### SU_4C_8

The Cyborg Apocalypse: Cybernetic Technology in Literature

**Fall 2017**

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| **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION** |

**Dr. Amanda Licastro**

(You can address me as Dr. L or Professor)

**Telephone number:** Please use email (x2388)

**Stevenson email:** [**alicastro@gmail.com**](mailto:alicastro@gmail.com)

**Best times for phone contact:** I prefer email and will answer anytime before 10pm and after 9am.

**Office location:** DC 238 (on Greenspring on the first floor of Dawson Center)

**Office hours:** Monday and Wednesday 12:30-1:30pm on OMN, and Fridays at GS by appointment

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| **COURSE INFORMATION** |

**ENG 281 - The Cyborg Apocalypse: Cybernetic Technology in Literature**

**Credits: 3**

**Prerequisite(s):** Placement or a grade of “C” or better in ENG 152

**Classroom or Studio Location:** Monday and Wednesday in SoD on OMN

**Scheduled Class Days and Time:**  *Check Webexpress*

**Course Description:** Is the divide between human and machine becoming harder to maintain? From the Golem of folk tales to Frankenstein and even Siri, the concept of the semi-artificial person, or cyborg, is long-lived, appearing across popular, religious, and scientific imaginations. As technology becomes more personal, the cyborg becomes less alien, and the prospect of our own transformation into technologically enhanced organisms seems imminent. In this course we will investigate posthumanism through a critical look at cybernetics in our culture, examining representations in media such as literature, film, television, advertising, video games, and comics. Students will research the current state of modern medical and robotics science and use this to inform their readings of the cyborg in our society. Critiques will be framed through the lens of gender, race, and labor using the theory of scholars Katherine Hayles, Donna Haraway, and Lennard Davis.  The class will engage in multimodal research projects on a WordPress blog that focus on building written and visual rhetorical skills. Readings will include fiction such as Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* and Karel Capek’s *R.U.R.* (Rossum's Universal Robots), which will be paired with films such as *The Stepford Wives* and shows such as “Black Mirror.”

**Instructional Methods Used in this Course:** lecture, discussion, guest speakers, group work

**Required and Recommended Texts, Manuals, and Supplies:** You need all three required texts and a notebook:

Textbook #1 -----------------------------------------------------

Author: Karel Capek

Title: Rossum's Universal Robots

ISBN: 0141182083

Publisher: Penguin

Format: paperback

Textbook #2 -----------------------------------------------------

Author: Jennifer Haley

Title: The Nether

Edition: November 30, 2014

ISBN: 0810130637

Publisher: Northwestern University Press   
Format: paperback

Textbook #3 -----------------------------------------------------

Author: Philip K Dick

Title: Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep

ISBN: 0345404475

Publisher: Del Rey

Format: ebook or paperback

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| **COURSE OUTCOMES** |

**Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:**

• Solve a problem appropriate to the study of a specific topic whose context has been delineated to the point that several possible definitions can be inferred;

• Read texts closely and analytically;

• Locate sources suitable for problems appropriate to the study of the specific topic and for an audience schooled in the literature of that topic;

• Write competently and to the standard of the discipline in the academic style;

• Produce an effective organizational pattern with careful language choices during class participation and/or oral presentations; and

• Read texts as complex interactions of values.

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| **GRADING STANDARDS** |

**Grading Scale:**

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| A | 93-100 | 4.0 |
| A- | 90-92 | 3.7 |
| B+ | 87-89 | 3.3 |
| B | 83-86 | 3.0 |
| B- | 80-82 | 2.7 |
| C+ | 77-79 | 2.3 |
| C | 73-76 | 2.0 |
| C- | 70-72 | 1.7 |
| D+ | 67-69 | 1.3 |
| D | 60-66 | 1.0 |
| F | 1-59 | 0.0 |

*Students must earn a minimum grade of “C” in courses that are used to fulfill the SEE requirement and major requirements.*

**Grading** **Standards:*****All assignments require the honor pledge be stated and agreed to before submitting.***

Active Class and Online Participation 25%   
Short Writing Assignments 20%   
Midterm Project 25%   
Final Group Project 30%

**Course Requirements:**Each student will complete a journal, blog posts, two formal essays, and a digital project. There will be reading assignments every night.

