NOTE
This document provides an outline of the course.
A full course handbook will be available at the start of Michaelmas Term.

Course Details: 6 x 1.5 hr seminars, *day and time tbc*, Weeks 1-6, Michaelmas Term.

Essay: Students are asked to generate their own essay topic, arising from, responding to, or extending the ideas and approaches of the course.

Overview: Feminist science fiction in the Western Anglophone tradition has a long history, stemming as far back perhaps as Margaret Cavendish’s *The Blazing World* (1666), or Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818). In a six week course, we will not attempt a historical overview of the genre. Rather, the course is structured around six key characteristics of feminist SF as exhibited in its most canonical works from the period of second-wave feminism. Each week one such text is paired with a contemporary work of feminist SF. This structure is designed to encourage a comparative approach between the thematic concerns, formal techniques, and political critiques of 1970s and 1980s feminism and feminist SF, and those of contemporary feminism and contemporary feminist SF. The course’s commitment to the importance of these texts as sites of engagement with feminist theory and feminist politics is founded on two premises: one, as stated by Judith Butler, that ‘literary narrative [is] a place where theory takes place’ (*Bodies That Matter* 182); the other, via Darko Suvin, that as the literature of cognitive estrangement, science fiction is fundamentally a genre of social and political critique.

Primary Texts:
To enable the comparative analysis, students are required to study two books per week, in addition to accompanying theoretical work. It is therefore strongly advised that students read the twelve books on the course in advance of the start of Michaelmas Term.

Week 1: Introducing Feminist Science Fiction
---. *To Write Like a Woman: Essays in Feminism and Science Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

Week 2: Gender in Alien Climes

**Week 3: Utopia, Dystopia, Rage**

**Week 4: Intersecting Time and Space, Gender and Race**
Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (1979)

**Week 5: Reproduction**
Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985)

**Week 6: Binarism**

**Background Reading**

**SF Theory**
*Students with no previous knowledge of SF are strongly encouraged to read Darko Suvin’s ‘Estrangement and Cognition’ in Metamorphoses of Science Fiction before the start of the course.*


**Feminism and SF**
Future Females, the Next Generation: New Voices and Velocities in Feminist Science Fiction Criticism (Roman & Littlefield, 2000).

Bartowski, Frances, Feminist Utopias (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).


‘Feminism’, The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction. Available at: http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/feminism


Lane, Christina, Feminist Hollywood: From Born in Flames to Point Break (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000).


Melzer, Patricia, Alien Constructions: Science Fiction and Feminist Thought (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006).


Russ, Joanna, How to Suppress Women’s Writing (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018 [1983]).
