wide range of academic skills, and demands more time than the average course. In addition to an intensive reading load (with reading checks to document your marginalia), each student will write two major papers (a literary interpretation and a research paper), prepare two exam guides, take a mid-term and final exam, develop an annotated bibliography, and use the discussion board extensively to post drafts and comments on readings. A breakdown of the assignments and relative point values is as follows:

Final drafts of papers	200 points
Exams	100 points
Annotated bibliographies	40 points
Quotation assignments	20 points
Individual drafts of papers	0-20 points, depending on completeness
Two-minute Presentation	10 points
Required emails and posts	-5 points if not completed
Reading checks	5 points

Your grade is calculated by adding the total points earned and then dividing them by the total points possible. That average will then be plugged into the college's grading scale.

Transcript/Entry Numerical Grade	Corresponding letter grade	Percent Equivalent
4.0	A	93.6-100%
3.7	A-	89.5-93.5%
3.3	B+	87.5-89.4%
3.0	B	83.5-87.5%
2.7	B-	79.5-83.5%
2.3	C+	77.5-79.5%
2.0	C	69.5-77.4%
1.3	D	63.5-69.5%
0.0	F	0-63.5%

Be advised that *you must complete all major papers and in-class essays in order to pass the course*. Even if your paper is too late to be accepted under the late work policies, it must be completed by the end of the semester. If it is not, then you will automatically fail for the course, regardless of what your point total is.

MAJOR PAPER REWRITE OPTION

In order to allow students to benefit from the three-step writing process and to turn in the best possible work for evaluation, students will be permitted to revise the first graded major paper in the course for an entirely new grade provided the assignment/essay was handed in on time and without plagiarism. Late or plagiarized papers are ineligible for revision.

Note: Just turning in a revision does not guarantee you will receive a higher grade. In the event that the revised draft grade is actually lower than the original assignment, you will receive the higher of the two grades; however, a higher revision grade always replaces the original grade, so if you are prepared to work hard, your grade will most likely benefit. See the class web page for more information on the major paper rewrite. Please see the class web page's assignments section for more explicit details.

COLLEGE POLICIES:

All College policies must be followed and are a binding part of this syllabus. Details on the Student Code of Conduct can be found at <http://www.mc3.edu/policy/sa/conduct.htm>.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Plagiarism constitutes a serious breach of academic honesty and will not be tolerated. Unless I deem an act of plagiarism or cheating an honest mistake, I routinely assign students an "F" in the course for any act of academic dishonesty without the option of withdrawing from the course. Especially egregious acts will receive an "FX" with an additional notation of academic misconduct on the student's transcript. Please note that submitting work from another class as original work for this course constitutes academic dishonesty. For a full discussion of the Academic Honesty policies, please see <http://www.mc3.edu/policy/aa/ethics.htm>.

GRADE APPEAL

In the interest of due process, the College provides an appeal process for a student who believes that a recorded final grade does not accurately reflect his/her academic performance in a course due to issuance of an arbitrary grade, inconsistent grading practice, or mechanical error. The policy and procedure is found at <http://www.mc3.edu/about-us/policies/8581>

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The purpose of the Student Code of Conduct is to guide students to understand their responsibilities in regard to appropriate behavior and respect for others in the college community. The policy addresses classroom disruptions and removal from the classroom for behavioral issues. It also provides the standards for ensuring the College provides due process to students through the judicial process. The policy and procedure is found at <http://www.mc3.edu/about-us/policies/125>

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) welcomes qualified students with disabilities and endorses the principles of nondiscrimination and reasonable accommodation as described in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). To see if you are eligible for services and reasonable accommodations in this course please review the policy on the Disabilities web site at <http://www.mc3.edu/policy/sa/disable.htm>.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Regular attendance and punctuality are expected. Students may miss four class meetings and remain in the course. The fifth absence will result in either a required withdrawal from the course (before the **October 31, 2019**, deadline) or an automatic F in the course (after the **October 31, 2019**, deadline for withdrawal without a signature). At the start of the semester, each student will receive 12 points of extra credit for attendance. Points lost for tardiness or absences will initially be taken from this pool of points, giving students the flexibility to miss two classes without injury to their grades. Each absence will subtract five points from a student's total points scored for the semester. Each late arrival will subtract two points from the total points scored. A point will be awarded for each class attended. If a student knows he or she will miss a class, that student should alert Dr. Halbert beforehand. Under special circumstances (usually involving a documented medical emergency or a death in the family), you may request permission to remain enrolled in the course if your absences have exceeded four, but such circumstances are rare. Attendance will be taken by sign-in sheet at the start of class; students arriving after the sign-in sheet will be marked tardy. If you arrive late, please wait until the end of class to sign the sheet. Failure to sign the sheet at all constitutes an absence. Students who leave class early must ask for permission prior to the start of class; if you leave without permission before I dismisses the class, you will be marked absent for the whole period. Good manners suggest that if you know you will miss a class meeting, you will contact me and let me know.

