

**SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, FILM, THEATRE & MEDIA – FILM PROGRAMME
2007 COURSE INFORMATION SHEET**

FILM 338

Genre Study: Science Fiction Film and Television

CRN 9178



Teaching staff

Coordinator: Scott Wilson 107, 85 FT, ph 463 6520, email scott.wilson@vuw.ac.nz

Tutors:

Violetta Petrova: forum@paradise.net.nz

Richard Whyte: dickwhyte@gmail.com

Office hours will be posted.

Class times and venue

Second trimester:

Lectures and screenings: Tuesday and Thursday 10am-1pm in Hugh Mackenzie [Kelburn] LT105. All sessions will start with a one-hour lecture followed by a screening.

One-hour tutorial on Thursday (times to be advised during the first week of the course and on the Film Studies 338 notice board in 77 FT). **Please Note:** *Tutorials will start in the first week of the course.* Tutorial enrolment can occur via the Film 338 Blackboard site.

Course aims, content and objectives

FILM 338 is an exploration of a specific film and television genre with a focus on the history and development of Science Fiction. This study incorporates an examination of

the historical and cultural contexts within which these texts are produced and consumed, and the manner with which these texts both reflect and contribute to their contexts of production and reception. Weekly tutorials will provide an opportunity for discussion of films screened and lecture topics plus course reading assignments. By the end of the course, students should have a better sense of the history and function of cinematic and televisual genre in general, and Science Fiction in particular, as well as a greater ability to write lucid and perceptive film criticism.

Set texts

Sean Redmond (ed.). *Liquid Metal: The Science Fiction Film Reader* (Wallflower Press, approx. \$65). School of English, Film and Theatre *Guidelines for SEFT Students* (\$1.00). Other readings will be provided or suggested as required.

Workload

The university anticipates that you should be able to devote about 16 hours per week to a 24-point course at 300 level. Therefore you should probably expect to spend, on average, about 8 hours per week (apart from class time) in reading, viewing films, writing assignments and preparing for classes.

Assessment

All assessment will be internal. Details of each assignment can be found at the end of this course outline.

Assessment Title	Due Date	% of Final Grade
Film Genre Essay (Individual work: 1500 words)	August 17th	25%
Theoretical Dialogue Creative Activity (Group Work)	Sept 27 th (No Extensions)	30%
Film analysis essay (Individual work: 3000 words)	Oct. 12 th	35%
In-class Précis Presentation (500 words max)	Throughout the Semester	10%

The in-class group presentations are designed to allow students to explore and appreciate the aesthetic, practical and creative issues raised by the course. The film analysis essay is designed to extend the textual analysis skills introduced in Film 101 and Film 231, connecting the ideas of narrative, spectacle and genre to an analysis of the theoretical issues raised during the lectures and tutorials. In summation, the assignments are designed to help fulfil the objectives of the course by requiring students to engage in close critical analysis, research aspects of film theory, and present clear and well-supported written and oral arguments. Except in special circumstances (e.g. medical reasons with certificate), assignments handed in up to five days late may lose up to 10% (at a rate of 2% per day). *No work will be accepted more than five days after the due date unless specific prior arrangements have been made.*

Assignments should be handed to the Administrator in 77 FT or placed in the drop box outside the Film & Theatre office on level 3, 77FT. You are strongly advised to keep both a hard and electronic copy of your work. The Administrator will issue receipts on the day the essay is submitted or, if left in the drop box, the following day. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they are issued with a receipt.

Aegrotat provisions may apply if you are unable to submit your final assignment. In such a case you should contact one of the course coordinators. There is a university policy on reasonable accommodation with respect to assessment procedures for students with disabilities.

Mandatory Course Requirements

To be eligible to pass the course you must complete all assignments and attend at least 7 tutorials (if on a particular week you are unable to be present at your scheduled tutorial you may, with the tutor's permission, attend another). Regular attendance is also expected at screenings and lectures, though there will be no roll calls.

School Facilities

Students are encouraged to make full use of the Robert Lord Library at 77FT; however, please note that **library materials do not leave the building**. There is a coin-operated photocopy machine on Level 3. The Green Room is also available to students working in the building. You are expected to clean up after yourself, including returning to the Green Room any mugs removed from there.

