Fantasy and Science Fiction

ENGL 22

Spring 2026   Section 99   Fully Online   3 Unit(s)   01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026   Modified 01/22/2026

👤 Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Tanja Nathanael

Email: Tanja.Nathanael@sjsu.edu
Office: Canvas/Zoom

Office Hours

- Flexible hours
- By appointment
- Send email or Canvas message to schedule an appointment

🕐 Course Information

LECTURE

COURSE TYPE: Asynchronous

COURSE LOCATION: Canvas

- REQUIRED: LOG IN TO THE COURSE ON A WEEKLY BASIS
- REQUIRED: CHECK WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR DETAILS REGARDING LECTURES & ASSIGNMENTS
- Announcements will post on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Mondays
- Course weeks will run Wednesdays through Tuesdays

ALL ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE REQUIRED READING!

COURSE THEME

American and British Fantasy and Science Fiction: Frontiers of Time and Space

During this course we will examine texts that explore the frontiers of the imagination in both fantasy and science fiction. Arguably, the British tend to be more successful fantasists due to their comparatively long mythic history, while American writers have excelled in the genre of science fiction, due in part perhaps from an inherited historical ideal to explore the frontier. And yet, as we will discover, there are exceptions to this understanding in both cases. Additional themes of subgenre, gender, LGBTQ+, dis/ability, and diverse voices will also be explored.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED:

Canvas course must be accessed from a laptop or desktop computer or similar device. Students from previous semesters have reported difficulties with receiving notifications, navigating modules, and submitting assignments while accessing Canvas using their phones. Therefore, it is NOT recommended that you use your phone to complete assignments for this course. Please limit phone use to checking messages.

WRITING REQUIREMENTS

GE LEARNING OUTCOMES require writing a minimum 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline to meet Learning Outcome #4: "Research and write effective analyses of works of human intellect and imagination." In this course, students will be assigned one research essay that fulfills this requirement. More information regarding Learning Outcomes and the Research Essay assignment are detailed below.

💻 Course Description and Requisites

Students will examine works of literary fantasy and science fiction to understand them as expressions of human intellect and Imagination; to comprehend their historical and cultural contexts; and to recognize their diverse cultural traditions. Both contemporary and historical works will be studied.

Satisfies 3B. Humanities (Formerly Area C2).

Grading: Letter Graded

Note(s): No credit in the English major.

✳ Classroom Protocols

ATTENDANCE

SIX REQUIRED CHECK-INS

Although this course is online and asynchronous, students must maintain a regular and active presence in the course. This includes responding to emails and messages, as well as completing module assignments in a timely manner. There are six virtual check-ins during the semester—that is, one response per module to a required "Citizen" assignment—one Opening Reflection, one pre-writing assignment for Modules 1-3, and one Closing Reflection. Also, there is one required Zoom meeting with the instructor for midterm progress assessment.

IMPORTANT: If there is no response to Canvas message or email and no activity in the Canvas course by the end of the second week of the course, a student may be dropped.

EMAIL & ONLINE COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE

For this online course, we will do all of our writing in digital spaces—some formal, some informal. An important part of learning to be a successful student and writer is knowing what is appropriate in a given situation. An email to me, to any other faculty or staff member on campus, or to anyone in any position of authority must be respectful and professional in tone, should come from your official SJSU email account or Canvas message board, and should follow this sample format:

EXAMPLE:

Subject: Request to schedule an appointment

*A subject line is always required and should clearly and briefly represent your purpose for emailing.

Emails with no subject line may be mistaken as "junk mail" and may not be read.

Salutation:

Dear Dr. Nathanael,

*Always use a formal address, such as Professor, Dr., Ms., Mr. Never use the person's first name unless you have been given explicit permission to do so. Never use informal address like "Hey, Prof!"

Body:

I am a student in your ENGL 22 class, and I would like to schedule an appointment with you to discuss my essay draft. I am having trouble with my thesis statement and hope to get your help in clarifying it.

Are you available to meet this Wednesday afternoon?

*State your question, concern, or request briefly and clearly, using standardized English. Maintain a polite, respectful tone and avoid using exclamation points, emoticons, texting abbreviations, or coarse language. Avoid asking questions that are answered on the syllabus or assignment sheet, such as "When is our paper due?" or "What is our homework for tomorrow?" Emails that are not professional in style or tone, or that ask questions that are clearly answered on the syllabus or assignment sheets, may be ignored.

