

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ENG 245 CCF: SCIENCE FICTION—SPRING 2023

DR. HAROLD WILLIAM HALBERT

MWF 11:15 AM to 12:10 PM Parkhouse 343



Montgomery County
Community College

Office Phone: 215.641.6371 (email preferred) Website: http://www.halhalbert.com	Email: hhalbert@mc3.edu or hhalbert@gmail.com
Office Hours: Blue Bell: Parkhouse 441 MW 12:30 PM to 1:15 PM F 12:30 PM to 1:00 PM Pottstown: South Hall 228, Cubicle G TTh: 11:45 AM to 12:15 PM Additional appointments can be schedule individually via email request. I can do online office hours as well.	Writing Center Hours: Blue Bell Campus: MW 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM

COURSE 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:

- Various Texts located in Blackboard in Course Materials
- *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury (ISBN: 9781451673319)
- *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
- Post-It Brand book marking tabs
- Access to the MLA Style Guide with the 2009 Update

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 each
Exams	100 points each
In-class essays	50 points each
Annotated bibliographies	50 points
Quotation assignments	20 points
Scholarly Article Analysis Project	50 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 per day's worth of reading unless otherwise noted.

Various minor assignments with individual grade points possible may also be assigned. 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.

GRADED DESIGNATIONS			INSTITUTIONAL GRADING SCALE	
GRADES	QUALITY POINTS	DEFINITION	GRADES	NUMERICAL EQUIVALENCIES
A	4.00	SURPASSES EXPECTATIONS	A	93-100
A-	3.67		A-	90-92
B+	3.33	ABOVE EXPECTATIONS	B+	87-89
B	3.00		B	83-86
B-	2.67		B-	80-82
C+	2.33	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	C+	77-79
C	2.00		C	70-76
D	1.00	BELOW EXPECTATIONS	D	60-69
F	0.00	ACADEMIC FAILURE	F	0-59
XF	0.00	ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT	XF	0.00

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.](#)

TURNING IN ROUGH DRAFTS

For each major paper, we will write a complete rough draft and then a final draft. 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. In-person classes also requires a printed copy for others to read. 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.*** You must allow SafeAssign to work on your paper. You may receive a zero on your paper if you do not enable that option.
- Post a copy to the discussion board in the "Final Draft" forum.

I will mark the first draft extensively for two reasons: to give you clear guidance should you choose to submit the [optional major paper rewrite](#) and for you to use as a guide on what to improve in subsequent drafts. Other major papers will receive fewer comments since they generally repeat issues from the first paper. The final paper will not receive any written comments unless you explicitly request it since they will be submitted at the end of the semester.

COLLEGE POLICIES:

All [College policies](#) must be followed and are a binding part of this syllabus. You can find them at the top of our Blackboard course page under policies. Key policies to note are the [Student Academic Code of Ethics](#) (which deals with cheating, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty) and [Student Code of Conduct](#).

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 the [Student Academic Code of Ethics](#).

All students in my English courses will submit the final drafts of their papers to SafeAssign as part of the final draft dropbox submission to check for plagiarism.

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. Click here for the full [Grade Appeal Policy](#).

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. Click here for the full [Student Code of Conduct](#).

COMMUNICATION WITH DR. HALBERT

While I have an office phone, the best way to communicate with me is via email. I am generally quick to respond, but please be advised that I may take up to 48-hours to respond during the semester (and longer during breaks). I generally do not answer emails after 5PM because I want to stay married, so 1 AM messages the night before a paper is due will normally not get a response before class. My expectation is that you will check your email each day, particularly between the final class meeting and the posting of grades. I will not spam the class with non-class related materials, so if you get a message from me, please consider it important and respond if needed.

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](#).

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 **Tuesday, March 28, 2023**, deadline) or an automatic F in the course (after the **Tuesday, March 28, 2023**, 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 dismiss 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 College will post closures on the school's web portal and send text messages to anyone who has signed up for them. 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 on the [Registration Calendar](#).

Should you wish to withdraw from the course, the deadline to withdraw without my signature is Tuesday, March 28, 2023. If you do not formally withdraw, you will receive an F for the course even if you stop attending. **After Tuesday, March 28, 2023, 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 April 13, 2023. After that, all requests to withdrawal must be made directly to the Dean of Arts and Humanities.

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.

