EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
REPORT TO THE RIVERSIDE DIVISION  
FEBRUARY 25, 2014

To be adopted:

PROPOSED SCIENCE FICTION AND TECHNOCULTURE STUDIES MINOR

PRESENT: 

PROPOSED:

1. Upper-division requirements (24 units)

   a) Four (4) units from SFTS #### (intro)

   b) Sixteen (16) additional units, selected from the following groups. Students must take at least four (4) units from two of the three groups.

   GROUP ONE: Fine Arts; selected from CRWT 162; CRWT 172; MCS 146; MCS 151G; MCS 153 (E-Z); THEA 166C.

   GROUP TWO: Humanities; selected from CPLT 118; CPAC 132; ENGL 179A; ENGL 179B; ENGL 179C; ENGL 179D; ENGL 179T; JPN 184; HIST 105; HIST 107; HISA 147; PHIL 137; PHIL 167.

   GROUP THREE: Social Sciences; selected from ANTH 143; ANTH 162; WMST 106; WMST 161; WMST 185; WMST 187; WMST 189.

   c) Four (4) units from SFTS #### (senior seminar)

All students must take the introductory course and the senior seminar. There is no required order in which elective courses
must be taken but credit in SFTS #INTRO is required for entry into SFTS##SEM.

See Minors under the College of Humanities Arts and Social Sciences in the Colleges and Programs section of this catalog for additional information on minors.

**JUSTIFICATIONS:**
This is a proposal for a new minor. The introductory course is required for entry into the senior seminar, but it is not required before taking the elective courses for the minor. A student may choose to do the introductory course after having already taken several courses that he or she later decides to organize into the minor by taking the required intro and seminar courses.

This program will build on the unique resource of the Eaton Collection of Science Fiction, the world’s largest archive of these materials, held here at UCR. Thus, it will create an STS program unique among those offered at other University of California campuses. As our letters of external report attest, the cultural study of science and technology is an integral part of twenty-first century education and this minor will coordinate already existing strengths in these fields across a number of departments in CHASS and provide an integrated experience for students. The program also builds on a distinctive expertise in science fiction on our campus, consolidating UCR’s already world-class reputation in this field.

Beginning in Fall 2013 a graduate Designated Emphasis in these areas of study enrolled its first group of students: the minor will both provide potential TA opportunities for these students and, reciprocally, the DE will offer the undergraduate students an opportunity to pursue research in these fields at the graduate level here at UCR.

**APPROVALS:**
Effective: Fall 2014
Approved by the SFTS Committee in Charge: 5/8/13
Approved by Executive Committee of CHASS: 10/2/13
Approved by CHASS Faculty: 10/16/13
Approved by the Committee on Educational Policy: 12/9/13
Proposal for Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies Minor

Committee in Charge
Rob Latham, English (Co-chair)
Sherryl Vint, English (Co-chair)
Jayna Brown, Ethnic Studies
Dana Simmons, History
Tamara Ho, Women’s Studies
Nalo Hopkinson, Creative Writing
Eric Schweitzgebel, Philosophy

Supporting Faculty
Derek Burrill, Media and Cultural Studies
Stu Krieger, Theatre
Margherita Long, Comparative Literature
Juliet McMullin, Anthropology
Yolanda Moses, Anthropology
Lisa Raphals, Comparative Literature
Robin Russin, Theatre
Chikako Takeshita, Women’s Studies
Susan Zieger, English

Purpose
The minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies explores the intersections linking science fiction studies, science and technology studies (STS), and technoculture studies. Consistent with other STS programs around the country and internationally, this program will examine the histories and cultures of science, technology, and medicine to understand the role that culture has always played in the production of science and the reciprocal way that changes in science and technology have shaped culture. The program also uniquely emphasizes the role of popular culture and the genre of science fiction in particular in mediating public understandings of science, serving as an imaginative testing ground for technological innovation, and articulating hopes and anxieties regarding technocultural change. Drawing on faculty from across CHASS, the Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies minor will enable students to develop a critical understanding of the cultures of science and their dialectical exchanges with contemporary popular culture.