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| **COURSE POLICIES** |

**Policies:** You must arrive to class on time and avoid leaving early unless there are serious extenuating circumstances. Please contact me if you will be absent and find a classmate to share their notes with you. Late journal entries and blog posts will not be accepted under any circumstances. However, extensions for essays and digital projects will be considered on an individual basis. **Please come see me for help – I welcome you to visit my office hours to speak with you anytime!**

**Classroom and Studio Policies:** The use of cell phones and headphones is prohibited unless explicitly stated in class. Remove your headphones *before* entering the room and put your phone on silent. You will be using a computer in class regularly. You are welcome to bring your own laptop. You are not to use this time to check social media, sports scores, gossip blogs, or anything other than our course work. Please respect our time together and use the computers to complete your assignments to the best of your ability…you are paying to be in this class and learn after all…

**Submission of Assignments or Projects:** All assignments will be submitted online on our course blog. A tag and category will be provided and must be used to receive credit for your work. All citations should be in MLA format. Please use OWL at Purdue for guidance in formatting your citations.

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| **UNIVERSITY GUIDELINES** |

**Diversity Statement:** Stevenson University commits itself to diversity as it relates to awareness, education, respect, and practice at every level of the organization. The University embraces people of all backgrounds, defined by, but not limited to, ethnicity, culture, race, gender, class, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical ability, learning styles, and political perspectives. The University believes its core values are strengthened when all of its members have voice and representation. The resulting inclusive organizational climate promotes the development of broad-minded members of the University who positively influence their local and global communities.

**Attendance:** Each student is responsible for his or her own class attendance and regular attendance is expected. Every student is responsible for the material covered or the skills exercised during scheduled classes. Grades will be based on demonstrated achievement of the objectives of the course, not on attendance in class as such. Students who stop attending and fail to officially withdraw from a class will be given a grade of "FX" which calculates as an "F" in the GPA.

**Course-Specific Attendance:** Attendance and participation are *essential* to learning. You are expected to come to every class session and participate in our discussions. Every class you will complete a journal entry that will count toward your participation grade and help you formulate your thoughts to contribute to our group discussion.I will record your participation every day and add this to your cumulative total grade.

**Standards of Academic Integrity:** Stevenson University expects all members of its community to behave with integrity. Honesty and integrity provide the clearest path to knowledge, understanding, and truth – the highest goals of an academic institution. For students, integrity is fundamental to the development of intellect, character, and the personal and professional ethics that will govern their lives and shape their careers. Stevenson University embraces and operates in a manner consistent with the definitions and principles of Academic Integrity as set forth by the International Center for Academic Integrity.

Students are expected to model the values of academic integrity (honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage) in all aspects of this course. Students will be asked to assent to and to uphold the University Honor Pledge:

“*I pledge on my honor that I have neither given nor received*

*unauthorized assistance on this assignment/exam.”*

Suspected violations of the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://now.stevenson.edu/depts_old/hr/Shared%20Documents/Forms%20and%20Documents/Volume_V_Student_Policies.pdf#page=4) will be reported and investigated as outlined in the Policy Manual, Volume V.

If you are unsure what counts as plagiarism – for instance if you cut and paste part of a paper, buy an essay online, have someone help you write your paper, or borrow a paper from someone else - this STILL counts as plagiarism. Instead of cheating, come ask me, or a tutor, or a librarian for help!!!

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| **ACADEMIC SERVICES** |

**Disability Services**  
Stevenson University will make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) facilitates equal access for every student who self-identifies as having a disability. If you are a student with a disability who needs accommodations in this class, please contact the Director of Disability Services located in Garrison Hall South Room 138 or send an email to ODS@stevenson.edu. Once accommodations are authorized by ODS, please provide me (your instructor) with your approved accommodations memo as soon as possible. Accommodations are not retroactive.

