GENY0002

Academic Skills Plus
Science Fiction

Term Two // 2022
Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

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Academic Skills would like to Respectfully Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Bedegal (Kensington campus), Gadigal (City and Art & Design Campuses) and the Ngunnawal people (Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra) of the lands where each campus of UNSW is located.
Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary
This course is aimed at improving your academic skills. It will provide you with an overview of academic culture in order to enhance your academic literacy and understanding of how academic texts are constructed. This will help you participate in the creation of knowledge at university and allow you to produce better assignments. The skills developed in this course primarily include critical thinking, academic writing, referencing, notetaking, reading, time management, grammar, expression, as well as oral presentations. Students will apply these skills to the course theme of ‘Science Fiction’, which we will discuss in our weekly lectures. There is no prior knowledge required for the course and it’s expected your writing, critical thinking, and ability to express your ideas will improve as a result.

Course Learning Outcomes
After successfully completing this course, you should be able to:

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<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Level of Thinking</th>
<th>Aligns with Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Apply critical thinking and academic research to essay writing</td>
<td>Level 3 Apply</td>
<td>1,2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Analyse and reflect on the construction, accuracy, and reliability of academic sources</td>
<td>Level 4 Analyse</td>
<td>1,2,4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Apply referencing conventions to researched essays and presentations</td>
<td>Level 3 Apply</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Create effective written and spoken texts using clear and concise language.</td>
<td>Level 6 Create</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
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Recommended Reading:


*Level Up Your Essays* by Inger Mewburn, Katherine Firth and Shaun Lehmann (2021)

**Assessment schedule (to pass the course all assessments must be completed)**

1. Essay 1 (25%). 1000 words. Due: 15th July 11:59pm
2. Essay 2 (35%). 1500 words. Due: 5th August 11:59pm
3. Presentation (30%). Due: 8th August 11:59pm
4. Class participation: (10%) Ongoing throughout the course

**Penalties for late assignments:**

If you are having difficulties in meeting any due dates, please speak to the convenor or your tutor. UNSW policy requires penalties for late work. Up to 3% of the total mark can be subtracted each day an assignment is late, including weekends. For example, if you hand in the first essay five days late, then you can lose 15% of the total mark. If you feel that you are unable to complete a task by the due date, for whatever reason, please email your convenor or tutor. We are always happy to discuss your options.

**Essay questions:**

*(NOTE: for each question, you must refer to at least two creative works):*

1. Atwood writes: “What I mean by ‘science fiction’ is those books that descend from H. G. Wells’s *The War of the Worlds*, which treats of an invasion by tentacled, blood-sucking Martians shot to Earth in metal canisters – things that could not possibly happen – whereas, for me, “speculative fiction” means plots that descend from Jules Verne’s books about submarines and balloon travel and such – things that really could happen but just hadn’t completely happened when the authors wrote the books. I would place my own books in this second category: no Martians.” (From *In other worlds*, p.6)

With these remarks in mind, is it useful to distinguish between science fiction and speculative fiction? In answering this question you might also consider Le Guin’s suggestion that people who refer to their works as ‘speculative fiction’ rather than ‘science fiction’ are simply trying to
protect themselves from some of the negative connotations associated with science fiction (see *In other worlds*)?

2. Is it useful to distinguish between literary and non-literary science fiction?
3. Is it bad if science fiction works contain a ‘message’?
4. Is it possible to differentiate between good and bad science fiction?
5. What is science fiction?
6. Select a science fiction theme or trope (for example, aliens, time travel, dystopia). Compare two or more creative works and evaluate which provides the most convincing treatment of this theme or trope.
7. Compare two or more works of science fiction and discuss which work contains a superior treatment of gender.
8. What do our depictions of Mars tell us about ourselves?
9. What do our depictions of Aliens tell us about ourselves?
10. To what extent is science fiction a valuable genre?
11. Why is science fiction sometimes seen as a joke? Is this perspective justified?
12. What is the difference between the genres of science fiction and fantasy? Is science fiction superior to fantasy?
13. Is utopian or dystopian SF more effective in addressing current global problems? (You can focus on a particular problem such as climate change, or address the question more generally).