The program encompasses courses in the social study of science and medicine, in the history of technology, in creative expression addressing relevant themes, in cultural analysis of print and media texts dealing with science and technology, and in the cultural differences in technology, including non-western scientific practices. This minor will be a rich interdisciplinary study of cultural ways of responding to changes in science and technology, and will compliment program majors in departments such as Anthropology, Creative Writing, English, Ethnic Studies, Media and Cultural Studies, Theatre, and Women’s Studies.

Justification
This program will build on the unique resource of the Eaton Collection of Science Fiction, the world’s largest archive of these materials, held here at UCR. Thus, it will create an STS program unique among those offered at other University of California campuses. As our letters of external report attest, the cultural study of science and technology is an integral part of twenty-first century education and this minor will coordinate already existing strengths in these fields across a number of departments in CHASS and provide an integrated experience for students. The program also builds on a distinctive expertise in science fiction on our campus, consolidating UCR’s already world-class reputation in this field.
Beginning in Fall 2014 a graduate Designated Emphasis in these areas of study will enroll its first group of students: the minor will both provide potential TA opportunities for these students and, reciprocally, the DE will offer the undergraduate students an opportunity to pursue research in these fields at the graduate level here at UCR.

Administration
The minor will be administratively homed in the Department of English (the Chair indicates her support of this arrangement in the attached letter) and will be overseen by Rob Latham and Sherryl Vint, faculty members hired specifically to develop curricular offerings in the field of science fiction. We do not anticipate any additional space needs for the program. Drs. Latham and Vint will advise students from their faculty offices, and the Department of English staff will request classrooms for our two courses as part of the administrative support.

As the attached letters of support from Chairs of all involved departments indicate, a number of Departments have agreed to occasionally release faculty from their programs to teach the two new courses we are proposing as part of this minor proposal: an Introduction to Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies and a senior Seminar in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies (course proposals attached). Initially, either Rob Latham or Sherryl Vint (co-chairs of the Committee in Charge) will staff these courses while the new degree is set up (the English department supports this staffing plan).

We anticipate that we would offer the Introduction to Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies course once per year, with an anticipated enrollment of 50-60 students. The Seminar in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies will be offered only every second year, anticipating that every second year we will reach a critical mass of senior students ready to take the capstone course as they graduate. We anticipate an enrollment of 15-20 students in the senior seminar course. At this stage, we are requesting no new resources for this program, but should it prove more popular than estimated here support for TAs or Readers would allow us to expand enrolment. If this program were to receive its own funding in the future, we would be able to employ the graduate students in the Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies DE, thus using this program’s resources to help support graduate students as well as to support the minor.

All other courses required for the program are ones regularly offered and staffed by the relevant participating departments, as indicated in the attached letters of support from Department Chairs. We do not anticipate this new program will have any impact on existing programs since Drs. Latham and Vint were hired specifically to develop new curricula related to science fiction and since all other courses are ones already regularly offered by their home departments.

In its steady state, we anticipate this program granting 12-15 degrees a year.

The membership of the Committee in Charge will rotate on a biannual basis to allow participation in decisions from faculty from all participating departments. This committee will make decisions about course substitutions and other curricular program matters. Either Dr. Latham or Dr. Vint will remain a Chair of this committee in the foreseeable future, but this role could be taken over by other participating faculty if they have support to do so from their home department.
Curriculum
The minor consists of 24 credits, as follows:

1. SFTS ####: Introduction to Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies (4 credits)

This course is required to receive the minor but need not be taken prior to taking other relevant courses. It will be taught on a rotating basis by faculty across the supporting departments. This course will provide a foundation for interdisciplinary study for the students, and will emphasize the connections between STS and the study of science fiction.

2. 16 Additional Credits, selected from among the following courses. Students must take at least one course from two of the three lists.

Fine Arts list:


CRWT 172: Advanced Fiction Workshop (4). A workshop in fiction writing for students who wish to attempt, with criticism from class members, to fashion a collection of stories or a novel.