Award

The Prize for Film Studies, arising from a fund established by the Wai-te-Ata Press, will be awarded to the best student of film history, criticism or production.

Communication

Any additional information, or changes to the course, will be announced in class and posted on the course notice board on Level 3, 77FT.



**FILM 338 SCIENCE FICTION FILM & TELEVISION – TIMETABLE
2007**

<p>Tuesday July 10th Lecture 1: Introduction</p> <p>Reading: Course Outline! Screening: George Melies / Chris Marker / <i>Aeon Flux</i> (Peter Chung, 1991)/ <i>Animatrix</i> (2003) and others.</p>	<p>Thursday July 12th Lecture 2: Establishing the Genre</p> <p>Reading: ‘Images of Wonder: The Look of Science Fiction’: Vivian Sobchack (pp 4 - 10) Screening: <i>The Thing</i> (John Carpenter, 1982)</p>
<p>Tuesday July 17th Lecture 3: Disaster Awaits Us</p> <p>Reading: ‘The Imagination of Disaster’: Susan Sontag (pp 40 – 47) Screening: <i>Soylent Green</i> (Richard Fleischer, 1973)</p>	<p>Thursday July 19th Lecture 4: Technophobia / Technophilia</p> <p>Reading: ‘Technophilia: Technology, Representation and the Feminine’: Mary Ann Doane (pp 182 – 190) Screening: <i>The Matrix</i> (Wachowski Brothers, 1999)</p>
<p>Tuesday July 24th Lecture 5: Alien Messiahs</p> <p>Reading: ‘With Eyes Uplifted: Space Aliens as Sky Gods’: Carol Schwartz Ellis (pp145 – 153) Screening: <i>The Man Who Fell to Earth</i> (Nicolas Roeg, 1976)</p>	<p>Thursday July 26th Lecture 6: Post-Humanity</p> <p>Reading: ‘Human Artifice and the Science Fiction Film’: J.P. Telotte (pp57 – 63) Screening: <i>Casshern</i> (Kazuaki Kiriya, 2004)</p>
<p>Tuesday July 31st Lecture 7: The City</p> <p>Reading: ‘Cities on the Edge of Time: The Urban Science Fiction Film’: Vivian Sobchack (pp78 – 87) Screening: <i>Renaissance</i> (Christian Volckman, 2006)</p>	<p>Thursday August 2nd Lecture 8: Post-Modernism / Post-Cartesian</p> <p>Reading: ‘Who Programs You? The Science Fiction of the Spectacle’: Scott Bukatman (pp 228 – 238) Screening: <i>eXistenZ</i> (David Cronenberg, 1999)</p>
<p>Tuesday August 7th Lecture 9: Dystopia</p> <p>Reading: ‘Technophobia / Dystopia’: Michael Ryan & Douglas Kellner (pp 48 – 56) Screening: <i>THX 1138</i> (George Lucas, 1971)</p>	<p>Thursday August 9th Lecture 10: Gender / Sexuality / Orientalism</p> <p>Reading: ‘A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s’: Donna J. Harraway (pp158 – 181) Screening: <i>Natural City</i> (Byung-chun Min, 2003)</p>
<p>Tuesday August 14th Lecture 11: Race & Racism</p> <p>Reading: TBC Screening: <i>Planet of the Apes</i> (Franklin J. Schaffner, 1968)</p>	<p>Thursday August 16th Lecture 12: Time Travel / Primal Scene</p> <p>Reading: ‘Back to the Future: Oedipus as Time Traveller’: Andrew Gordon (pp 116 – 125) Screening: <i>Back to the Future</i> (Robert Zemeckis, 1985)</p>