Closing:

Thank you,

*Use a formal closing, such as "Sincerely," "Respectfully," "Thank you," or "Best regards."

Name & ID

Martha Jones

ID: xxxxxxx

Course: ENGL 22

*Always sign your full name at the end of your email. Include your student ID and course number as a courtesy. Occasionally, there are students with the same name and this will avoid confusion.

Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

> **Goal 1:** To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.
> **Goal 2:** To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.
> **Goal 3:** To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website (https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php)](https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php).

📊 Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area 3B: Humanities

Across the disciplines in Area 3 coursework, students cultivate and refine their affective, cognitive, and expressive faculties by studying works of the human intellect and imagination. Area 3 courses help students to respond subjectively as well as objectively to aesthetic experiences and to develop an understanding of the integrity of both emotional and intellectual responses. In their intellectual and subjective considerations, students develop a better understanding of the interrelationship between the self and the creative arts and the humanities in a variety of cultures.

3B (Humanities) courses encourage students to analyze and appreciate works of philosophical, historical, literary, aesthetic, and cultural importance. Students may take courses in languages other than English in fulfillment of 3B if the courses do not focus solely on skills acquisition but also contain a substantial cultural component. This may include literature, among other content. Theater and film courses may be approved if they emphasize historical, literary, or cultural considerations. Logic courses may be accepted if the focus is not solely on technique but includes the role of logic in humanities disciplines.

GE Area 3B Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of a 3B course, students should be able to:

1. analyze and understand works of philosophical and humanistic importance, including their temporal and cultural dimensions;
2. explore and articulate their own subjective aesthetic and intellectual responses to such texts;
3. analyze and assess ideas of value, meaning, and knowledge, as produced within the humanistic disciplines; and
4. research and write effective analyses of works of the human intellect and imagination.

Writing requirement

3B classes require a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

📘 Course Materials

REQUIRED READING

Six novels plus selected novellas, short stories, poems, and articles. Some readings (short stories or articles) will be available via .PDF documents on Canvas or via the links available on Canvas. All novels listed below are available in e-book and paperback editions through the campus bookstore or other online venues. See Canvas course page for details.

PLEASE NOTE:

ALL ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE REQUIRED READING.

ALL TEXTS ASSIGNED IN THIS COURSE ARE REQUIRED READING.

NOVELS

Douglas Adams. The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (1979)

L Frank Baum. The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (1900)

Ursula Le Guin. A Wizard of Earthsea (1968)

Rainbow Rowell. Carry On (Simon Snow Trilogy Book 1) (2015)

J.K. Rowling. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (1998)

J.R.R. Tolkien. The Hobbit (1937)

NOVELLAS

Anne McCaffrey. The Ship Who Sang (1985)

Nnedi Okorafor. Binti (2015)

Deborah J. Ross. Four Paws to Light My Way (2021)

SHORT WORKS

Brian Aldiss. "Supertoys Last All Summer Long" (1969)

Terry Bisson. "They're Made Out of Meat" (1990)

Ray Bradbury. "The Million Year Picnic" (1946)

Robert Burns. "Tam O'Shanter" (1791)

C.J. Cherryh. "The Scapegoat" (1985)

Samuel R. Delany. "Driftglass" (1971)

Al Feldstein and Joe Orlando. "Judgment Day" (1953)

William Gibson. "Johnny Mnemonic" (1981)

Lizz Huerta. "Mouths" (2018)

Washington Irving. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820)

Ken Liu. "Mono No Aware" (2013)

H.P. Lovecraft. "Dagon" (1919)

C.L. Moore. "Shambleau" (1933)

An Owomoyela. "Three Points Masculine" (2016)

Kurt Vonnegut. "Harrison Bergeron" (1961)

NOTE: Additional readings such as articles, blogs, and videos will be assigned along with the above main readings.

See weekly assignments for details.

≔ Course Requirements and Assignments

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

REQUIRED HOURS

"Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus."

In other words, expect to dedicate about 10-15 hours per week to this 15-week course.

See breakdown of grading and assignment descriptions below.

Course assignments (described in detail below) will consist of orientation activities, module quizzes, one research essay, one team project, one timeline project, module activities (Side Quests), participation credit (Citizen), A.i. training, and one final exam.

