This course is essentially a modern science fiction class since all the readings in the Norton Anthology were written after 1959. I would prefer it otherwise but the Norton was the only anthology that met my requests for examination copies prior to the deadline for book orders. The short stories in that text (some of which are more fantasy than sci fi) will offer us differing approaches to and themes in our readings while the longer works I have chosen are generally considered to be “classics” of the genre.

There will be frequent previously unannounced quizzes on both the readings and lectures. The two lowest quiz scores will not count in the final grade average, but quizzes NOT TAKEN will be averaged in as ZERO grades. These quizzes will be given before discussions of the readings begin and will be objective and not interpretive. The length of the quizzes will vary from two or three questions to as many as ten. Quizzes usually will be given at the beginning of the class but may be given during or at the end of the session. Students coming after the quizzes are well underway will not be allowed to take them. Quizzes will count at 30% of the final grade.

There will be two short (3-5 pages each) papers required. Choices for papers are: any story in the anthology not assigned as required reading; compare two stories in the anthology not required; compare one assigned story with one story not assigned. Ideas for specific kinds of topics should come from our class discussions but should not mirror those discussions. The first paper may be written for a higher grade not to exceed 85. You may not write on the same story(s) twice. Each short paper will count as 20% of the final grade.

There will be a term paper (7-10 pages) which will count 30% of the final grade. Topics for this paper should be chosen from the following books or films: NOVELS—The Left Hand of Darkness, Ursula Le Guin; The Road, Cormac McCarthy; Oryx and Craik, Margaret Atwood; Stranger in a Strange Land, Robert Heinlein; Part III of Gulliver’s Travels, Jonathan Swift. FILMS—The Road, Alien, Aliens, Blade Runner, Outland, War of the Worlds, Star Wars (1977).

Term papers will be due at 10:30 on Friday, December 14, in our classroom (this is the date our final exam is scheduled—however, THERE WILL BE NO FINAL EXAM IN THIS CLASS). You may, of course, turn in papers via email and earlier than this date if you wish. But to accommodate anyone who wishes to turn in the paper on the scheduled date in the classroom, I will be present there from 10:30 to 11:00.

Late papers will be penalized three points per late day. Papers are not considered late if they are turned in before midnight on the due date. Papers may be submitted via email only at the address listed at the top of this page.
Leave your cell phones off while in class. If it goes off in class, I reserve the right to have you leave class and not return until the next class period. If you expect a possible crisis call, let me know before class that your phone will be on. It is vital that you attend class, take the quizzes, and turn in work on time because I almost never give the grade of incomplete. Faculty no longer can drop students so if you stop attending, remember to fill out and file the proper drop form.

Required Texts:

The Norton Book Of Science Fiction (short story anthology)
Frankenstein, Mary Shelley
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Robert Louis Stevenson
Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury
The Wanting Seed, Anthony Burgess
The Handmaid’s Tale, Margaret Atwood
A Canticle for Leibowitz, Walter M. Miller, Jr.
Brave New World, Aldous Huxley
Cat’s Cradle, Kurt Vonnegut

The longer works will be read in this order. As soon as you finish one of them, immediately begin the next one on the list. You may use editions other than those I ordered but remember that the pagination will differ sometimes making it difficult to follow specific passages during class discussion (although I will announce chapter numbers as well as page numbers in reference to those specific passages).

Schedule (numbered items are page numbers to stories in the anthology):

Aug. 30 Intro to class; backgrounds and definitions; handouts
Sep. 6 Frankenstein; Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
Sep. 13 Tauf Alef (427); Gather Blue Roses (250)

Sep. 14: Census Date

Sep. 20 Fahrenheit 451
Sep. 27 Kyrie (201); Dark Benediction (handout). FIRST PAPER DUE
Oct. 4 The Wanting Seed
Oct. 11 His Vegetable Wife (628); The Women Men Don’t See (255); For the Sake of Grace (211).
Oct. 15: Mid-Term Grades Due—2:00

Oct. 18  The Handmaid’s Tale
Oct. 25  A Canticle for Lebowitz
Nov. 1   Elbow Room (412); Speech Sounds (513). SECOND PAPER DUE.
Nov. 15  The Star Beast (handout); Strange Wine (350); As Simple as That (231)
Nov. 22  THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
Nov. 29  Cat’s Cradle
Dec. 6   Homelanding (794); Body Ritual Among the Nacirema (handout); The Life of Anybody (509); The Byrds (501).

Dec. 7: Last Class Day—incomplete grades due

Dec. 10-11: Student Study Days

Dec. 12-18: Final Exams

Dec. 14  TERM PAPER DUE: 11:00

Dec. 21  Final Grades Due: 2:00