** MID-SEMESTER BREAK **

<p>Thursday September 6th Lecture 13: Monstrous Femininity</p> <p>Reading: ‘Time Travel, Primal Scene and the Critical Dystopia’: Constance Penley (pp126 – 135) Screening: <i>Alien</i> (Ridley Scott, 1979)</p>	<p>Thursday September 13th Lecture 14: Otherness and Animality</p> <p>Reading: TBC Screening: <i>X-Men: The Last Stand</i> (Brett Ratner, 2006)</p>
<p>Tuesday September 4th Lecture 15: Invasion Narratives</p> <p>Reading: ‘We’re the Martians Now: British SF Invasion Fantasies of the 1950s and 1960s’: Peter Hutchings (pp337 – 345) Screening: <i>Quatermas and the Pit</i> (Roy Ward Baker, 1967)</p>	<p>Tuesday September 11th Lecture 16: Genre Bending (I)</p> <p>Reading: ‘Postfuturism’: Vivian Sobchack (pp220 – 227) Screening: <i>Alphaville</i> (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965)</p>
<p>Tuesday September 18th Lecture 17: Genre Bending (II)</p> <p>Reading: TBC Screening: <i>The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai across the 8th Dimension</i> (W.D Richter, 1984)</p>	<p>Thursday September 20th Lecture 18: Cult Sci-Fi</p> <p>Reading: TBC Screening: <i>Primer</i> (Shane Carruth, 2004)</p>
<p>Tuesday September 25th Lecture 19: Fans and Meta-texts</p> <p>Reading: ‘“We’re Only a Speck in the Ocean”: the Fan as Powerless Elite’: John Tulloch (pp281 – 297) Screening: <i>Mystery Science Theatre 3000</i> (1996)</p>	<p>Thursday September 27th Lecture 20: Retro-Futurism</p> <p>Reading: TBC Screening: <i>Brazil</i> (Terry Gilliam, 1985)</p>
<p>Tuesday October 2nd Lecture 21: Cyborgs</p> <p>Reading: ‘Machine as Messiah: Cyborgs, Morphs and the American Body Politic’: Doran Larson (pp191 – 204) Screening: <i>Robocop</i> (Paul Verhoeven, 1985)</p>	<p>Thursday October 4th Lecture 22: Leaving the City</p> <p>Reading: ‘Dark City: White Flight and the Urban Science Fiction Film in Postwar America’: Eric Avila (pp88 – 97) Screening: <i>Logan’s Run</i> (Michael Anderson, 1976)</p>
<p>Tuesday October 9th Lecture 24: The Baroque</p> <p>Reading: TBC Screening: <i>The Fifth Element</i> (Luc Besson, 1997)</p>	<p>Thursday October 11th Lecture 24: The End of the Beginning of the End.</p> <p>Screening: To Be Chosen By Popular Ballot. Fancy Dress has been mentioned, in hushed whispers ...</p>

General University policies and statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University’s policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hard copy or under ‘About Victoria’ on the VUW home page at www.vuw.ac.nz.

Student and staff conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct

Academic grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html

Students with Impairments (see Appendix 3 of the Assessment Handbook)

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building:

Telephone: 463-6070

email: disability@vuw.ac.nz

The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the School Office or DSS.

Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences the support contact is **Dr Allison Kirkman, Murphy Building, room 407**. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Māori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

This programme offers:

- Academic mentoring for all Māori & Pacific students at all levels of under graduate study for the faculties of Commerce & Administration and Humanities & Social sciences. Contact Manaaki-Pihipihinga-Programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 6015 to register for Humanities & Social Science mentoring and 463 8977 to register for mentoring for Commerce and Administration courses
- Post graduate support network for the above faculties, which links students into all of the post grad activities and workshops on campus and networking opportunities
- Pacific Support Coordinator who can assist Pacific students with transitional issues, disseminate useful information and provide any assistance needed to help students achieve. Contact; Pacific-Support-Coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 5842.

Manaaki Pihipihinga is located at: 14 Kelburn Parade, back court yard, Room 109 D (for Humanities mentoring & some first year commerce mentoring) or Room 210 level 2 west wing railway station Pipitea (commerce mentoring space). Māori Studies mentoring is done at the marae.

Student Services

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: student-services@vuw.ac.nz) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984,

email at education@vuwsa.org.nz) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.

Acknowledgments

Assistance from the NZ Federation of Film Societies and the New Zealand Film Archive is gratefully acknowledged. Students are urged to join the Wellington Film Society.