MCS 146 (E-Z): Special Topics in Technoculture and Digital Media (4). Advanced study of theories and practices of reader and audience interaction with technologies of cultural production in general and digital media in particular. Includes praxis-oriented composition or research. E. Identities and Interactions; F. Cultures and Technologies of the Visual; G. Cultures and Technologies of the Aural; I. Advanced Composition and Rhetoric for Digital Media Authors. Cross-list ed with ENGL 146 (E-Z)

MCS 151G: Gender, Mechanization, and Shape (4). Utilizes film, video, and texts to examine the relationship among gender, mechanization, and shape during the twentieth century. Focuses on the performing arts, industrial and technological design, and the relationship of visual culture to changing notions of gender. Course is repeatable. Cross-listed with DNCE 171G.


THEA 166C: Screenwriting: Rewrites and Writing for Television (4). Explores the fundamentals of screenwriting. Includes story development, plotting, and characterization as they are used in creating a complete script for television or feature film.

Humanities list:

CPLT 118: The Alien as Other (4). Lecture, 3 hours; outside research, 3 hours. Considers the alien in science fiction studies as an image of both alterity (“Otherness”) and a reflection on what it means to be human. Topics include alien contact, societies and languages, and the deliberate modifications of both humans and aliens. Utilizes short stories, novels, and film.
CPAC 132 Medical Traditions in China and Greece (4). This course focuses on the comparative history of science (medicine) in China and Greece. Cross-listed with AST 132, CHN 132, and CLA 132.


ENGL 179C: Science and Science Fiction (4). This new course is currently in the process of approval review. Investigates the relationship between science and science fiction and the role of culture in producing scientific knowledge. Readings include novels and scholarship in the history and sociology of science. Covers work by Nancy Kress, Greg Bear, Greg Egan, Thomas Kuhn, Donna Haraway, and Bruno Latour.

ENGL 179D: Science Fiction on Film (4). This new course is currently in the process of approval review. A historical survey of science fiction film and television from the twentieth century to the present. Includes reading in film and television criticism. Covers work by directors and creators such as Robert Wise, Stanley Kubrick, Gene Roddenberry and David Cronenberg. Cross-listed with MCS ####.

ENGL 179T. Studies in Science Fiction (4). Focuses on a specific theme, subgenre, period, movement, or major author within the field of science fiction. Explores topics such as science fiction and social identities, cyberpunk, and H.G. Wells and the scientific romance.


HIST 105: Science in the Modern World (4). History of science in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, stressing the rise of the Darwinian worldview, the genetic revolution and its social consequences, and the romantic rejection of science.

HIST 107: Disease and Society (4). Covers a world history of disease and how it relates to massive population change, cultural shocks, and globalization. Evaluates the complex and reciprocal relationship between illness and society. Analyzes how cultures, states, and individuals shape the spread of contagious disease, as well as how disease affects societies.

HISA 147: Medicine Ways of Native Americans (4). Explores the medical history of Native Americans. Focuses on traditional Native American medicine and how Western diseases, medical practices, health care, and policies have shaped American Indian health. Topics include medicine among people, rituals, ceremonies, smallpox, measles, influenza, anemia, accidents, diabetes, suicides, mental illness, and murders.

PHIL 137: Philosophy of Science (4). Topics discussed include understanding scientific objectivity in the light of history and sociology of science; realism and anti-realism about scientific theories; scientific methodology and its logic; and the nature of scientific explanation.

PHIL 167: Biomedical Ethics (4). A philosophical discussion of newly emerging issues, both ethical and social, in biology and medicine, such as genetic engineering, euthanasia, experimentation with human subjects, abortion, behavior control, and patient's right to know.
Social Sciences list:

**ANTH 143: Gender, Race, and Medicine (4).** Explores the relationship between Western medicine and women, racial minorities, and non-Western citizens. Investigates how gender ideology, racial inequity, and colonialism shape the medical representation of bodies, sexuality, and pathology. Examines how patients have renegotiated their relationships with medicine through health movements and alternative healing practices. Cross-listed with WMST 185.

**ANTH 162: Culture and Medicine (4).** Interrelations of health, disease and culture; cross-cultural comparisons of “health,” “disease” and “curing” concepts; effects of cultural behavior on health and illness. Special focus on traditional societies and their belief systems, and on the effects of cultural change (historical and modern) on illness and curing.

**WMST 106: Feminist Bioethics (4).** An exploration of the ways in which feminist theory provides insight on contemporary issues in bioethics. Topics include women in clinical research, cosmetic surgery, abortion, contract gestation, fetal protection policies, and the politics of mental illness. Cross-listed with PHIL 171.

