

Anatomy of the Science Fiction Short Story

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The short story is a highly disciplined literary form with tightly controlled structural and plot requirements. The *science fiction* version of this art form must satisfy these requirements and introduce a new scientific or technological advance which functions as an integral part of the plot. In this seminar we will read a series of short stories and discuss them in class. We will develop an appreciation of the short story as an art form, examining the function of dialogue, action, point of view, rolling exposition, infodumps, entry points, and the sense of an ending. We will meet on Friday afternoons from 3 - 5 PM in the Poetry Center. Each session will be a combination of lecture and discussion.

1. **July 11:** John Kessel, "A Clean Escape."
Anne McCaffrey, "The Ship Who Sang."
Ted Chiang, "Catching Crumbs from the Table."
James Blish, "A Work of Art."
2. **July 18:** Nancy Kress, "Margin of Error."
Ursula K Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas."
Robert Heinlein, "All You Zombies."
Larry Niven, "Inconstant Moon"
Ted Chiang, "The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate"
3. **July 25:** Ray Bradbury, "Dark They Were, and Golden-Eyed"
William Gibson and Michael Swanwick, "Dogfight."
Terry Bisson, "Bears Discover Fire."
Paolo Bacigalupi, "Pump Six."
Robert Silverberg, "Passengers."
Ted Chiang, "Story of Your Life."
4. **August 1:** Daniel Keyes, "Flowers for Algernon." Ted Chiang, "Understand."
Kathleen Ann Goonan, "Memory Dog."
Ted Chiang, "What's Expected of Us."
Neil Gaiman, "Orange."
Sue Burke, "Spiders."
5. **August 8:** Michael Swanwick, "The Scarecrow's Boy."
Ted Chiang, "Exhalation."
Elizabeth Bear and Sarah Monette, "Boojum."
Arthur C. Clarke, "The Nine Billion Names of God."
Isaac Asimov, "Nightfall."

Required Texts:

Orson Scott Card, Ed., *Masterpieces: The Best Science Fiction of the 20th Century*. Ace/Penguin, 2004. ISBN: 044101133-0.

David Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer, Editors. *Best SF 14*, EOS/HarperCollins, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-06-172174-8.

Suggested Texts:

Ted Chiang, *Exhalation*, Vintage Books, 2020.
ISBN-13: 978-1101972083.

Ted Chiang, *Stories of Your Life and Others*, Vintage Books, 2016.
ISBN-13: 978-1101972120.

Robert Silverberg, Ed. *The Science Fiction Hall of Fame*, Volume One, 1929-1964.
Tordotcom, Tom Doherty Associates, 2005.
ISBN-13: 978-0765305374

Additional texts are online through the HSP learning portal.