REQUIRED SUBMISSION FORMAT

All assignments must be submitted in a format that can be seen and graded by the instructor.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to high volume of error, Google Docs links are not acceptable. See individual assignments for specific format requirements.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Research Essay (10 points total; 5-7 pages, or approx. 1500 words minimum required)

Students will demonstrate their ability to critically evaluate literature and defend a position in an essay. Some additional research will be required, and essays must quote from credible academic sources with citations. Successful essays will have a clear thesis, present ideas in an organized, logical, and coherent form, and use Standard English grammar, punctuation, spelling, and usage. Formal assignment prompts and grading rubrics will be distributed at the time the essays are assigned. Essays will be graded in the order of student conference appointments on Zoom. (GELO 1-4)

Team Project (10 points total; approx. word count may vary)

Design a Wizard School

Working in teams of three or four, students will brainstorm and design their own wizard school. Wizard school designs may be inspired by but are expected to be creatively different from Harry Potter's Hogwarts or other similar magic schools. Student teams will be expected to set up a regular meeting schedule to discuss a project plan, assigned roles, and expected outcomes. Student teams may utilize email, phone calls, and Zoom to conduct their meetings depending on individual schedules. Students will be graded individually on their roles as a team member and their contribution to the overall project. Grading criteria will include: 1) analysis of overall project; 2) analysis of contribution to project; 3) analysis of another group project. Formal assignment prompts and grading rubrics will be distributed at the time the project is assigned. (GELO 2-3)

Timeline Project (10 points total; audio/visual, approx. word count may vary)

History of Subgenres in Fantasy & Science Fiction

Create an historical timeline of a fantasy/science fiction subgenre.

Students will select one subgenre from Module 3 to explore in more detail and create a timeline of its historical development. Students will present their findings in an audio/visual slide presentation (or equivalent). Students will explore and articulate their own subjective aesthetic and intellectual responses to their selected subgenre. Students will demonstrate the significance of their selected subgenre by making connections to why fantasy matters, by analyzing and assessing ideas of value, meaning, and knowledge, as produced within the humanistic disciplines. (GELO 1-4)

Module Quizzes (15 points; 5 points per module)

Module quizzes will be taken online in Canvas and will be available during a seven-day window (see schedule for details). Once the window is closed, no one may take the exam except with a university approved excuse (illness, etc.) Module quizzes will contain a selection of matching, multiple choice, short answer questions based on weekly readings and lectures. Practice quizzes will be available within the lectures. (GELO 1)

Side Quests (15 points; 5 activities required per module)

Side Quests consist of a selection of small activities in which the student may demonstrate additional knowledge or skills based on the current module's assignments. The completion of one Side Quest = 1 point. Over the 15-week semester, students are required to achieve 15 Side Quests for 15 points. Activities include: illustrating a text, watching and responding to a TED Talk, responding to a scholarly article, and more. See Side Quests in Canvas for more details. (GELO 1-4)

Citizen (Participation credit; 20 points)

In addition to the Side Quests listed above, students must complete a selection of required assignments marked "Citizen." These assignments are necessary for the successful completion of the course. Such assignments include workshops, opening and closing reflections, and a student conference appointment with the instructor held on Zoom. NOTE: Zoom appointments will be unavailable during Week 15 and Finals Week. Students are encouraged to complete their Zoom appointment earlier in the semester. (GELO 1-4)

Final Examination (20 points)

The Final Exam will be taken online in Canvas and will be available during a seven-day window during Finals Week. Once the window is closed, no one may take the exam except with a university approved excuse (illness, etc.) The Final will be cumulative and consist of a random selection of questions from the Module 1-3 quizzes. The Final will contain a selection of matching, multiple choice, short answer questions. Practice quizzes are available within the lectures. (GELO 1, 4)

EXTRA CREDIT POLICY: EASTER EGGS

Extra credit may be earned by responding to specially marked assignments called "Easter Eggs." These discussion board prompts are available on a weekly basis but for a limited time. Easter Egg credit must be collected as a group to earn tiered rewards. See Canvas page for list of rewards.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Extra credit may NOT be used to replace the credit of main assignments. Failure to turn in required assignments or receiving a 0 on a main module project assignment will nullify extra credit.

LATE WORK POLICY: By Arrangement

At any time, and for reasonable circumstances, a student may request an extension on a main module assignment like a project or quiz. Message the instructor to make arrangements.

TIME SENSITIVE: Late work will receive a 10% or (-1) point reduction for each week beyond the original due date of the assignment.

Extensions are not granted for one-point assignments like Citizen or Side Quests.

A.i. TOOLS USE POLICY

A.i. Tools, such as ChatGPT, are now a part of our reality, but their usefulness in education is still under debate. Throughout this course, we will engage with and analyze the efficacy of such tools.