**WMST 161: Gender and Science (4).** Focuses on the intersections of Western constructions of gender and scientific knowledge since the sixteenth century. Considers the cultural and political roles of the scientist in terms of gender, the structuring of objectivity and objects of study, the status of scientific knowledges, and the emergence of feminist science studies.

**WMST 185: Gender, Race, and Medicine (4).** Explores the relationship between Western medicine and women, racial minorities, and non-Western citizens. Investigates how gender ideology, racial inequity, and colonialism shape the medical representation of bodies, sexuality, and pathology. Examines how patients have renegotiated their relationships with medicine through health movements and alternative healing practices. Cross-listed with ANTH 143.

**WMST 187: Women, Gender, and Technology (4).** Introduces historical and sociological studies of gender and technology. Examines how women have been affected by technological developments and how gender ideologies informed the design and implementation of various technologies. Explores the relations among technology, material culture, sustainability, and power. Technologies covered include those in the household, the workplace, and cyberspace.

**WMST 189: Gender, Technology, and the Body (4).** Examines various technologies that alter the body. Investigates how technological interventions in the body reproduce and reshape gender ideologies in contemporary Western culture. Topics include cosmetic, sex-reassignment, and weight loss surgeries; reproductive,

3. **SFTS ####: Senior Seminar in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies (4 credits)**

   This is a required, capstone course to receive the minor. It is expected that students would normally take this course in their final year of undergraduate study. This course will be taught on a rotating basis by faculty across the supporting departments. The Senior Seminar in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies will provide students with the skills for formulating independent research questions in interdisciplinary cultural studies of science and science fiction.
May 6, 2013

To: The Committee on Educational Policy

From: Stephen Cullenberg, Dean, CHASS

RE: Proposed minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies

I strongly support the proposal for a minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies. The SFTS minor represents an important step in establishing UCR as the world leader in the study of Science Fiction and Technoculture. Recognizing the tremendous resource of the Eaton Collection of Science Fiction, I established three new faculty lines to build both a curriculum and research center in the field. These lines are now held by Professors Sherryl Vint and Rob Latham in English, the co-Chairs of the proposed program, and the prominent novelist, Nalo Hopkinson of the Creative Writing department. The interdisciplinary nature of the proposed minor, with its critical emphasis on the profound connections between science, technology and medicine on the one hand and popular culture on the other, offers students a unique opportunity to think broadly and deeply about questions that shape contemporary culture and society. The committee in charge includes faculty members from half of CHASS’s twenty departments, all of whom have strong research interests in the field and regularly teach the relevant courses. The resources for this program are already established in the College and the proposal thoughtfully organizes these resources into a meaningful course of study. Science Fiction and Technoculture, which includes literature, film, video games, and new media, is an area of broad popular interest among undergraduates. The introductory course will encourage students to a more thoughtful and critically engaged understanding of popular culture and serve as an important entryway to the minor.
New Courses
Course Title: Introduction to Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies

Course Description: Investigates the relationship between science, technology, and medicine and the genre of science fiction. Emphasizes exchanges between technology and popular culture. Covers fiction by the likes of H.G. Wells, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Nancy Kress and critical readings by Steven Shafer, Donna Haraway, and Bruno Latour.

Justification: This course will be the foundational course for a new interdisciplinary program in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies. The purpose of this program is to examine the productive interchanges between science and technology as intellectual and material forces shaping human experience and the mode of science fiction as a cultural form that responds to such changes.

Course is NEW.

Course is STANDARD type.

Affects Programs: Will be part of minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies.

Activities: Lecture 3 hours per week (group activity)
Reading (Extra) 3 hours per week (individual activity)

Prerequisite: None.

Grading: Letter Grade or petition for Satisfactory/No Credit (S/NC)

Repeatable: No

Syllabus
Students will be required to attend regularly and participate in discussion. The writing assignments will consist of weekly quizzes, an in-class midterm exam (including short-answer and essay sections), and a final (7-8 page) paper in lieu of a final exam.

