

**The Ohio State University
First-Year Seminar Program
Course Proposal**

Course Information

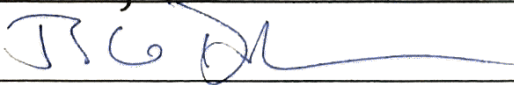
1. Attach a sample syllabus that includes the following. (Sample syllabi can be found at <http://freshmanseminars.osu.edu>).
 - the course goals
 - a brief description of the content
 - the distribution of meeting times
 - a weekly topical outline
 - a listing of assignments
 - grade assessment information (A-E or S/U)
 - required textbooks and/or reading list
 - the academic misconduct and disability services statements (sample statements can be found at <http://asccas.osu.edu/curriculum/asc-syllabus-elements>)
2. Attach a brief biographical paragraph that includes the current research interests, teaching awards and honors, and undergraduate courses taught by the participating instructor(s). The paragraph will be included in materials for first-year students.

T.M. RUDAVSKY Dept of Philosophy
Proposer's Name and Primary Academic Unit (please print)

Prof of Philosophy / Fiction, Science Fiction and Time
Proposer's Title Proposal title

Rudavsky.1@osu.edu 292-7914
Proposer's e-mail Address Contact Phone Number

March 1, 2017
Submission Date


Approval of Department Chair of Academic Unit (please print)

Please indicate the semester you would like to offer the seminar: (AU) 2017 SP' _____

This form and any attachments should be mailed to First-Year Seminar Program, 100 Denney Hall, 164 Annie & John Glenn Avenue, ATTN: Todd Bitters or e-mailed to bitters.4@osu.edu.

Freshman Seminar Proposal (for Autumn 2017)
Fiction, Science Fiction and Time
Prof T.M. Rudavsky, Dept of Philosophy
Email: <Rudavsky.1@osu.edu>/

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Is there a relationship between philosophy and fiction; between philosophy and science-fiction; between fiction and science-fiction? All three love to play with and twist our notions of time, of self-hood, of what reality is really like. This one-credit hour course will explore the intersections between philosophy/science fiction and fiction, with respect to issues having to do with the nature time and time travel; personal identity and selfhood; and free will. Specific topics and authors will be chosen from the following list:

- a) What is time; can we travel forward or backward in time? Is time even real? (Augustine, Borges; Lightman; Lewis)
- b) How can we, if at all, account for personal identity over time? (Kafka; Dennett; Locke)
- c) Do we actually have free will – do we make free choices? (Agnon; Borges; Augustine;

Our discussions will be informed by two kinds of connections: Philosophy on literature – philosophical approaches to understanding literary texts (truth; authorship; selfhood) and Philosophy in literature – literary texts that explicitly invoke philosophical problems or approaches. Our sessions will incorporate both literary and philosophical works, as well as occasional relevant films accessible through the OSU Media Library [*The Matrix*; *Twelve Monkeys*; *Back to the Future*; *Minority Report*] in order to promote discussion of these basic issues in philosophy and literature.

COURSE GOALS:

The main objective of this mini-course is to take representative themes prevalent in contemporary literature and film, and examine them more critically through the lens of philosophical analysis; in this way students will be introduced to a more rigorous way of thinking about these issues, and will be encouraged to think more critically about films, sci-fi, and other texts.

TEXTBOOKS

Readings will be drawn from a variety of sources, including classics in Western philosophy, modern fiction, and contemporary readings in science fiction. All readings will be placed on CANVAS/CARMEN.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. take-home essay exam, week of finals (50%)
2. Oral presentation (10 min); topics will be assigned at the start of the semester (25%). There will online discussion links [carmen] to post handouts; students will then post comments on the handout prior to class discussion.
3. Class participation and regular attendance may affect the grade as much as one-half letter grade (25%).
4. Students will receive a letter grade for the course.

Meeting Times:

Class will meet weekly for one hour; students are expected to do reading in preparation for class. Study prompts will be provided for readings.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students with disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) that have been certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Student Life Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue; telephone 614- 292-3307, slds@osu.edu; slds.osu.edu.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>)

FOR YOUR SAFETY, the OSU Student Safety/Escort Service is available after 7 p.m. by dialing 292-3322.

[TENTATIVE] SCHEDULE OF READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS: (AUTUMN TERM 2018)

I. What is Literature? [Week 1-2]

Topics include: How do we approach works of literature? Is there such a thing as “authorial intention”? Are there important differences between literature and philosophy?

Readings will include Borges “Pierre Menard”; selections from ‘postmodernist’ theory (McHale volume on postmodernism)

II. What is Time? [Weeks 3-6]

Topics include: What is time; Is time real, or a figment of our imaginations; Can we travel back in time? Can we make the past turn out to be different from what it already is?

Readings will include selections from (wk 3) Augustine *Confessions*, (wk 4) Lightman *Einstein*, (wk 5) Borges *Labrynth*s, (wk 6) Lewis *Time Travel*

III. Are you the same person across time? [Weeks 7-10]:

Topics include: how can I be the “same” person if I change over time; are there essential aspects to my personhood [body; mind; soul; memory]; if I lose my memory [dementia/alzheimers] am I a different person; what if my body is replaced altogether; or if my brain is detached from my body?

Readings will include selections from contemporary philosophers and science fiction, including – (wk 7) Kafka *The Metamorphosis*; (wk 8) Dostoyevsky *The Double*; (wk 9) Locke *The Prince and the Cobbler*; (wk 10) Dennet *Where Am I*

IV. Do we have free will? (Weeks 11-15)

We tend to think of ourselves as free agents, but are we really? Many recent films {e.g. the Matrix} question our notions of agency and freedom. Is the world determined, or is there room for ‘free’ action? To what extent are our actions/choices “free” in any meaningful sense of the word?

Readings will include selections from – (wk 11-2) Agnon *Tehilla*; (wk 13) Borges *Labrynth*s; (wk 14) Taylor *Fate*; (wk 15) Augustine *On Free Will*

All four units will carry optional (x-credit) film opportunities, including *The Matrix*; *Twelve Monkeys*; *Minority Report*; *Back to the Future*; and others.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL PARAGRAPH

T.M. Rudavsky is Professor of Philosophy at The Ohio State University. She received her Ph.D in philosophy from Brandeis University. She specializes in philosophical theology and has edited three volumes. Her volume Time Matters: Time, Creation and Cosmology in Medieval Jewish Philosophy appeared in 2000. Her most recent book (2010) on Maimonides has appeared in the "Great Minds" series with Blackwell-Wiley Press. She is the author as well of numerous articles and encyclopedia entries, with a particular focus on issues connected to time. Her primary (undergraduate) teaching areas include philosophy of religion, history of philosophy, and contemporary existentialist thought.