YELLOW LIGHT: PROCEED WITH CAUTION

Often A.i Tools Policies vary from major to major, from department to department, from course to course. Some instructors will encourage students to use A.i. freely (green light), while others will forbid its use altogether (red light). For this course, I have adopted a "yellow light" policy; that is, proceed with caution.

In Module 1, you will be given an A.i. workshop that will provide you with more information. In brief, you will learn:

Appropriate AI uses:

- To find key terms for research
- For review and editing

Do NOT use AI tools to:

- Generate original work—including organizing and outlining ideas.
- Search for academic sources—often these are "invented" by A.i. to show sample results. Even when the results are genuine articles, this means that everyone using A.i. for the assignment will pull up the same source, which doesn't yield much variety of thought.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE A.i. TOOLS AS A WRITING AID:

- An A.i. Use Statement must be included that explicitly states what the student used A.i. tools for. Such as, "In writing this essay, I used Grammarly as an aid in proofreading my original work. I affirm that I did not use A.i. tools to generate original ideas for any part of this essay."
- Every individual use of A.i. must be formally and correctly cited in the assignment's Works Cited.
- An Appendix that includes the original question submitted and response received from A.i. must be submitted along with the essay.

Courtesy of the Humanities department:

Much of the academic work we do—from writing essays to creating visual art—functions much like weightlifting. You build your intellectual "muscle" by practicing and by doing. You can't build muscle by bringing a forklift with you to the gym. Likewise, you can't build your skills and knowledge by offloading your intellectual work to an algorithm. Remember: Any 8-year-old can type a prompt into an input field; but a truly educated person can think for themselves because they have knowledge and skills at their disposal from practice.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

I have long been committed to diversity, and recognize the barriers faced by women, minorities, and other marginalized peoples in engaging in some fields as well as in their academic journey. As a college instructor, I strive to create an open, inclusive, and equal environment in which every student has the opportunity to engage comfortably and find the answers they specifically need. Through personal interaction and via my course design, I am committed to supporting students of all identities: including all races, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, and socioeconomic background.

Here are some avenues in which my commitment to diversity is expressed in my online asynchronous course:

Diversity of Authorship

Of the fictional texts that I teach, I maintain a roughly equal balance of male and female authors plus one gender neutral author. Some activities include discussion and engagement with cancel culture and racial and feminist concerns.

Diversity of Content

Of the fictional texts that I teach, about one half have female protagonists plus one alternative gender and one gender unidentified protagonist. Protagonists also represent a range of races and cultures. I organize my course into three main modules. Each module and its corresponding texts explore themes of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Assignments and activities encourage engagement with topics of diversity, equity, inclusion, gender and sexual identity, ability, and socioeconomic issues. Also, students are encouraged to think about how books are marketed based on gender, race, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Diversity of Access

In my teaching experience, I have worked closely with students with learning disabilities. Therefore, in the creation and design of my online asynchronous course, I have made accessibility a priority. Quizzes and key points-bearing assignments and projects are all allowed a 7-day submission window. Also, I am generous with extensions and extra credit. Small one-point assignments and activities are due within the length of each module—usually an average of five weeks. Students also have a range of submission options for some activities, which include audio, video, and written responses. At midterm, I require one Zoom appointment to discuss student progress and answer questions. I encourage feedback on course navigation and offer suggestions for effective progress. Students with special needs are encouraged to reach out and make arrangements; however, many accommodations are already incorporated into my course.

✔ Grading Information

Student progress will be assessed by means of essays and exams, along with a team project and some shorter assignments (Side Quests). Students will receive assignment prompts and rubrics—posted to Canvas and discussed in lectures—that will outline the specific expectations of the assignments. Students will receive written feedback on assignments along with a letter grade based on a 10-point scale per main module assignment. As this is an online class, students are encouraged to stay in regular contact with the instructor with regard to any questions about assignments or class expectations.

Specific grading criteria for assignments are indicated in the descriptions. Late papers and make-up exams must be arranged with the instructor. By department policy, in all English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure

Breakdown

DETERMINATION OF GRADES

Grades are determined on a 100-point scale, as follows:

10 points = Research Essay (to be completed in Module 1)

10 points = Team Project (to be completed in Module 2)

10 points = Timeline Project (to be completed in Module 3)

15 points = Module Quizzes (5 points in each module)

15 points = Side Quests (Module Activities; 15 total required)

20 points = Citizen (Participation)

20 points = Final Exam

100 points total

Grading Scale:

A 90-100

B 80-89

C 70-79

D 60-69

F 0-59

This course must be passed with a D- or better as a CSU graduation requirement.

