Course Description:
This course reviews the intersection between the genre of science fiction and the academic study of politics. The course explores the political themes of various films, television shows, and novels. Topics covered include the exercise of power, the role of authority in society, institutional structures and arrangements, and conceptualizations of democracy. In addition, the course examines issues such as gender roles, racial politics, and civil right and liberties as examined by science fiction.

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes:
This course is associated with the major and minor in political science. The course is not part of the general education core curriculum. No general education objectives or outcomes are addressed in this course.

Program Learning Objectives:
The following program learning outcomes for the political science major are addressed in this course:
• The student will demonstrate oral communication skills.

Student Learning Objectives:
• To explain how authors and creators of science fiction explore politics
• To discuss concepts of power and authority found in political science as expressed in science fiction
• To explain how science fiction addresses issues like economic development and political development
• To evaluate concepts of international relations like balance of power, deterrence, terrorism and war
• To examine concepts of citizenship and civil liberties explored in science fiction

Textbooks:
Three books are required for this course:
Atwood, Margaret. 1985. The Handmaid’s Tale (Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart)
In addition, you will need to access two miniseries through the NBC App and will need to access several movies through Amazon Prime, Vudu, or other streaming service that offers these movies for rent or for free.
The professor reserves the right to add other readings at any time during the semester.
Grades:

Grades for the course will be drawn from the following sources:

- Introductory Activity: 10%
- Reaction Papers: 35%
- Video Presentation of Book: 25%
- Participation: 30%

Total: 100%

Course grades will be converted to letter grades using a standard 90%--80%--70% scale:

- A: 90.0% and above
- B: 80.0% to 89.9%
- C: 70.0% to 79.9%
- D: 60.0% to 69.9%
- F: 59.9% and below

Course grades are for the entire class are not curved or adjusted at the end of the semester. Extra credit work is not permitted.

Introductory Activity:

After watching the introductory video about your professor, you will introduce yourself to me and to the rest of the class through a video post to a discussion board in Brightspace by D2L. In this post, you should address the following questions. Your video should be about five (5) minutes in length.

- What is your major? Why did you choose that major?
- What is your classification? (First year, sophomore, junior, or senior)
- What is your home town? Where else have you lived?
- Where did you go to high school?
- Why are you taking this course?
- What is your background or interests in science fiction?

This activity will help me and your co-learners in the class get to know you a bit better. Your video post is due in the appropriate location in Brightspace by D2L by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, July 8. To record your video, you may use ZOOM or you may set up a free account from several other vendors like Screencast-o-matic (www.screencast-o-matic.com). However you record your video, make sure that you save the video in an .mp4 format for viewing in Brightspace by D2L. The introductory activity is worth ten (10) percent of your final grade.

Reaction Papers:

You will write a series of five (5) reaction papers during the course from the list of options below. In each paper, you will identify the political content, themes, and messages in the assigned work. Your reaction papers are due according to the schedule provided below. Late papers will be penalized. Specific questions to address in your paper will be made available in the course’s Brightspace by D2L website.

These papers should be approximately two pages in length. Your paper must be typed, double-spaced, using an appropriate font (e.g. Times New Roman 11 or 12 point). Your papers are graded based upon content as well as spelling and grammar. So, be sure to check the grammar and spelling before submitting the paper. Papers with more than seven (7) grammatical errors will be penalized one letter grade, and papers with greater than fifteen (15) errors will be given a zero (0) for the grade. The following is a list of Dr. Galatas’ pet peeves in terms of grammar. You should avoid the following errors and issues in your paper.

- Use of contractions
- Ambiguous pronoun references
- Dangling prepositions
• Incomplete sentences and sentence fragments
• Using the word “feel” when you mean “believe” or “think”

The following is a list of paper topics and due dates.
• Paper #1 – Review of Battlestar Galactica (2003); Due July 10.
• Paper #5 – Review of Ready Player One (2018); Due July 27.
• Paper #7 – Review of Star Trek: Beyond (2017); Due August 5.

Your paper is due at **11:59 p.m. on the date the paper is due.** Collectively, the reaction papers are worth 35% of your final grade in the course.