This is the link to the University’s Office of Disability Services: <http://www.stevenson.edu/academics/academic-resources/disability-support-services/>

In addition to meeting during my office hours, the following resources are available for academic support:

* **The John L. Stasiak Academic Link,** located on Owings Mills in the Center for Student Success (GHS 101), provides free tutoring for many classes. If you are having difficulty with or would benefit from discussing the material with an upper level peer, seek assistance early in the semester. Tutoring often makes a difference in a student’s grade. For more information regarding hours, scheduling appointments and accessing additional resources, please visit: <http://www.stevenson.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-link/>
* **The SU Library** provides electronic and print resources to support your coursework. Subject specific Research Guides and Databases by subject can be found on the library home page as well as brief tutorials and directions to assist you in using these resources.
* **Lynda.com** is an online learning resource available to all Stevenson students. On lynda.com students can view

For more information about the SU learning outcomes and goals, please see the Stevenson catalog.

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| **COURSE SCHEDULE INFORMATION** |

**Course Calendar:** \***Subject to change**\*

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| M 8/28 | Intros and syllabus. | Join blog, get books, and read “Empathizing 101” <http://bit.ly/2b1J9ZK>  (Try taking the empathy quiz linked in the article). |
| W 8/30 | Social annotation. Join hypothesis. Annotate Bury: <http://bit.ly/2aXe1xd> | Read and annotate “Reading Books and Watching Films makes you Kinder in Real Life” <http://bit.ly/2aB04mo> |
| M 9/4 | Labor Day. No class. | Annotate “What Becomes of Empathy” <https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2016/07/20/what-becomes-of-empathy/>. Make a pro/con list for teaching empathy. |
| W 9/6 | Provocation assignment. Integrating sources and MLA citations. | Read Philip K Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Group 1 post provocations by Monday. |
| M 9/11 | *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* | Read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Group 2 and 3 post responses to two posts by Wednesday. |
| W 9/13 | Fishbowl Group 1. | Read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Group 2 post provocations by Friday. Group 1 and Group 3 post responses by Monday. |
| M 9/18 | Fishbowl Group 2. | Finish *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Group 3 post provocations by Wednesday. Group 1 and Group 2 post responses by Friday. |
| W 9/20 | Fishbowl Group 3. Midterm assignment. | Read [“Donna Haraway – A Cyborg Manifesto.”](http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Haraway-CyborgManifesto-1.pdf) (please print out and bring to class). |
| M 9/25 | Reverse outlining. | Read and annotate Lennard Davis “Constructing Normalcy.” [ConstructingNormalcy\_Davis](https://eng28105fall15.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/constructingnormalcy_davis.pdf) (PDF). Outline midterm. |
| W 9/27 | Ableism. Watch Butler video.<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0HZaPkF6qE> | **Draft midterm.  Bring two printed copies to class 10/4.** |
| M 10/2 | Peer review. | Revise midterm. Bring draft to conference. |
| W10/4 | Conferences. (W/TH) | Revise midterm. Post midterm by 10/9. |
| M 10/9 | NO CLASS. Fall break. | Revise midterm. Post midterm by 10/9. |
| W10/11 | How to read a play. Guest speaker. | Read (first two acts). Capek, Karel, and Ivan Klima. *R.U.R.* |
| M 10/16 | *Stepford Wives.* | Read (acts 3 and 4) *R.U.R.* |
| W 10/18 | *Stepford Wives.* | Finish *R.U.R.* |
| M 10/23 | *R.U.R.* | Read Chapter 1. N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Post definitions. |
| W10/25 | *Black Mirror.* | Read Chapter 1. Hayles. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Post definitions. |
| M 10/30 | Virtual bodies and posthumanism. | Read *The Nether.* |
| W 11/1 | Virtual reality. Bring headphones. | Read *The Nether.* |
| M 11/6 | Virtual reality. Bring headphones. | Read *The Nether.* |
| W 11/8 | *The Nether.* Final project. | Write pitch. Post elevator pitch under category “final” and tag “pitch.” |
| M 11/13 | Speed pitching. |  |
| W11/15 | Speed pitching. Pick groups. | Vote on top four projects. |
| M 11/20 | Work on Contract. | Finish contact and email to professor by midnight. |
| W 11/22 | NO CLASS. Happy Thanksgiving. | Work on Final. Gather journals to turn in. |
| M 11/27 | Group work. | Group work. |
| W 11/29 | Create demos. | Group work. |
| M 12/4 | Group work. | Group work. |
| W12/6 | Conferences | Finish final project. |
| FINAL | Presentations. TBD. | Happy Holidays! |