GRADING TERMS

Students who do not submit the total required module projects (10 pt. value each), or receive a zero on one of them, will not receive an A in the course. Extra Credit may not be used in lieu of a Module project.

To Clarify: A ZERO will be assigned to a project for the following:

- The assignment is skipped (nothing turned in)
- The assignment is submitted but is obviously plagiarized or is wholly produced by A.i.
- The assignment is submitted but does not meet most or all of the criteria of the prompt (significantly below the word count minimum; essay is off-topic, etc.)
- The assignment is submitted but citations are exclusively taken from movies based on the book or books not assigned in class (Student may request to include such references so long as they are in addition to the assigned reading)
- The assignment is submitted in a format unable to be accessed by the instructor (broken link; corrupted file; etc.)

As a result, student's overall course grade will be impacted as follows:

- Zero or missing one module project = Cannot earn higher than a B
- Zero or missing two module projects = Cannot earn higher than a C
- Zero or missing three module projects = Cannot earn higher than a D and in danger of failing course

Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor and discuss options before assignments are missed.

🏛 University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 (PDF) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php)](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

📅 Course Schedule

Schedule is subject to change at instructor's discretion.

Schedule adjustments will be announced via Canvas Announcements and email.

Always log into Canvas to view the current course schedule.

MODULE 0

GETTING STARTED ORIENTATION

JAN 22 – JAN 27

WEEK 0

DUE: MODULE 0 QUIZ

DUE: CITIZEN: INTRODUCE YOURSELF

DUE: CITIZEN: OPENING REFLECTION: WHY FANTASY MATTERS

MODULE 1

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

JAN 28 – FEB 3

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO COURSE

BEGIN THE HOBBIT

DUE: CITIZEN: MODULE 1 PRE-WRITING

FEB 4 – FEB 10

WEEK 2

BEGIN THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ

FEB 11 – FEB 17

WEEK 3

BEGIN FOUR PAWS TO LIGHT MY WAY

FEB 18 – FEB 24

WEEK 4

ESSAY PREP: ESSAY WORKSHOPS

BEGIN WRITING ESSAY DRAFTS

FEB 25 – MAR 3

WEEK 5: END MODULE 1

DUE: ESSAYS

DUE: MODULE 1 QUIZ (7-day submission window)

DUE: FIVE SIDE QUESTS DUE AT END OF MODULE 1

MODULE 2

WIZARD SCHOOLS

MAR 4 – MAR 10

WEEK 6

BEGIN A WIZARD OF EARTHSEA

DUE: CITIZEN: MODULE 2 PRE-WRITING

DUE: SET STUDENT CONFERENCE APPOINTMENT

MAR 11 – MAR 17

WEEK 7

BEGIN HARRY POTTER & THE SORCERER'S STONE

MAR 18 – MAR 24

WEEK 8

BEGIN CARRY ON

MAR 25 – MAR 27

WEEK 9

TEAM PROJECT PREP: TEAM MEETINGS & BRAINSTORMING

[SPRING BREAK: MAR 30 – APR 3]

APR 6 – APR 7

WEEK 10: END MODULE 2

DUE: TEAM PROJECT: WIZARD SCHOOLS

DUE: TEAM PROJECT: TEAM ANALYSIS

DUE: MODULE 2 QUIZ (7-day submission window)

DUE: FIVE SIDE QUESTS DUE AT END OF MODULE 2

MODULE 3

NEW FRONTIERS

APR 8 – APR 14

WEEK 11

GOTHIC

LOVECRAFTIAN HORROR

SCIENCE FICTION & THE MARTIAN FRONTIER

DUE: CITIZEN: MODULE 3 PRE-WRITING

APR 15 – APR 21

WEEK 12

SPACE OPERA

ANDROIDS & A.I.

CYBERPUNK

MILITARY SF

APR 22 – APR 28

WEEK 13

DIVERSE VOICES

AFRICANFUTURISM

APR 29 – MAY 5

WEEK 14

SATIRE & DYSTOPIA

COMICS

HUMOR

MAY 6 – MAY 11

WEEK 15: END MODULE 3

DUE: MODULE 3 QUIZ

DUE: MODULE 3 PROJECT

DUE: FIVE SIDE QUESTS DUE AT END OF MODULE 3

FINALS WEEK: MAY 13 – MAY 20

FINAL REFLECTION & FINAL EXAM