**ASSESSMENT 1: Essay 1 (1000 words)**

Answer one of the above questions. The feedback criteria will be discussed in class. Please use the Harvard Referencing System. **At least four academic-quality sources must be used. At least one of these must come from the course readings. Blogs, Wikipedia, news articles, etc, do not count towards the four sources; although you can use these (with caution).**

The following are the criteria used to mark Essay 1 (total marks = 100):

- Structural diagram: Thesis and main points. (3 marks)
- Introduction: Orientation, thesis, outline. (20 marks)
• Body: General logic (relationship between paragraphs), structure of paragraphs (topic sentences, elaboration, concluding sentences). (25 marks)
• Conclusion: Summary, thesis restated. (12 marks)
• Is the question answered: Is there a sustained and convincing engagement with the question? (10 marks)
• Research: Are there a sufficient number of sources, are the sources well integrated, is knowledge and understanding of the subject demonstrated, is a referencing system followed? (10 marks)
• Critical thinking: Is the student’s voice strong? Are the arguments nuanced? Does the response engage with the ideas of others in a thoughtful manner? (10 marks)
• Expression: Grammar, level of formality, clarity, etc. (7 marks)
• Formatting: Line spacing, font size, page numbers, etc. (3 marks)

ASSESSMENT 2: Essay 2 (1500 words)
The idea for Essay 2 is to use the feedback you’ve received for Essay 1 to produce a better essay. You may respond to the same question as your first essay or attempt a new question. At least seven academic-quality sources must be used. At least two must come from within the course and at least three must come from outside the course (there will be a significant mark penalty for not using the required readings). Non-scholarly websites do not count towards the seven sources; although these sources can be used with caution and citation. You must also include a tree-diagram that outlines your essay’s structure.

The following are the criteria used to mark your essay (total marks = 100):
• Structural diagram: Thesis and main points. (3 marks)
• Introduction: Orientation, thesis, outline. (10 marks)
• Body: General logic (relationship between paragraphs), structure of paragraphs (topic sentences, logic, transitions, etcetera). (17 marks)
• Conclusion: Summary, thesis restated. (5 marks)
• Is the questions answered: Is there a sustained and convincing engagement with the question? (20 marks)
• Research: Are there enough sources? Is knowledge and understanding of the topic demonstrated? Are the sources well integrated and engaged with? (15 marks)
• Referencing: Is a referencing system adhered to (in-text citations / footnotes and reference list / bibliography)? (5 marks)
• Critical thinking: Is the student’s voice strong? Are the arguments nuanced? Does the response engage with the ideas of others in a thoughtful manner? Etcetera. (15 marks)
• Expression: Grammar, level of formality, clarity, etc. (7 marks)
• Presentation: Line spacing (1.5), font size (11 or 12), page numbers, margins (not too narrow) etc. (3 marks)

ASSESSMENT 3: Academic Skills Poster
You are to create and present a GENY0002: Academic Skills Plus poster. The poster should target first and second year undergraduate students at UNSW, with the aim of encouraging them to develop their academic skills by enrolling in GENY. You must submit your pitch as a 5-7 min video showcasing your poster and explaining why you think it should be selected to be displayed across UNSW campus. You will be marked on both your presentation skills as well as the quality of your poster.

Steps to follow:
1. Record your 5-7 min video presentation.
2. Upload your presentation to YouTube (listed as private).
3. Submit the video link + your poster to Moodle forums.
4. Watch and comment on at least three other student presentations.

The following are the criteria used to mark your presentation:
• Opening/introduction: Here you should introduce yourself and say what you will talk about. Make sure you provide an outline that gives the audience a sense of how your presentation will develop. (15 marks)
• Clarity of structure: It should always be clear where you have just been in your presentation, where you are, and where you are going. Have you used clear signposts? Is the structure of your presentation clear? (15 marks)
• Quality of description: Is the poster explained clearly and succinctly? (10 marks)
• Quality of poster: Is the poster appropriate for the intended audience? Is it creative and original? Is it engaging? (15 marks)
• Conclusion: Does the conclusion summarise what you have said? Does it avoid introducing any new information? (10 marks)

• Performance: Think about your speaking manner. Present in a way that is engaging but informative. You will do poorly here if you read from a script. You will do well if you have a more conversational manner. (30 marks)

Class participation
UNSW policy is that students must attend 80% of the scheduled class hours for their course in order to achieve satisfactory academic progress. Class participation in this program is based on a number of factors including: your willingness to discuss and share ideas in class, your ability to respond to questions and feedback, your overall attendance throughout the term, your participation in blog posts and post lecture activities, as well as your capacity to observe and discuss lecture material. In short, there are three ways to gain participation marks.

1. Attending tutorials, asking questions, and making useful comments in class.
2. Making thoughtful weekly blog posts in Moodle (SEE WEEKLY ACTIVITIES).
3. Watching lectures and participating in post discussion via Microsoft Teams.

Attendance
4. According to UNSW policy, all students must attend at least 80% of the scheduled class hours for their course in order to achieve satisfactory academic progress. Failure to achieve satisfactory attendance may result in cancellation of enrolment. If you are absent due to a medical reason, a valid medical certificate should be provided to explain the absence. Please contact your tutor or convenor if you cannot make a class to discuss your options.