CLASS CANCELLATION:

In the event of inclement weather or other emergency, the MCCC School Closing Code is 320 for day classes and 2320 for evening classes. Announcements will be made on KYW (1060 AM) and other local stations. In the event that I have to cancel a class, I will email the class and post a message on Blackboard (assuming I have power at home to access the Internet). I strongly urge each of you to set up [Montco's text messaging alert](#) on your mobile phones as well: the College will send an alert of campus-wide closings.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY, INCOMPLETES, AND AUDITS:

Students are encouraged to consult with their instructor and/or an academic advisor when initiating a Course Withdrawal. The instructor's permission must be requested and received if requesting a withdrawal after 60% and before 75% of the course is completed. After 75% of the course is completed, students may apply for an Excused Withdrawal due to medical, catastrophic, or other circumstances beyond the student's control. Specific dates of deadlines for this semester can be found at <http://www.mc3.edu/adm-fin-aid/deadlines>

Should you wish to withdraw from the course, the deadline to withdraw without my signature is October 31, 2019. If you do not formally withdraw, you will receive an F for the course even if you stop attending. **After October 31, 2019, I will not sign any withdrawal requests unless you have a documented emergency. If I have not returned the first paper by this date, I will extend the deadline until one week after that paper is returned.**

The absolute last day to get my signature is November 14, 2019. After that, all requests to withdrawal must be made directly to Academic Affairs.

Applications for an "Incomplete" will only be entertained in cases of documented medical emergencies, incarceration, or military call-ups. Audits will not be permitted unless you start the course as an audit student and can convince me that you are willing to do all that work for no grade.

TURNING IN DRAFTS

For each major paper, we will write at least two drafts. Each draft needs to be uploaded to the Discussion Board in Blackboard with the paper both copied and pasted AND attached as a file. One purpose of this upload is to create a backup file of your paper should your computer/storage device crash. The other is so that you can read the works of others to see other approaches to the same writing task you are facing. While stealing the words or ideas of others in the class will result in a plagiarism charge, stealing someone's style or rhetorical moves isn't: most strong writers at some point have looked at the works of others as guides on how to write.

TURNING IN MAJOR PAPERS

When the final draft of a major paper is due, you will need to do the following:

- Submit the paper to the appropriate dropbox on Blackboard as either an MS Word, Pages, or Rich Text Format file. When required, a works cited page should be included in the same file. ***This file is what will actually be graded, so make sure it matches the same final version that you submitted in hardcopy.***
- Post a copy to the discussion board in the "Final Draft" forum..

LATE WORK

All work is due at the beginning of class on the day listed for the syllabus unless otherwise noted. I hate late work from students: it complicates my ability to grade or simply keep track of your work. More importantly, it devalues the efforts of your classmates who work very hard to meet their deadlines. To discourage late work, I have the following policy:

- Final drafts of papers lose 25 points (out of the possible 200 points) for each 24-hour period they are late. This penalty includes Saturdays and Sundays.
- Other late assignments have a 24-hour period to be submitted. They will be graded, and that grade will be divided by 2 and entered into the grade spreadsheet.

Late work will kill your grade, so don't do it. If you know ahead of time that you will not be able to complete a task, contact me for an extension. I reserve the right to make an exception to the late policy in the case of an extreme (and documentable) emergency, but that almost never happens.