Assignments

ASSIGNMENT ONE: *Genre Assignment and Analysis.*

Individual Essay (1500 words) – 25% of final grade

Assignment Brief

Part of the purpose of this course is to explore, critique and problematise the concept of genre as a disciplinary mechanism as it applies both to the production and reception of texts. While we might consume the Science Fiction text with little difficulty, in the same way that we might intuitively ‘know’ a Science Fiction text when we encounter one, we should also (as film scholars) be aware of the fact that ‘genre’ is never a stable, or entirely inclusive factor. This assignment, therefore, is designed to provide you with an opportunity to thoroughly critique a single Science Fiction text and explore comprehensively its membership of the Science Fiction genre.

Therefore you should:

- Devise a working definition of the Science Fiction genre – while this does not necessarily need to be expressly covered in your essay, it should certainly inform your work.
- Choose a film or television text
- Explore the manner with which your chosen text conforms to the science fiction genre template (as you define it)
- Explore the manner with which it deviates (if it does) from this template.
- If it crosses into other generic territory, you must both explain and account for this movement – i.e.: does it do so for narrative reasons, character development? Is there some other possible explanation (economic / authorial / cultural / historical)?
- If it generates new generic or sub-generic material, you must account for and explain its presence and use.
- Audience reception and generic success – based on box office, critical reception and (sub-)generic influence

As noted above, the purpose of this essay is to explore (a) the manner with which a film conforms to, or deviates from, the genre to which it belongs, and (b) the begin considering the ways in which these factors influence the audiences who consume these texts. As with all written work, it is expected that you will thoroughly research your topic and conform to the highest standards of referencing and presentation.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- 1) Comprehensive overview of the text and its relationship to the genre.
- 2) Consideration of audience / text relationships in interpretations
- 3) Coherency and structure to the essay as a whole.

- 4) Clear evidence of well directed research (periodicals, journals, books, magazines, screenings, database, Internet sites) on the chosen text and its relationship to the genre.
- 5) Written material clear and concise, correctly referenced and with a comprehensive bibliography.

COMMENTS:

(Tutor comments to be inserted here)

Tutor Signature

Presentation mark

ASSIGNMENT TWO: *Theoretical Dialogues: Sci-Fi Concepts in a Contemporary Setting.*

Group Work: Written Assignment (min: 1000 words) AND Audio-Visual Supplement (30% of final grade)

Due Date: Thursday Sept 27th (No Extensions)

Assignment Brief

As this course seeks to make clear, film genres and the texts they both generate and discipline exist in a dialogic relation with the society that surrounds and consumes them. Thus while Science Fiction texts provide the means to safely discuss contemporary issues and concerns, those same issues and concerns work back into the fabric of the consuming culture. This assignment asks that you explore your contemporary mediascape and examine the manner with which the concepts and issues covered in this course are articulated within, or played out against, the environment that surrounds you.

Thus, for example, watching and thinking about the *Robocop* might cause you to reconsider going to the gym, or methods of amending (improving / fixing / supplementing) the body, or even about the disciplinary machinery of the legal system. *Bladerunner* might cause you to think about discourses surrounding subjectivity / individuality / mortality / beauty / humanity, etc. *The Thing* and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* might raise issues of security, otherness, alterity, or the ways in which a society deals with perceived threats to itself. *Brazil* might raise issues about contemporary capitalism and the role of the worker, or the possibility for an active assertion of the self in the face of overwhelming bureaucracy. *The Matrix* might raise notions of ‘connectedness’ or bodily transcendence, while *X-Men* might generate thought about ‘becoming-animal’, genetic engineering and bodily modification, eugenics, and so on.

The central questions for this assignment are: How are these issues circulating in our contemporary society as we encounter it? Where do they circulate? Who do they affect? What ideological content exists within these representations? How do our encounters with these concepts impact on our understanding of ourselves / our culture / our society / our past(s) or future(s) – (or present)?

The Tasks:

1: In groups of (at most) four, you are required to choose **ONE** theoretical concept that we have covered in class, in order to explore its presence in, and impact upon, our contemporary experience.