**Video Presentation of Book:**

In addition, to the assigned books listed above, you will select one additional science fiction book. You may select on your own, or if you need assistance, your instructor may offer suggestions. You will read the book outside of class time, on your own. As you read the book, you should take notes on the key political themes of the book. Possible themes include:

- Who has power and how is power exercised?
- How does the society in the book govern itself?
- How are resources allocated?
- Does the book focus on individual rights or collective identities?
- How does the book address issues such as majority rule and rights of the minority?
- Are there other key political ideas addressed in the book?

You will prepare an video of approximately seven (7) minutes addressing one or more of the political themes in the book. You should prepare for the video presentation by practicing and observing the time limits. Going too long or not long enough will negatively impact your grade for the oral presentation. Your presentation will be graded based upon the following criteria:

- Your language is clear and avoid colloquialisms
- Your language is clear, precise, and effective
- Your presentation is practiced and polished with professional body language and eye contact
- Your presentation is well-organized and coherent
- You are appropriately dressed for the presentation

Your proposed book for your presentation is due by **July 17, 2020 by 11:59 p.m.** Proposals will be accepted on a first-come-first served basis. The video presentation will be uploaded to a discussion board in Brightspace by D2L. The presentation should be saved in an .mp4 format. Your oral presentation is worth 25% of your grade for the course.

**Participation:**

Participation consists of two types of participation. The first type of participation also entails group activities related to the assigned readings, television shows, and movies. You will be assigned to a group of five or six students; each group will be named based upon one of the Battlestars from *Battlestar Galactica*. Each group will be given questions and themes to address associated with assigned readings, television series, and movies. Individually, you will discuss the questions through discussion boards in Brightspace by D2L. You are expected to post your initial thread, react to other posts, and collectively reach agreement on the political themes, concepts, and ideas conveyed in the day’s materials. The group will appoint a moderator, or “Commander” to post the final
conclusions of the group. The “Commander” position should rotate throughout the term. Your grade will be
based upon the quality and score of your comments and reactions.

Participation counts as 30% of your final grade in the course.

Attendance:
Because this course is delivered in an online format, attendance will not be taken. Attendance does not count
toward your course grade.

Student Academic Dishonesty:
The following is taken from SFASU’s Policy Manual (2018), section on “Student Academic Dishonesty.”
“Abiding by university policy on academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students.
Faculty members must promote the components of academic integrity in their instruction, and course syllabi are
required to provide information about penalties for cheating and plagiarism, as well as the appeal process.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty:
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: using or
attempting to use unauthorized materials on any class assignment or exam; falsifying or inventing of any information,
including citations, on an assignment; helping or attempting to help other student(s) in an act of cheating or
plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were one’s own. Examples of
plagiarism include, but are not limited to: submitting an assignment as one's own work when it is at least partly the
work of another person; submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the Internet or another
source; incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper or presentation without giving the author credit.

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty:
Penalties may include, but are not limited to, reprimand, no credit for the assignment or exam, resubmission
of the work, make-up exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/4.1-student-academic-dishonesty.pdf.
All cases of academic dishonesty will be handled according to University policies and procedures in the SFASU
Policy Manual and other sources of policy. The consequences for academic dishonesty may range from a score of
zero (0) on the assignment to an “F” for the course. For details, students should refer to the SFA Policy Manual
(2018) or the University’s General Bulletin, 2017 – 2018 section entitled “Academic Integrity” and other sources of
University policy.

Withheld Grades:
The following is taken from SFASU’s Policy Manual (2018), “Course Grades Policy.” (Policy 5.5)
“At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, a grade of
WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances.
Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a
WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Active Military Service
(6.14)]. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and
will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.”

