

## Welcome to Science Fiction!

You are about to embark on an adventure that will simultaneously entertain you and challenge your perceptions! Although there is a lot of reading in this course, the stories are about exciting and interesting topics like time travel, alternate realities, robots, aliens, and dystopian futures. If you keep up with the reading, you should do fine! In addition, there will be a number of projects and written assignments throughout the semester.

SUMMER READING CHOICES: We encourage you to read any of the following:  
(Blurbs taken from amazon.com)

**1984 by George Orwell.** (*1984* is back on the bestseller list in 2017 because people are comparing this science fiction classic to modern day. It is definitely worth reading!) "It is probable that no other work of this generation has made us desire freedom more earnestly or loathe tyranny with such fullness." --Mark Shorer, *New York Times*, 1949 Among the seminal texts of the 20th century, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a rare work that grows more haunting as its futuristic purgatory becomes more real. Published in 1949, the book offers political satirist George Orwell's nightmare vision of a totalitarian, bureaucratic world and one poor stiff's attempt to find individuality. The brilliance of the novel is Orwell's prescience of modern life--the ubiquity of television, the distortion of the language--and his ability to construct such a thorough version of hell. Required reading for students since it was published, it ranks among the most terrifying novels ever written.

**Across the Universe** by Beth Revis. (I'd call this a Sci-Fi action/romance/mystery). As the spaceship *Godspeed* travels toward a new earth, the lives of 100 cryogenically frozen settlers hang in the balance after someone endeavors to quietly murder them. The other passengers aboard the ship have never known life outside its walls and are enslaved by the machinations of Eldest, their tyrannical leader, who divides them into three distinct classes. When Amy, a frozen settler from earth, survives being thawed in a murder attempt, she immediately bonds with Elder, *Godspeed*'s lone teen and future leader. Amy's individuality, her rebellion, and her fierce desire for freedom, inspire Elder to act on his own doubts and defy Eldest--his mentor and keeper--with shocking results. Eldest's methods of twisting history and altering the lives of this captive community are a frightening echo of tyrants in our own history, and *Across the Universe* challenges readers to consider the impact of unchecked power, blind trust, and the ability of one dissenting voice to make a difference.-- *Seira Wilson*

**Dune** by Frank Herbert. (*DUNE* shares many similarities with *STAR WARS*. There are lots of characters to keep track of, but it is one of the best action-science fiction novels ever written!) This Hugo and Nebula Award winner tells the sweeping tale of a desert planet called Arrakis, the focus of an intricate power struggle in a byzantine interstellar

empire. Arrakis is the sole source of the "spice" which is necessary for interstellar travel and grants psychic powers and longevity, so whoever controls it wields great influence. The troubles begin when stewardship of Arrakis is transferred by the Emperor from the Harkonnen Noble House to House Atreides. The Harkonnens don't want to give up their privilege, though, and through sabotage and treachery they cast young Duke Paul Atreides out into the planet's harsh environment to die. There he falls in with the Fremen, a tribe of desert dwellers who become the basis of the army with which he will reclaim what's rightfully his. Paul Atreides, though, is far more than just a usurped duke. He might be the end product of a very long-term genetic experiment designed to breed a super human; he might be a messiah. His struggle is at the center of a nexus of powerful people and events, and the repercussions will be felt throughout the Imperium. *Dune* is one of the most famous science fiction novels ever written, and deservedly so.

Have a great summer! I look forward to meeting you in the fall!

Sincerely,

Mr. Craig Schmidt  
Teacher and Sci Fi Nerd  
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