2: The concept you choose, and your theorising of its place, role and position in contemporary (local) society must be explored in a group work that will demonstrate both a familiarity with the concept (and, if required, its major theorists), as well as a comprehensive examination of that concept as it is actively articulated. In effect, this assignment requires you to consider your contemporary experience as a text to be analysed.

3: In groups you are to construct a comprehensive exploration of the chosen concept, which should include a short (3 minutes max) audio-visual exploration of your concept. This exploration is to be delivered as a seminar / lecture / performance / etc in tutorials on Thursday, September 27th. The written component of the assignment may take the form of a standard essay, or it might assume another form (to be discussed with your tutors). This is entirely up to you. The important point is that your coverage and exploration of the concept is **COMPREHENSIVE**. Thus, you may utilise any kind of technology: digital video and / or analogue film; still images; found footage (you will need to provide the technology and material yourself). The audio-visual supplement is not required to have / be / contain narrative. Indeed, you should see the audio-video supplement as a way of demonstrating an accretion of details, working towards illustrating your general thesis.

4: This assignment has an unashamedly local focus – thus you are required to examine your specific media-scape as you encounter the University, the City, your jobs, public transport, whatever litters the pavements, etc. The key point is that the concepts we discuss in class are at work in our lives right now – not just ‘over there’ (in Hollywood, Bollywood, Pollywood, ‘the Construct’, ‘Inner-space’, ‘the Holo-Deck’, etc, etc.). So theorise local – including theorising ‘the local’. If you include media forms from other locations, they **MUST** be explored and theorised in a local context and setting.

5: All material is to be submitted (including copies of the audio-video material). All written work should meet departmental standards. Full and comprehensive referencing and a full bibliography are required. Given the particular nature of the assignment, it is due during the tutorial hours. Consequently **NO** extensions will be given. You are therefore encouraged to start thinking about this earlier, rather than later. Indeed, today is a good time to start.

Note:

The brief encourages you to be provocative but also thoughtful. You are encouraged to be creative in all aspects of the assignment, up to and including disagreeing with the assignment itself. Thus you might see contemporary Wellington as demonstrating dystopic tendencies, as a site of post-human development, as a place where issues of ‘alien-ness’, ‘other-ness’ and alterity are constantly in discussion, or as a place that has no need of ‘Science Fiction’ concepts whatsoever. Any position you take must be supported with evidence in your submitted assignment.

Each member of the group **MUST** contribute to the assignment. The division of labour will be handled internally. Thus some people might assume responsibility for particular aspects of the assignment, or might contribute equally across the various components.

Helpful tips....

Brainstorm your ideas about the brief. Talk through your understanding of the concepts we have covered, the ways in which the various films raise and deal with these concepts, and how they might spill over from the films and into contemporary society. Do you agree with the general concept of the brief? If so – how? If not – why? These positions will inform your general approach. Make use of your tutors – they are an invaluable resource.

PRESENTATION: TEMPLATE**Theoretical Dialogues: Sci-Fi Concepts in a Contemporary Setting.**

Name(s):

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- 1) The theoretical concept is appropriate and comprehensively explored.
- 2) The Assignment is specifically local in its theorising.
- 3) Both aspects of the assignment are creative and interesting.
- 4) Coherency and structure to the presentation as a whole. Evidence of teamwork and critical self-reflection and group evaluation.
- 5) Clear evidence of well directed research (periodicals, journals, books, magazines, screenings, database, Internet sites) on the chosen concept.

Note: presentation notes and a bibliography of sources have to be handed to your tutor after your presentation

COMMENTS:

(Tutor comments to be inserted here)

Tutor Signature

Presentation mark

ASSIGNMENT THREE:

Individual Film Analysis Essay due date, Friday October 12th by 2pm. 35% of final grade (3,000 words)

This essay asks you to consider the Science Fiction film as a generic text, as well as a text that contains and explores particular theoretical concepts. Choose **ONE** of the following topics:

Genre and Discipline

1: How does the Science Fiction text function as a disciplinary mechanism? In answering this question, you may wish to consider how Science Fiction films might work productively to generate knowledge, to train an audience, to promote (or limit) discussion around particular issues (amongst other things).