TUTORIAL SERVICES:

Tutorial Services: Free subject-area tutoring, academic workshops, and study skills specialists are available at Blue Bell Campus's Tutorial Services in College Hall 180, across from the Cafeteria. Tutorial Services helps students develop learning strategies based on their unique learning styles with the goal of creating successful students and independent learners. Contact them at 215-641-6452 or log into the portal and find us online at <https://mymccc.mc3.edu/allcampusresources/academicaffairs/lal/Pages/default.aspx>. Please note that Tutorial Services houses the Writing Center where faculty-tutors are more than happy to assist with revising papers.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

As adults, students and the instructor should know to do the following in class:

- Be prepared for class with work completed and required materials available.
- Refrain from non-class related conversations once class has started.
- Keep cell phones and pagers in "silent" mode and refrain from answering them or using them to send text messages. Should a student expect an important call (because of family emergencies or issues of similar magnitude), please make the instructor aware of that possibility before class.
- Inform the professor if you will be recording the class.
- Treat each other with mutual respect: while we can challenge each other's ideas in class, personalized attacks or use of inappropriate language directed at another member of the class community is unacceptable.
- Ask for help if you need it.
- Make the most of this course. It will help in the future.

FINAL WORD:

I enjoy teaching writing courses: I believe they can be the most empowering classes a person can take in college because the skills you learn can help you in virtually every part of your life. I took this job to help people discover their potential: as long as you are willing to do the work, I will do everything in my power to help you not only pass the course, but to be the best writer you can be.

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS

Wednesday, August 28, 2019

- First Class.

Friday, August 30, 2019

- Email contact information to me at hhalbert@gmail.com. See handout on Blackboard for exact information sought and link to template. PLEASE USE THE TEMPLATE FILE.
- Read, sign, and return your contract.
- Read "How to Really Read This Book" (Handout)
- Read and mark the following selections from Masri (copies are located in the course documents folder on the class web page):
 - "A Brief Introduction to Science Fiction and Its History"
 - [skim only, no need to mark] "A Selective Guide to Science Fiction Research" from *The War of the Worlds*—H.G. Wells
 - "A Martian Odyssey" —Stanley G. Weinbaum
 - "The Fact of Blackness"—Frantz Fanon

Monday, September 2, 2019

- Labor Day: NO CLASS
- You may want to start reading Karel Čapek's *R.U.R.*

Tuesday, September 3, 2019

- NO CLASS: We do not meet on Tuesdays
- Last day to Add Courses without Faculty Signature

Wednesday, September 4, 2019

- Read and mark Acts I and II of Karel Čapek's *R.U.R.* (Masri 231-262)
- We will start watching *Blade Runner* in class.

Friday, September 6, 2019

- Finish reading and marking Act III and the Epilogue of Karel Čapek's *R.U.R.* (Masri 262-281)
- We will start watching *Blade Runner* in class.

Monday, September 9, 2019

- Read and mark "A Cyborg Manifesto"—Donna J. Haraway (Masri 455-475 or in course documents). **WARNING:** This text is going to challenge you and will require multiple nights to complete. Start on Friday night. This is a 10-point reading.

Wednesday, September 11, 2019

- Read and mark "Liar!"—Issac Asimov (Masri 282-295))

Friday, September 13, 2019

- Read and mark "Burning Chrome"—William Gibson (Masri 371-386)

Monday, September 16, 2019

- Read and mark "Second Variety" by Philip K. Dick (Masri 296-330)

Tuesday, September 17, 2019

- NO CLASS: We do not meet on Tuesdays
- Last day to Drop Courses

Wednesday, September 18, 2019

- Read and mark selection From Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (Masri 179-185)
- [Withdrawal](#) without signature period begins

Friday, September 20, 2019

- Read and mark "When I Was Miss Dow" (Masri 87-96)

Monday, September 23, 2019

- Read and mark "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" (Masri 342-371)

Wednesday, September 25, 2019

- Read and mark "The Algorithms for Love" by Ken Liu (Masri 415-427)

Friday, September 27, 2019

- Exam Quotation Assignment Due. Submit to Blackboard Drop Box.
- Read and mark "Bloodchild"—Octavia E. Butler (Masri 119-135)

Monday, September 30, 2019

- Read and mark "The Nine Billion Names of God" by Arthur C. Clarke (Masri 915-921)
- Read and mark "All you Zombies" by Robert A. Heinlein (Masri 551-561)

Wednesday, October 2, 2019

- Read and mark "Mars Is Heaven!"—Ray Bradbury (Masri 73-87)

Friday, October 4, 2019

- Midterm Exam. Bring completed Exam Card.

Monday, October 7, 2019

- Draft of Paper #1 due. Bring a copy to class and post a copy in the "Paper #1: Draft" forum of the class discussion board.. This is a 20-point assignment for a completed draft. Incomplete drafts will be prorated, but it is better to come with a partial draft than to skip class.