Students with Disabilities:
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with
disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor
and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. For additional information, go to
http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.
**Acceptable Student Behavior:**

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the iCare program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings or Viewing</th>
<th>D2L Assignment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07/07</td>
<td>The Cold War</td>
<td>Getting Started Module; Watch <em>Battlestar Galactica</em> (1978), “Saga of a Star World” [Episodes 1-3] [Free on NBC App]</td>
<td>Read Getting Started Module; Read Cold War Module</td>
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<td>07/08</td>
<td>The Cold War</td>
<td>Finish <em>Battlestar Galactica</em> (1978), “Saga of a Star World” [Episodes 1-3] [Free on NBC App]</td>
<td>Introductory Video Due</td>
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<td>07/09</td>
<td>Post-Cold War Order</td>
<td>Watch <em>Battlestar Galactica</em> (2003) [Free on NBC App]</td>
<td>Read Post-Cold War Module; Discussion #1 Due</td>
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<td>07/10</td>
<td>Post-Cold War Order</td>
<td>Watch <em>Battlestar Galactica</em> (2003) [Free on NBC App]</td>
<td>Paper #1 Due</td>
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<td>07/13</td>
<td>Post-Cold War Order</td>
<td>Watch <em>Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country</em> (1991)</td>
<td>Paper #2 Due</td>
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<td>07/14</td>
<td>Totalitarian Governments</td>
<td>Watch <em>Star Wars: Episode IV: A New Hope</em> (1997)</td>
<td>Read Totalitarian Module; Paper #3 Due</td>
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<td>07/15</td>
<td>Totalitarian Governments</td>
<td><em>The Handmaid’s Tail</em> pp. 1-66</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>07/16</td>
<td>Totalitarian Governments</td>
<td><em>The Handmaid’s Tail</em> pp. 67 - 140</td>
<td>Discussion #2 Due</td>
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<td>07/17</td>
<td>Totalitarian Governments</td>
<td><em>The Handmaid’s Tail</em> pp. 141 – end</td>
<td>Discussion #3 Due; Proposal for Oral Presentation</td>
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<td>07/20</td>
<td>Human Nature and War</td>
<td><em>Divergent</em> (2014)</td>
<td>Read Human Nature Module; Paper #4 Due</td>
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<td>07/21</td>
<td>National Security</td>
<td><em>Dragonsdawn</em>, pp. 1 – 125 (Chapters 1 – 6)</td>
<td>Nat’l Security Module</td>
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<td>07/22</td>
<td>National Security</td>
<td><em>Dragonsdawn</em>, pp. 126 – 205 (Chs. 7 – 11)</td>
<td>Discussion Post #4 Due</td>
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<td>07/23</td>
<td>National Security</td>
<td><em>Dragonsdawn</em>, pp. 206 – 272 (Chs. 12 – 16)</td>
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<td>07/24</td>
<td>National Security</td>
<td><em>Dragonsdawn</em>, pp. 273 to end (Chs. 17 – 19)</td>
<td>Discussion Post #5 Due</td>
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<td>07/27</td>
<td>Privacy / Human Rights</td>
<td><em>Ready Player One</em> (2018)</td>
<td>Read Privacy Module; Paper #5 Due</td>
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<td>07/28</td>
<td>Environmental Politics</td>
<td><em>Red Mars</em>, pp. 1 – 91 (Parts 1 and 2)</td>
<td>Envir. Politics Module</td>
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<td>07/29</td>
<td>Environmental Politics</td>
<td><em>Red Mars</em>, pp. 92-230 (Parts 3 and 4)</td>
<td>Discussion Post #6 Due</td>
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<td>07/30</td>
<td>Environmental Politics</td>
<td><em>Red Mars</em>, pp. 231 – 382 (Parts 5 and 6)</td>
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<td>07/31</td>
<td>Environmental Politics</td>
<td><em>Red Mars</em>, pp. 383 – 470 (Part 7)</td>
<td>Discussion Post #7 Due</td>
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<td>08/03</td>
<td>Environmental Politics</td>
<td><em>Red Mars</em>, pp 384 – end (Part 8)</td>
<td>Discussion Post #8 Due</td>
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<td>08/04</td>
<td>Challenges to Democracy</td>
<td><em>Star Wars: Episode III: Revenge of the Sith</em> (2005)</td>
<td>Democratization Module; Paper #6 Due</td>
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<td>08/05</td>
<td>Globalization</td>
<td>Watch <em>Star Trek: Beyond</em> (2009)</td>
<td>Globalization Module Paper #7 Due</td>
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<td>08/06</td>
<td>Video Presentation</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>08/07</td>
<td>Video Presentation</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Video Presentation Due</td>
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