Generic Consistency

One of the ways we recognise texts as belonging to a specific genre is through their consistent use of a similar or shared set of conventions / topics / themes / etc. This necessarily extends to narrative situations, character types, and even specific diegetic details. Choose *at least* two Science Fiction texts to discuss the manner with which they work to either construct or utilise a set of consistent details that either build on, or extend, the Science Fiction genre. For example, you might choose to discuss the history of specific diegetic devices (faster-than-light travel; wormholes; teleportation; the ubiquitous laser pistol or ray-gun) – the development of specific character types (the hero; the side-kick; the damsel in distress; the anti-hero) – or the movement through consistently utilised diegetic spaces (the post-apocalyptic landscape; the urban sprawl; the starship or space cruiser). You should bear in mind that each use of these devices draws in an audience's previous encounters, and works to further solidify what the genre can and cannot do.

Generic Transformation

Utilising *at least* two texts, explore the manner with which the Science Fiction genre is extended. You may choose to focus on:

- a) The relationship between technological advances and genre development.
- b) Social change and the genre.
- c) Audience expectations and generic content.
- d) Cross-media influence.
- e) Inter- or extra-generic influence.

Fans and Fandom

Utilising a specific case study, explore one of the following:

- a) The ways in which fans can productively influence the genre (i.e.: ensuring that a text remains in circulation; influencing the construction of a text; having a text cancelled or discontinued; rediscovering a 'lost' text).
- b) The meta- and extra-textual explorations that occur around a central text (i.e.: conventions; collecting and trading; slash fiction etc.).
- c) The possibility that fans are exploited by the texts they value.
- d) The manner with which texts might work to encourage or accommodate fans and their various desires.

Industrial Contexts

How does the context of production affect the text that emerges as a result? Explore the production history of ONE film or television series, examining the ways in which production issues impact upon the text, its content and / or its production history and lifespan.

Genre and Culture

The concept of Science Fiction might very well mean different things in different cultural contexts. Compare *at least* two Science Fiction texts from different cultural environments to explore:

- a) Cross-Pollination.
- b) Plagiarism.

- c) Re-making as a way of removing difference.
- d) Issues of racism / Orientalism / sexism / species-ism, etc(-ism).
- e) Style, influence and formal development.

Write Your Own Adventure

You may, of course, be burning with an unquenchable desire to write about something else, something that is not covered above (be it a concept, a specific text, or a filmmaker). If this is the case, then you may design your own topic – IN CONSULTATION WITH YOUR TUTOR.

Assessment Criteria

1. The essay needs to be well structured with a definite introduction and conclusion
2. There should be evidence of set reading and wider research. Essays need to be referenced, supportive quotations supplied (no more than 10% of overall word count) and completed with a bibliography of sources used.
3. Essays should involve the close, textual analysis of at least one film, but wider contexts should be considered where relevant. Description should be avoided.
4. The ‘language’ of film studies should find its way into the essay – the key terms, concepts and critical ideas should be drawn upon to flesh out the reading of the film.
5. Critical autonomy is important: original idea and argument are important factors in the success of a film analysis essay.
6. Repetition should be avoided. The word count should be kept to. Essays should be double-spaced with a wide margin on both sides of the paper. A cover sheet with essay title, course title, student name, and tutor name should be included.

ASSIGNMENT FOUR:

Course Reading Précis in Pairs (Max. 500 words). To be assessed in tutorials. (10%)

Précis to be delivered verbally at tutorial and a written version submitted.

Length: 500 words

You are expected to deliver the précis verbally in the tutorial of the appropriate week. You will be assessed on your ability to assess and comment on the main ideas of the article. You do not necessarily have to agree with the argument in your article but you should be able to discuss it. To that end, your Précis should do the following:

- (a) Summarise the reading
- (b) Provide *at least* two questions directed towards your fellow students, regarding issues that emerge from the reading and your interpretation of it.

(c) Provide *at least* two questions you feel should be directed to the essay's author(s).

You are expected to take about 5-10 minutes and are not expected to lead the whole tutorial.