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 on the main floor of the library. 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](#). Please note that Tutorial Services houses the Writing Center where faculty-tutors are more than happy to assist with revising papers.

BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT:

Any student who has difficulty accessing resources to meet their basic needs i.e. safety, food and/or stable housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Director of Student Retention and Success, in the Student Success Center, at csmith3@mc3.edu or 215.641.2803 for support.

SYLLABUS UPDATE:

While all professors try to maintain their syllabuses without revisions during a semester, sometimes circumstances require that the syllabus be revised to correct an error or to adjust to unforeseen circumstances. In such cases, I will announce on Blackboard that a change has been made to which document, and from that point on, the revised document will supersede the original. I will do my best to give as much warning as possible.

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.

KEY ONLINE RESOURCES AT THE COLLEGE

You may find the following resources helpful here at Montgomery County Community College:

- [MCCC's Library Resources](#)
- [Registration Calendar](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Spring 2023 Final Exam Schedule](#)
- [Acceptable Use of Technology policy](#)
- [Student Success Resources](#)
- [Wellness Resources](#) (physical and mental health resources)

FINAL WORD:

I enjoy teaching literature 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

Note: The bulleted items under a specific date are what is due on that date. Items are due at the start of class unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, January 18, 2023

- First day of class

Friday, January 20, 2023

- Read the instructions and complete the Contact Information handout.
- Read the instructions and complete the Student Contract handout.
- Read the instructions and complete the "Introduce Yourself" assignment.
- Read and mark the following selections found in the Course Materials section of our Blackboard Site:
 - "How to Really Read This Book"
 - "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, January 23, 2023

- Read and mark "Liar!"—Isaac Asimov (Found in Course Materials)
- Watch and take notes on *Blade Runner* (Final Cut). [You can see where it is legally streaming here.](#)

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

- No Class: we do not meet on Tuesdays.
- Last day to add without faculty signature.

Wednesday, January 25, 2023

- Read and mark "Burning Chrome"—William Gibson (Found in Course Materials)

Friday, January 27, 2023

- Read and mark "Second Variety" by Philip K. Dick (Found in Course Materials)

Monday, January 30, 2023

- Read and mark "A Cyborg Manifesto"—Donna J. Haraway (Found in Course Materials). **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, February 1, 2023

- Read and mark "When I Was Miss Dow" (Found in Course Materials)

Friday, February 3, 2023

- Read and mark selection From Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (Found in Course Materials)

Monday, February 6, 2023

- [Scholarly Article Analysis Project](#): read and mark Lisa Yaszek's "Of Fossils and Androids: (Re)Producing Sexual Identity in 'Jurassic Park' and 'Blade Runner'" and then complete the questions found on the template document in the [Scholarly Article Analysis Project](#) instructions. (20 points)

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

- No Class: we do not meet on Tuesdays.
- Last day to drop a course (15-week Classes)

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

- Read and mark "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" (Found in Course Materials)

Friday, February 10, 2023

- Read and mark "The Algorithms for Love" by Ken Liu (Found in Course Materials)
- Read and mark "Mars Is Heaven!"—Ray Bradbury (Found in Course Materials)
- Withdrawal without signature period starts.

Monday, February 13, 2023

- Read and mark "Bloodchild"—Octavia E. Butler (Found in Course Materials)

Wednesday, February 15, 2023

- Read and mark "All You Zombies—" —Robert A. Heinlein
- Read and mark "The Nine Billion Names of God" —Arthur C. Clarke

Friday, February 17, 2023

- Exam Quotation Assignment Due. Submit to Blackboard Drop Box.

Monday, February 20, 2023

- Draft of Paper #1 due. Post a copy in the "Paper #1: Draft" forum of the class discussion board. Posting is worth five points.
- We will have a workshop on your drafts today worth 20 points. You must attend class with a completed draft printed for a partner to read to get those points. Incomplete drafts will be prorated, but it is better to come with a partial draft than to skip class.
- If you had an accommodations letter sent to me, please send me an email to remind me that you will need extra time on the midterm exam so I can make arrangements.

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

- Read and mark Robert Silverberg's "Passengers" (see course documents)
- Read and mark "How the World Was Saved" by Stanislaw Lem (Found in Course Materials).

Friday, February 24, 2023

- Read and mark Orson Scott Card's "Ender's Game" (the original short story version, not the novel, [available online](#)).

