

Description of Revision of ENGL 348 Science Fiction by Women
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ENGL 348, "Literature by Women--Science Fiction," is a course that explores the history of women's science fiction from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), through writing in the sf pulp magazines (1920-1945), to contemporary novels. The course asks whether women have a separate tradition of science fiction and how women writers represent and resist gender roles, as well as other social institutions and practices. Since the nineteenth century, progressive women have been arguing for changes in domestic practices and relationship to the environment as beneficial to women, and female sf writers have been portraying alternative worlds that operate according to principles of sustainability or show the effects of misuse of our environment.

In revising this course, I began with short stories by Pamela Zoline (1960s), James Tiptree Jr. (1970s), and Manjula Padmanabran (1990s) that critique consumer culture, and *Frankenstein* fictions (1818-present) that depict the dangers of misuse of science, including a Japanese manga by Arawaka. I also assign fictions that imagine utopian societies that revise gender roles and describe social systems that emphasize human stewardship of the environment, fair distribution of resources, and the interdependence of social (including gender), economic, and environmental systems. In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* from the early 20th century, an all-women society practices sustainable agriculture and vegetarianism, developing nut and fruit-bearing trees that turn their country into a parkland. Ursula K. LeGuin's *Eye of the Heron* from the 1970s contrasts a wasteful militaristic capitalist society with a pacifist communal agriculture-based society that carefully plans for a low impact on the environment. Marge Piercy's 1970s *Woman on the Edge of Time* imagines a gender-equal society where resources are shared (even mothering across genders) and transportation is by bus, bike (shared), or foot. Octavia Butler places Lilith, the African-American hero of *Dawn* (1980s), on an alien ship that collects survivors of an earth destroyed by nuclear war, a ship which is itself a biosphere, grown not built. Judith Moffett's 1990s *The Ragged World*, set in the D.C.-Baltimore-Philadelphia corridor and ending in College Park, describes a United States that loses Pennsylvania to a nuclear accident just as aliens arrive who agree to save the earth (but not necessarily humans) by requiring sustainable no-chemical agriculture and forbidding use of petroleum products, deforestation, and eventually human reproduction. In Julie Czerneda's *Survival* (21st century), an alien species reproduces beyond its planet's capacity, draining the planet of all organic life, then migrates to another world.

I have also added to the syllabus a list of questions for discussion that focus the related topics of the course--science fiction, women's literature, and sustainability.