

Classics of Golden Age Science Fiction
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In this course we examine classic works of science fiction, from the origins of the genre in Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, to the “golden age” masters Clarke, Bradbury, Heinlein, and Asimov. In addition to these there are a host of other writers (Leigh Brackett, Poul Anderson, Theodore Sturgeon, Philip K. Dick, Andre Norton, Frederik Pohl, Keith Laumer, etc.) who produced great work and we will examine these, as well as prominent science fiction movies of the period. Class sessions will be a combination of lecture and participatory discussion. Meets Friday mornings from 9 to 12.

Weekly Schedule:

1. Feb. 4 Introduction. Definition and Origins of the genre. Lowell, Mars, and Burroughs. Jules Verne, *A Journey to the Center to the Earth*. Late 19th century Geology and Biology. Verne’s legacy. (Movie: *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, 1959.)
2. Feb. 11 H. G. Wells. *The War of the Worlds*. British Imperialism. The question of aliens: war vs. communication. “Root narratives” and Wells’ role in the foundation of science fiction. (Movie: *War of the Worlds*, 1953)
3. Feb. 18 Fred Hoyle, *The Black Cloud*. Astrophysics by other means. Hard science science-fiction. (Movie: *This Island Earth*, 1955).
4. Feb. 25 Ray Bradbury, *The October Country*. The science fiction – fantasy – horror continuum. (Movie: *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, 1954).
5. Mar. 4 Robert A. Heinlein, *Orphans in the Sky*. *Starship Troopers*. *Tunnel in the Sky*. *Stranger in a Strange Land*. Twists and turns of the “Dean” of science fiction writers. (Movie: *Destination Moon*, 1950).
6. Mar. 18 *Astounding*, John W. Campbell, and the role of pulp magazines. Poul Anderson, *The High Crusade*. (Movie: *The Thing from Another World*, 1951).
7. Mar. 25 The glory days of space opera: Leigh Brackett, “The Lake of the Gone Forever.” *The Sword of Rhiannon*. Keith Laumer and Rosel George Brown, *Earthblood*. (Movie: *Forbidden Planet*, 1956).
8. April 1 L. Sprague de Camp, A. E. Van Vogt, Andre Norton. (Movie: *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* 1956).
9. April 8 Isaac Asimov, “Nightfall,” *I, Robot*, Artificial Intelligence. *Pebble in the Sky*. (Movie: *When Worlds Collide*, 1951).

10. Apr. 15 Futurism and the perils of prediction: A guide to the next thousand years.
Arthur C. Clarke, *The City and the Stars*. (Movie: *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, 1951).

Required Texts:

The books listed below are in print, and are recommended for those who wish to obtain a hard copy. These texts have been reprinted dozens of times and any edition will do. There are also electronic versions available from a variety of sources, all of which work fine for this course.

Jules Verne, *A Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864). Bantam Classics, 1991.
ISBN-13: 978-0553213973.

H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (1897). Signet Classics, 2007.
ISBN-13 : 978-0451530653.

Fred Hoyle, *The Black Cloud* (1957). Valancourt Books, 2015.
ISBN-13 : 978-1941147429.

Ray Bradbury, *The October Country* (1956). Del Rey/Ballantine Books, 1996.
ISBN-13 : 978-0345324481.

Robert A. Heinlein, *Orphans of the Sky* (1941-63). Baen Books, 2015.
ISBN: 978-1-671-31845-1. (Apologies for the ugly cover!)

Keith Laumer and Rosel George Brown, *Earthblood* (1966) and other stories. Baen books.
2012. ISBN-13 : 978-1451638202.

Arthur C. Clarke, *The City and the Stars* (1956). Gollancz, 2001.
ISBN-13: 9781857987638.

Additional works will be available in digital versions, including:

Poul Anderson, *The High Crusade* (1960).
Isaac Asimov, *I, Robot* (1950)
Isaac Asimov, "Nightfall" (1941).
Isaac Asimov, *Pebble in the Sky* (1953).
Leigh Brackett, *The Sword of Rhiannon* (1953).
Leigh Brackett, "The Lake of the Gone Forever" (1949).
L Sprague de Camp, *The Hand of Zei* (1951).
Robert A. Heinlein, *Orphans of the Sky* (1941/63).
Robert A. Heinlein, *Tunnel in the Sky* (1955).

Suggested Movies:

Destination Moon (1950)
The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951)
The Thing from Another World (1951)
When Worlds Collide (1951)
The War of the Worlds (1953)
The Creature from the Black Lagoon (1954)
This Island Earth (1955)
Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956)
Forbidden Planet (1956)
The Fly (1958)
Journey to the Center of the Earth (1959)

Recommended for further exploration:

Alec Nevala-Lee, *Astounding: John W. Campbell, Issac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, L. Ron Hubbard, and the Golden Age of Science Fiction*. 2018. Dey St.: Harper Collins.
ISBN 978-0-06-257194-6.

Online:

John Cute, *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction (SFE)*, an online reference for authors, titles, and themes in science fiction.

The *Internet Speculative Fiction Database (ISFD)* has thorough information on the convoluted publication history of science fiction stories.