Monday, February 27, 2023

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

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

- Midterm Exam, Part 1 (Identifications)

Friday, March 3, 2023

- Midterm Exam Part 2 (Essay). Make sure you prepare an exam card.

Monday, March 6, 2023

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

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

- Read and mark "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman"—Harlin Ellison (Found in Course Materials)

Friday, March 10, 2023

- Please arrange to view *Gattaca*. [You can see where Gattaca is legally streaming here.](#)

Monday, March 13, 2023

- NO CLASS: Spring Break

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

- NO CLASS: Spring Break

Friday, March 17, 2023

- NO CLASS: Spring Break

Monday March 20, 2023

- Read and mark Section 1, Chapters 1-8 of *1984*. Pages 1-106

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

- Read and mark Section 2 of *1984*. Pages 107-230.

Friday, March 24, 2023

- Finish reading and marking *1984*. Pages 231-308.
- Read the final essay in *1984*, "The Principles of Newspeak."

Monday, March 27, 2023

- Read and mark Part One: "The Hearth and the Salamander" of *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury.

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

- NO CLASS: We don't meet on Tuesdays.
- Withdrawal without signature period ends.

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

- Read and mark Part Two: "The Sieve and the Sand" of *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury.
- Withdrawal with signature period starts.

Friday, March 31, 2023

- Read and Mark Part Three: "Burning Bright" of *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury.

Monday, April 3, 2023

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

Wednesday, April 5, 2023

- Read and mark pages 109-195 of *The Handmaid's Tale* ("VIII Birthday" until "XII: Jezebel's").

Friday, April 7, 2023

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

Monday, April 10, 2023

- Read and mark chapters 1-6 of *Watchmen*. Since the text is a graphic novel, I suggest using large Post-it notes so that you do not have to cover up the pictures that are as much a part of the text as the words.
- We will discuss our second paper, which requires research.

Wednesday, April 12, 2023

- Read and mark the rest of *Watchmen*.

Thursday, April 13, 2023

- NO CLASS: We don't meet on Thursdays.
- Withdrawal with faculty signature ends.

Friday, April 14, 2023

- NO CLASS: Dr. Halbert will be on an academic trip with the Liberal Arts Division.
- **Please arrange to watch and take notes on *The Matrix*.** [You can see where it is currently streaming for legal viewing here.](#)
- Withdrawals now require approval from Academic Affairs.

Monday, April 17, 2023

- Library Orientation. We will meet in the library: check announcements for specific location.
- Post a half-page description of one or two topics you are considering for Paper #2 that requires library research. Indicate the author, text, and overall topic about the text. Copy and paste AND attach the description to the "Research Paper Topics" forum.
- Attendance counts double today.

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

- Library Research Day. Meet on the main floor of the library and sign in with Dr. Halbert. Bring your laptop if you have one to facilitate looking up information.

Friday, April 21, 2023

- 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

Monday, April 24, 2023

- 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.
- If you had an accommodations letter sent to me, please send me an email to remind me that you will need extra time on the final exam on December 14th so I can make arrangements.

Wednesday, April 26, 2023

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

Friday, April 28, 2023

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

Monday, May 1, 2023

- Read and mark "The Star" by Arthur C. Clarke (Found in Course Materials).
- Last Class.

Friday, May 5, 2023

- No Class: the course is over except for the exam next week.
- Final Paper Due by 9AM. Submit to both Dropbox and Discussion Board. See Checklist for details.
- Optional Major Paper Rewrite of Paper #1 due. Submit to Dropbox and email to Dr. Halbert with a subject line "Major Paper Rewrite for ENG 211."

Monday, May 8, 2023, 10:20 AM to 12:20 PM

- ENG 245 Final Exam in our regular classroom. Make sure to prepare your exam card.
- Today is the last day to resolve any grade issues.

End of Semester Reminders:

- Always attend the last day of class for each of your courses.
- Check your MC3 email every day of exams until the professor lets you know the grades have been submitted. If there is an issue, your professor will email you to try to resolve the issue, but if you don't check your email, you may not have your issue addressed, resulting in a lower grade or even a failure for the course.
- Professors must submit grades no later than 11:59 PM on Thursday, May 11, 2023.
- Don't email your professor to see if the grades are done: he will email the class when they are finalized.