Aerial Literatures:
From Ballooning to Drones

Themes and Genres in the Literatures of the Americas

ENGL 2335.001
Spring 2016
T/H 12:30-1:45 @ Center for Instruction 102

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Course Description
Unmanned aerial systems (UAS) or what are commonly referred to in the public sphere as “drones” may seem like a newly frightening technology. But flying machines have long raised ethical questions for humanity. From ballooning wars and the invention of aircraft to depictions of travel by spaceship, it becomes clear that there exists a robust aerial imagination into which narratives about UAS fit. This class will study these aerial literatures, which includes works by Edgar Allan Poe, Jules Verne, Orson Scott Card, and many others.

Course Objectives
• To consider how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience by examining the connections between literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts.
• To use literature to explore ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures and nationalities.
• To recognize the distinctive characteristics of relevant literary periods, genres, and writers.
• To understand and use basic literary terms and concepts.
• To develop analytic skills by close reading, class discussion, and writing.
• To use writing as a tool for learning.

Student Learning Outcomes (Higher Education Coordinating Board of the State of Texas)
• Critical Thinking
  CT1. Generate and communicate ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information.
  CT3. Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information.
• Communication Skills
  CS1. Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written communication.
• Personal Responsibility
  PR1. Evaluate choices and actions, and relate consequences to decision making.
• Social Responsibility
  SR3. Engage in regional, national, and global communities.
How You Will Earn Your Grade

- Daily Reading Quizzes – 15%
- Class Activities/Daily Writing – 15%
- Midterm Exam – 20%
- Science Writing Essay – 10%
- “Hoax” Essay – 10%
- Revised Essay – 10%
- Final Exam – 20%

Required Texts

- *Ender's Game*. By Orson Scott Card
  ISBN 978-0812550702
- *Grounded*. By George Brant
  ISBN 978-0573702785
- *I, Robot*. By Isaac Asimov.
  ISBN 978-0553382563

Policies

- **Attend class**

I have allotted each student 2 absences. You should reserve these absences for illnesses, funerals, unexpected absences from town, etc. In general, I don’t need to know you’re going to be absent, **UNLESS** you foresee a long-term series of absences brewing or need an extension. Should you exceed your 2-absence allotment, your final grade will suffer. That means if you have an A at the end of the semester, it will drop to an A- with the third absence, with the fourth it will drop to a B+, with the fifth it will drop to a B, etc.

- **Do Not Be Late**

Tardiness will be counted as an absence.

- **Participate!**

Everyone has valuable contributions to make during class discussions—as both active listeners and speakers. I expect that each student come to class every day with an idea to share, a quotation to discuss, or a question to ask during discussion. I also expect that you will listen attentively to others and respond thoughtfully and respectfully to their ideas and questions.

- **Professional Behavior**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

- **Do Not Cheat**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a zero.

- **Do Not Turn in Assignments Late**

Late work will receive a zero. Assignments indicated on the syllabus as taking place in
class (peer review, presentations, and similar) will be considered late and will receive a zero if you are absent on that day.

- **Ask for an Extension**

I do award students extensions when absolutely necessary and according to the needs of the individual. Just ask!

- **Power Down for Class**

Don’t let electronics (laptops, cell phones, iPods, etc) get in the way of our face time! Please power down. (Unless asked to power up...which may happen on occasion).

- **Print out Readings**

Reading carefully, taking note of details, and being able to quickly point fellow students to specific examples in the text are cornerstones of a successful literature course. Bring all course readings from Blackboard (BB) to class, printed out. If you fail to bring readings to class, you will be asked to leave and you will be counted as absent.

- **MLA, 4EVAR**

All papers will be in 12 point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced with one-inch margins. You will use Modern Language Association (MLA) documentation and format. Procedures for MLA documentation and format can be found [at the Purdue Online Writing Lab: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/)

- **Dropping a Class**

Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. [DATE from academic calendar] is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

- **Grade Appeals**

Grade Appeals Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website: cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

- **Disabilities Accommodations**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus,
please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

- **Communication and Flexibility**

My goal is to provide a healthy, safe, intellectually stimulating classroom for all my students. Communicate your needs to me (e.g. in regards to being differently-abled, in terms of deadlines, questions you have about assignments or plagiarism, etc.), and you will find that I am quite flexible and ready to help with problems related to our class and beyond.

- **Academic Advising**

It is imperative that all students visit regularly with an academic adviser. Each college within the university has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisers to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. To find out how to contact the right adviser, go to: http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php

Students have yet to declare a major are advised by the Academic Advising Transition Center. For more information, go to: http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

**Assignments**

Daily Reading Quizzes (15%): Every day you will begin class by taking a two-question quiz that gives you credit for having done the reading and records your attendance for the day.

Class Activities/Daily Writing (15%): You will be expected to engage in personal writing exercises every day as well as various other kinds of in-class activities. Such exercises and activities will be collected at the end of each day, recorded for pass/fail credit, and returned to you promptly.

Midterm Exam (20%): At mid-semester you will take a mid-term exam testing your ability to comprehend and analyze the readings and films viewed during the first part of the semester.

Science Writing Essay (10%): During the first part of the course, you will write a piece of popular science writing on a topic of your choice related to flying machines and their literary representation.

“Hoax” Essay (10%): Your second major writing assignment will be to write a “hoax” essay in the style of Edgar Allan Poe on a topic of your choice related to course themes.

Revised Essay (10%): Your third major writing assignment will be to substantially revise either the Science Writing Essay or the “Hoax” Essay and write a reflection on the revision process.

Final Exam (20%): At the end of the semester, you will take a final exam testing your ability to comprehend and analyze the readings and films viewed during the second part of the semester.
Course Schedule

**Statement of Academic Continuity:** In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

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<tr>
<th>Date &amp; Assignments</th>
<th>Reading Assignment (To Be Completed by the Date Listed Next to it on the Schedule)</th>
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| Jan/Feb            | **Unit 1: Drones, An Introduction**  
                    *Rise of the Drone*. NOVA  
                    Meet the drones of TAMUCC – Guest Lecture by Mike Starek  
                    “Cow Art” and other examples of drone art on YouTube & in the news  
                    “Dronie” examples & the cultural life of drones  
                    **Writing Workshop: How to Write about Science for the Public** |
| Science Writing Essay |                                                 |
| February           | **Unit 2: “Unmanned”**  
                    The Flying Dutchman, selected artwork, literature, and cultural narratives about this famous ghost ship, including stories by Edgar Allan Poe and Washington Irving  
                    *I, Robot*. By Isaac Asimov.  
                    *Her*. Directed by Spike Jonze. |
| Midterm Exam       |                                                 |
| Feb/March          | **Unit 3: “Aerial”**  
                    Leonardo da Vinci’s flying machines  
                    “The Balloon-Hoax.” By Edgar Allan Poe  
                    “Five Weeks in a Balloon.” By Jules Verne  
                    *Top Gun*. Directed by Tony Scott  
                    *Good Kill*. Directed by Andrew Nichol  
                    **Writing Workshop: How to Write a Hoax Story** |
| Hoax Essay         |                                                 |
| April/May          | **Unit 4: “Systems”**  
                    *A History of the Dividing Line*. By William Byrd II  
                    *Ender’s Game*. By Orson Scott Card  
                    *Grounded*. By George Brant.  
                    **Writing Workshop: How to Successfully Revise an Essay**  
                    **Writing Workshop: How to Give Meaningful Feedback to Peers** |
| Revised Essay      |                                                 |
| Final Exam         |                                                 |