Help with assignments
UNSW provides a number of avenues for academic support. Your first step is to ask your tutor or convenor for questions relating to the course and assessment items. You can also visit us at Academic Skills which offers both workshops (see Study Hacks) as well as 1:1 consultations. You can book appointments here: https://student.unsw.edu.au/skills.
Plagiarism

UNSW defines plagiarism as using words or ideas of others and passing them off as one’s own, or republishing one’s own previously submitted work and presenting it as new findings or work without referencing the earlier work. This practice undermines academic and research integrity and is not tolerated at the University.

Types of Plagiarism:

**Copying:** Using the same or very similar text or idea to the original text or idea without appropriately acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person’s assignment, without appropriate acknowledgement. This can also include combining cited and non-cited (copied) passages.

**Inappropriate paraphrasing:** Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another’s ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

**Collusion:** Presenting work as independent work when it has been prepared in whole or part in through unauthorised collaboration with other people. This includes students providing their submitted work to another student for the purpose of them plagiarising, stealing or acquiring another person’s academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person’s work or seeking or receiving payment for completing academic work. This should not be confused with academic collaboration.

**Contract cheating:** Contract cheating is also known as engaging in ‘ghost-writing’. It is a form of collusion. When a student or researcher engages another person to complete work for them and then submits the work as their own. This includes circumstances where a student or researcher submits work they may have edited which was substantially the work of another person, or where a student or researcher prepares a draft that is substantially modified by another (beyond minor editing).

**Inappropriate citation:** Citing sources which have not been read, not acknowledging the ‘secondary’ source from which knowledge of them has been obtained. This may include fabricating citations, or inaccurately citing sources which goes beyond typographical errors.

**Self-plagiarism:** An author republishing their own previously submitted work and presenting it as new findings or work without referencing the earlier work, either in its entirety or partially. Self-plagiarism is also referred to as ‘recycling’, ‘duplication’, or ‘multiple submissions of research findings’ without disclosure. In the student or researcher context, self-plagiarism includes re-using parts, or all of a body of work that has already been submitted for assessment without proper citation. Where a student is repeating a course, they should seek permission from the course coordinator before re-submitting, in whole or part, the same piece of assessment

For more information see: [https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism](https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism)
Special consideration
On some occasions, sickness, misadventure, or other circumstances beyond your control may prevent you from completing a course requirement such as handing in a piece of written work by the due date, or sitting the formal end of session examination. It is also possible that such situations may significantly affect your performance in an assessable task. The University has procedures that allow you to apply for an extension or for special consideration for the affected assessments. Depending on the circumstances, the University may take action to allow you to overcome the disadvantage; eg: giving you an extension on an assignment or allowing you to complete a different assessment task. As far as is possible, you should try and keep your lecturer informed of the circumstances that are having an adverse effect on your studies. The University also offers Counseling Services and assistance for students with an ongoing disability.
You can apply for Special Consideration through the following page:
www.student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration

Student support services
There are a number of student services on campus dedicated to supporting the student experience. These services include: New Student Support, International Student Experience Unit, Financial Assistance, Wellbeing, Health & Safety, Peer Support Program, Nura Gili, Equitable Learning Services, the Nucleus and the Library.
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<th>Type</th>
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<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Introduction to Science Fiction</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>The Philosophy of University</td>
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<td><em>Detailed instructions for each week’s tutorial and lecture can be found on Moodle. You must consult Moodle regularly for updates and reading material.</em></td>
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<td>Week 2: 6th – 10th June</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Space Opera</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>The Research Process</td>
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<td>Week 3: 14th – 17th June</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Cyberpunk</td>
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<td><em>(Monday Public holiday)</em></td>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Writing Introductions</td>
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<td>Week 4: 20th – 24th June</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Speculative Fiction/Literary SF</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Writing body paragraphs</td>
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<td>Week 5: 27th June – 1st July</td>
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<td>Gender in Science Fiction</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Writing Conclusions + analysing a student essay</td>
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<td>Week 6: 4th – 8th July <em>(FLEXI WEEK)</em></td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>NO LECTURE (Flexi week)</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>NO CLASSES (Flexi week)</td>
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<td>Week 7: 11th – 15th July</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Aliens and Colonisation</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Integrating Evidence</td>
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<td>Week 8: 18th – 22nd July</td>
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<td>Utopia and Dystopia</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>Week 9: 25th – 29th July</td>
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<td>Grammar and Expression</td>
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<td>Academic Skills Recap</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>TRIVIA QUIZ</td>
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