

Course Description

This elective fulfills one semester of the 12th grade English requirement. This course will delve into the science fiction, horror, and mystery genres. We will look at how these genres are marketed to the adolescent and how their culture responds to these ideas, images, and values. Ideally, this course will arouse your curiosity, explore the inexplicable, predict the unpredictable, and satisfy your yearnings for the horrific, the mysterious, and the future in a variety of literary forms. We will also read works with a political and sociological focus that questions how these pieces provide a blend of entertainment and unique role models. Discussions will expand beyond the literary aspects and into ethical discussions about the advancements of science and myth and their effects on humankind. This course will be aggressive in its reading and number of essays, quizzes, and exams.

Course Expectations and Grading

Grading will be based upon the successful completion of the assignments. Assignments include numerous reading quizzes, tests, essays, reading logs, discussions, projects and culminating essays in response to themes discussed in each of the units. Reading logs and reading loads must be done before class. Take home essays should be typed, double-spaced, and checked for grammatical and spelling errors. Make sure you double-check your essays yourself. Late work will be accepted at ½ credit up till the end of a unit so make sure you get assignments in and on time. Participation in class discussions and activities is a necessity and will help encourage in-depth critical analysis and lively discussions. I consider the quality as well as frequency of your participation when determining the grade. Put simply, class participation will be a part of your overall grade. The following is a breakdown of the grading categories:

Tests/Essays/Projects	35%
Reading Quizzes	25%
Discussions/Participation	25%
Reading Logs/Assignments	15%

Class Behavior

Be respectful and courteous to one another. Participating in side conversations, text messaging, listening to music, playing video games, and/or succumbing to the voices in your head are not only distracting but also disrespectful. Please deter from these behaviors during class time. In regards to the aforementioned devices, I will take these items away, wrap them up, and give them to my siblings as early or belated birthday gifts.

Sensitive Materials

As we look into the science fiction, mystery, and horror genres, we will be reading a number of texts and watching some films that fall under these categories. One goal of this course is to expose you to a variety of interpretations a writer and/or director may have for a piece of literature. Thus, it is possible that you may encounter something that you find objectionable. I encourage you to discuss individually with me about what you find objectionable; in extreme cases alternative assignments may be assigned.

Academic Honesty

We honor academic honesty at Bainbridge High School. Plagiarism or cheating may “result in loss of credit for the assignment with a recorded failing grade. It may also entail loss of credit for the course with a recorded failing grade, removal from the course with a failing grade, and/or additionally appropriate disciplinary action.” (BHS Student Handbook) See the handbook for more information concerning the penalties of plagiarism and cheating.

Attendance

I will take attendance daily and will make note of any late arrivals or early departures. Make up work is your responsibility. It is your responsibility to check with me BEFORE or AFTER school for any missed assignments. Please use my web page to see what you may have missed. In case of an excused absence, you are expected to make up the missed assignment during the same amount of time allotted for that assignment after returning to class.

Office Hours

I am available for extra help before and after school. However, to ensure my availability for help, I encourage you to speak with me ahead of time to arrange a meeting.

Unit Descriptions

Science Fiction (approximately six weeks)

Objectives

- Become acquainted with the wide scope of the science fiction genre, understanding that it includes fantasy, adventure, and mystery, as well as social and political commentary
- Critique one's own social, political, and economic system by means of examining exotic cultures set in the past, future, and/or distant worlds
- Understand the appeal of science fiction and how the adolescent culture responds to its ideas
- Analyze works of science fiction through reading, writing, and discussion

Texts

Feed by M.T. Anderson

Assorted short stories from various science fiction anthologies

(Possible titles to choose from)

Stranger in a Strange Land by Robert Heinlein

Foundation by Isaac Asimov

Rendezvous with Rama by Arthur C. Clarke

The Martian Chronicles by Ray Bradbury

A Canticle for Leibowitz by Walter M. Miller, Jr.

Films (possible titles to choose from)

The Day the Earth Stood Still, *Planet of the Apes*, *Soylent Green*, *2001*, *Blade Runner*, *Gattaca*, *Minority Report*, *Equilibrium*

Horror (approximately six weeks)

Objectives

- Examine the development of horror from Poe to modern day writers
- Explore the concept of fear and the existence of evil
- Explore the possibility that all tales of horror have an ethical and moral foundation
- Understand the appeal of horror fiction and how the adolescent culture responds to its ideas
- Analyze works of horror through reading, writing, and discussion

Texts

Interview with the Vampire by Anne Rice

The Girl With All the Gifts by M.R. Carey

Great Short Works of Edgar Allan Poe

Assorted horror short stories by Stephen King, Clive Barker, Dean Koontz, etc.

Films (possible titles to choose from)

Nosferatu, *Psycho*, *Night of the Living Dead*, *Stepford Wives*, *The Exorcist*, *Interview with the Vampire*, *Army of Darkness*

Mystery (approximately six weeks)

- Understand the formula of a good mystery
- Explore the concept of a hero
- Become acquainted and analyze the evolution of the detective story
- Analyze the works of mystery through reading, writing, and discussion

Texts

The Beekeeper's Apprentice by Laurie King

Bootlegger's Daughter by Margaret Maron

Yellow Dog Party by Earl Emerson

The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown

Assorted short stories by Arthur Conan Doyle, Edgar Allan Poe, etc.

Films (possible titles to choose from)

Sherlock, *Death in the Clouds*, *Door to Death*, *The Maltese Falcon*, *Chinatown*, *Memento*, *Blood Simple*