

**Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram.**

**Department of Humanities**

**CBSC Electives**

**Name of the Course : Science Fiction( CBCS Elective)**

**Course Code : HS 461**

**Instructor : Dr Gigy J Alex**

**Course Description**

Science Fiction is a literary genre that deals with the impact of actual or imagined science on society or individuals. The term science fiction was popularized in the 1920s by an American publisher Hugo Gernsback. The Second World War, Industrial revolution and various other socio political events led writers and intellectuals to extrapolate the impact of technology and its future advancements upon the humankind. Major science fiction themes include space travel, robots, alien beings, time travel, cyberspace etc. In this course texts from genres consisting of novels, short stories, movies, plays, and poems are included.

**Main objectives of the course**

1. To identify the relationship between science and society
2. To chisel out the individual's role in technology and development
3. Our immediate world and an alien space
4. Fusing fact and fiction for a better appraisal of the universe

**Outcome**

This course is mainly concentrated around a reading community who will approach the works from a critical perspective. Prior reading is essential for discussing novels, essays and short stories. It will improve the critical appreciation of texts of different genres. It will provide an open forum to discuss things, and the creative writing skills will also improve. While discussing the topics we have to consider

- (1) the general nature of science fiction, early origins of SF
- (2) Subgenres and general themes of this genre
- (3) Discussions of Utopias, Dystopias, Soft SF, Hard SF, Time Travel, Women in SF, Cybernetics and SF, Issues of gender, ecology, language, power, genetic engineering, imaginative literature, and major techniques dealt with SF.

**Course Materials**

*Novels*

*Brave New World*- Aldous Huxley

*Fahrenheit 451*-Ray Bradbury

*The Handmaid's Tale*-Margaret Atwood or *The Left Hand of Darkness* – Ursula Le Guin

*The Calcutta Chromosome*-Amitav Ghosh

*Never Let Me Go*- Kazuo Izhiguro or *Dhalgren*- Samuel Delany

*Short story*

“The Distance of the Moon” - Italo Calvino

“All You Zombies”-Robert Heinlein  
“I, Robot”-Issac Asimov  
“Blood Child”-Octavia Butler  
“The Seventh Voyage”- Stanislaw Lem  
“Burning Chrome”-William Gibson

### ***Cinema***

***La Jette'e***- Chris Marker  
***2001: A Space Odyssey***-Stanley Kubrick  
***Solaris***-Andrei Tarkovsky  
***Matrix***-Lana Wachowski & Lily Wachowski  
***Gattaca***- Andrew Niccol  
***Interstellar***- Christopher Nolan  
***Blindness***- Fernando Meirelles

### ***Essays***

“Simulacra and Simulation”- Jean Baudrillard  
“Science Fiction”- Raymond Williams  
“A Cyborg Manifesto”- Donna Haraway

### ***Play***

***Harvest***-Manjula Padmanabhan

### ***Poems***

“A Martian Sends a Post card Home”- Craig Raine  
“Einstein on World Government” – A Van Jordan  
“A Portrait of the Artist”-Vandana Singh

### ***References***

Roberts, Adam- *Science Fiction* (2006)<sup>2nd</sup> ed, Routledge, London & New York

Parrinder, Patrick (ed)- *Science Fiction: A Critical Guide* (1979), Longman Publishers, London & New York

Bould, Mark etal (ed)- *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* (2009), Routledge, London & New York

### **Assessment**

30 marks for Quizzes+ 50 marks for end sem exam+ 20 marks for Internal Assessment Weightage (Teacher Assessment)

Paper Presentation - 10 marks (novelty of the topic, presentation, and independent thinking)

Written Assignment - 10 marks (creative writing, presentation, and originality of thought)

**Name of the Course : Visual Communication ( CBCS Elective)**

**Course Code : HS 462**

**Instructor : Dr Babitha Justin**

**Objectives:** To introduce the student to:

1. Visual communication in its many forms: from still images to moving images
2. The history of visual culture, right from the times of prehistoric communication to the digital present
3. The history of visual communication and its basic concepts
4. Historical, physiological, psychological, perceptual and cognitive aspects of visual communication
5. The structural variables of visual communication, referred to as the “visual rhetoric”
6. Critically analysis of methods and ethical implications of electronic and print media images

**Outcome:** On completion of the course, the students should be able to:

1. To look at the visual arts as rich cultural texts and visual media as investigative tools
2. To learn to transform visual experiences and observances into critical ponderings on visual representation
3. Build a critical and articulate understanding of the relationship between images and their representation
4. To develop insight into theoretical questions on contemporary producers and consumers of visual culture and to express the student’s own ideas with creativity, clarity and critical thinking

**Content :**

- What is Visual Communication? And why this question matters.
- Prologue to Graphic Design: Invention of Writing; Petroglyphs to Alphabets
- Reform and Revolution: Arts and Crafts; Indian Art, Nationalism in art, A glimpse of Contemporary art
- Consumption and Mass Culture: Photography, Cinema and advertisement
- The Digital world: The Virtual real in contemporary culture
- Theories of Visuality and their impact on visual communication

### **Module One: History of Visuality**

Visuality is an important mode of understanding our culture and life at close quarters. In this module, we will take a look at the emergence of visual culture in relationship to the development of visual technologies, the history of pictorial art, and the emerging recognition of the priority of the visual as the king of the senses.

#### **Readings**

Jean, Georges. (1992). Writing The Story of Alphabets and Scripts. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers.

Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright . (2004). Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University.

## **Module Two: The Politics of Visuality**

This module examines the production, reception, and interpretation of the aspects of culture that communicate through visual imagery. These include not only art, but photography, and commercial imagery (including advertisements, popular film, and television).

### Readings

Berger, John. (1972). *Ways of Seeing*, London, Penguin.

Mulvey, Laura (1975) "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in *Screen*, Vol. 16, No 3, pp 15-27.

## **Module Three: From Stasis to Movement**

This module examines the cultural, visual, spatial, and philosophical questions that art (paintings and cinema) engages with the society. The reference texts give the students a foundation on the theoretical framework on which they can look at the contemporary visual culture from a new perspective.

### Readings

Barthes, Roland. (1981). *Camera Lucida*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Partha Mitter (1994). *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations*. Cambridge University Press. Part one.

Braudy, Leo. (2004). *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings* (with Marshall Cohen), sixth edition. New York: Oxford, 2004.

## **Module Four: From Real to the Virtual**

Looks at the way in which the internet and cyber spaces are being used by disadvantaged and marginal groups for social and political change as well as misused as a system of surveillance. Here, how the virtual usurps the spaces of imagination in our day to day lives shall also be examined.

### Readings

Jones, Steve. (2002) *Virtual Culture: Identity and Communication in Cybersociety*. New Delhi: Sage.

Manovich, Lev. (2001). *The Language of New Media*. The MIT Press.

### **Core Text**

Lester, Paul Martin. (2006) Visual Communication Images with Messages 4th Edition.  
Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

### **Evaluation**

50 marks for End Sem Examination

30 for Q1 and Q2

10 for the Seminar Presentation

10 for Assignment and Final Report