Wednesday, October 9, 2019

- Read and mark Robert Silverberg's "Passengers" (see course documents)

Friday, October 11, 2019

- Read and mark "The Historian and His Facts"—E. H. Carr (Masri 673-685)

Monday, October 14, 2019

- NO CLASS.
- Final draft of Paper #1 due by 10 AM in the appropriate Dropbox on the class web site and on the Discussion Board. See checklist for details.

Wednesday, October 16, 2019

- Read and mark "Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government"—Hannah Arendt (Masri 850-876). This non-fiction theoretical piece is a bit challenging.

Friday, October 18, 2019

- NO CLASS: Dr. Halbert will be at a conference.

Monday, October 21, 2019

- Read and mark Section 1, Chapters 1-8 of *1984*. Pages 1-106
- We will begin watching *Gattaca* in class.

Wednesday, October 23, 2019

- Read and mark Section 2 of *1984*. Pages 107-230.
- We will continue watching *Gattaca* in class.

Friday, October 25, 2019

- Finish reading and marking *1984*. Pages 231-308. You do not need to read the appendix on "The Principles of Newspeak," but you may do so for five points extra credit.

Monday, October 28, 2019

- Read and mark pages 3-115 of *The Handmaid's Tale*. ("I: Night" until "VIII Birthday").
- We will start watching *The Matrix*.

Wednesday, October 30, 2019

- Read and mark pages 109-195 of *The Handmaid's Tale* ("VIII Birthday" until "XII: Jezebel's").
- We will continue watching *The Matrix*.
- [Withdrawal](#) without Faculty Signature Ends

Thursday, October 31, 2019

- NO CLASS: We do not meet on Thursdays
- [Withdrawal](#) with Faculty Signature Begins (60%)

Friday, November 1, 2019

- Finish reading and marking pages 199-211 of *The Handmaid's Tale* ("XII: Jezebel's" through the end of the "Historical Note").

Monday, November 4, 2019

- Read and mark chapters 1-4 of *Watchmen*.

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

- Read and mark chapters 5-8 of *Watchmen*.

Friday, November 8, 2019

- Finish reading and marking *Watchmen*.
- We will discuss the research project.

Monday, November 11, 2019

- Read and mark "Flowers for Algernon" by Daniel Keyes (Masri 1110-1132)

Wednesday, November 13, 2019

- Research project prewriting due. Post a copy to the discussion board in the "Research Paper: Prewriting" forum.
- **Library Orientation in our classroom.**
- **Attendance counts double today.**

Thursday, October 31, 2019

- NO CLASS: We do not meet on Thursdays
- [Withdraw](#) with Faculty Signature Ends (74%)

Friday, November 15, 2019

- Meet in the library (in College Hall) to do research. Sign in with Dr. H in the lobby of the library.
- [Excused Withdrawal](#) Only (WEX) Begins (75%)

Monday, November 18, 2019

- Annotated Bibliography Due at 9:35 AM. Post a copy to the "Research Paper: Bibliography" forum and submit a copy to the "Annotated Bibliography" dropbox.
- Two-Minute presentation on your paper topic

Wednesday, November 20, 2019

- Read and mark Connie Willis' "At the Realto" (Masri 596-614)

Friday, November 22, 2019

- Read and mark "How the World Was Saved" by Stanislaw Lem (Marsi 937-941).

Monday, November 25, 2019

- Read and mark "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman"—Harlin Ellison (758-768)

Wednesday, November 27, 2019

- NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break

Friday, November 29, 2019

- NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break

Monday, December 2, 2019

- Draft of Paper #2 Due. Post a copy and bring two copies to class. This draft will be graded out of 20 points for a complete paper with a works cited page (and not just a copy of the annotated bibliography) attached. It is better to come with a page or two than to skip class.

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

- Read and mark Chapters 1-13 of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

Friday, December 6, 2019

- Finish reading and marking *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

Monday, December 9, 2019

- LAST CLASS
- Second Quotation Assignment Due. Post a copy to the "Quotations for Final" Dropbox. Make sure to use the template linked in the instructions: don't just copy and paste.
- Read and mark "The Star" by Arthur C. Clarke (see Course Documents).

Wednesday, December 11, 2019

- NO CLASS. Class is over.
- Final Draft of Paper #2 due. Remember to have the works cited page as part of the final copy.
- Submit to discussion board and to the dropbox.

Friday, December 13, 2019

- FINAL EXAM: 8AM to 10AM in our regular classroom

Monday, December 16, 2019

- Optional Major Paper Rewrite of Paper #1 Due. See Assignments section for expectations.