

CORE 200: Liberal Arts Reading Salon

Dr. Tanya Heflin

Retro Sci-Fi and the Steampunk Aesthetic

Science fiction is the most important literature in the history of the world because it's the history of ideas, the history of our civilization birthing itself.

—Ray Bradbury

This salon will explore science fiction that plants our speculations about future worlds into an aesthetic of a retro past in order to discover what this juxtaposition of far-flung time periods can show us about present-day human psychology, culture, and progress. Steampunk, dystopias, and space westerns will transport us to unfamiliar frontiers where we'll seek to discover whether everything old really can be made new again.

We will finalize our reading/viewing list once the semester begins, but possible texts include:

Texts

Margaret Atwood. *The Handmaid's Tale*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985.

Octavia Butler. *The Parable of the Sower*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1983.

Philip K. Dick. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* New York: Doubleday, 1968.

William Gibson and Bruce Sterling. *The Difference Engine*. Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1990.

Jonathan Lethem. *Girl in Landscape*. New York: Doubleday, 1998.

H.G. Wells. *The Time Machine*. William Heinemann, 1895.

Films & Television

Avatar. Dir. James Cameron. 2010.

Dark City. Dir. Alex Proyas. 1998.

Bladerunner. Dir. Ridley Scott. 1982.

Firefly and Serenity. Dir. Joss Whedon. 2002/2006.