Reading List:
Grading:
  Attendance and Participation: 15%
  Quizzes: 25%
  Midterm Examination: 30%
  Final Paper: 30%

Tentative Schedule of Reading and Discussion

**Week One: Science Technology and Medicine Studies**
Hess, “Introduction” and “The Philosophy of Science: An Interdisciplinary Perspective”
Shapin, Steven. “Lowering the Tone in the History of Science: A Noble Calling.” *Never Pure: Historical Studies of Science as if It Was Produced by People with Bodies, Situated in Time, Space, Culture, and Society, and Struggling for Credibility and Authority.* Johns Hopkins UP, 2010. 1-14. [PDF on iLearn]
Extra Reading: H.G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds*

**Week Two: Science Fiction as Supplement to Science**
Hess, “Critical and Cultural Studies of Science and Technology”
Robinson, *Galileo’s Dream.*
Extra Reading: C.P. Snow, *The Two Cultures*

**Week Three: Hard Science Fiction and Strong Science Studies**
Hess, “The Institutional Sociology of Science” and “Social Studies of Knowledge”
Slonczewski, *The Highest Frontier*
Extra Reading: Geoff Ryman (ed), *When It Changed: “Real Science” Science Fiction*

**Week Four: The Changing Cultures of Technology**
*The Thing From Another World* (Nyby 1951) [film screening]
Extra Reading: John W. Campbell, “Who Goes There?” and screening of other two adaptations of this story, *The Thing* (Carpenter 1982) and *The Thing* (van Heijningen 2011)
Week Five: Science and Gender


Midterm Examination (administered in class)

Week Six: Postcolonial Science

Vizenor, *Heirs of Columbus*
Extra Reading: Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*

Week Seven: Science Studies as Science Fiction
Latour, *Aramis*

Week Eight: Science Fiction as Science Studies


Kress, *Fountain of Age*
Extra Reading: Margret Grebowicz (ed), *Sci-Fi in the Mind’s Eye: Reading Science Through Science Fiction*

Week Nine: AI, Cognition, Cybertheory


Egan, *Permutation City*
Extra Reading: Mark Dery, *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century*
Week Ten: Genomics, Biotech Futures
Varley, Slow Apocalypse
Extra Reading: Sheila Jasanoff, States of Knowledge: The Co-production of Science and Social Order
SFTS ####

**Course Title:** Seminar in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies

**Course Description:** Develops skills in the formulation and investigation of research questions in science fiction and technoculture studies. Synthesizes and integrates knowledge and skills obtained in the minor. Includes a major research project and presentations by guest speakers.

**Justification:** This course will be the capstone experience for a new interdisciplinary program in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies. The purpose of this program is to examine the productive interchanges between science and technology as intellectual and material forces shaping human experience and the mode of science fiction as a cultural form that responds to such changes.

Course is NEW.

Course is SEMINAR type.

**Affects Programs:** Will be part of minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies.

**Activities:** Seminar 3 hours per week (group activity)
Reading (Extra) 3 hours per week (individual activity)

**Prerequisite:** Introduction to Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies

**Grading:** Letter Grade or petition for Satisfactory/No Credit (S/NC)

**Repeatable:** No

**Syllabus**
Students will be required to attend regularly and participate in discussion. The writing assignments will consist of a seminar presentation on individual research accompanied by a written script submitted to the instructor, and a major research paper (12-15 pages) in lieu of a final exam. The extra reading for each week of the course will be assigned at the beginning of term and will draw on materials relevant to the students' research projects and in general will be fictional texts chosen for their relation to the week's theme. In addition extra essays may be added related to the topics addressed by guest speakers in the weeks that the class hosts such a speaker.

**Reading List:**


Grading:
- Attendance and Participation: 25%
- Presentation: 25%
- Final Paper: 50%

Tentative Schedule of Reading and Discussion

**Week One: Science Technology and Medicine Studies**  
Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Life*

**Week Two: Technoculture**  
Simon Cooper, *Technoculture and Critical Theory*

**Week Three: Science Fiction and Technoculture**  
Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts*

**Week Four: Comparative Traditions of Technoscience**  
Helaine Selin, *Medicine Across Cultures*

**Week Five: Creative Responses to Technoculture**  
David Kirby, *Lab Coats in Hollywood*

**Week Six: Bioscience, Bioethics**  
Marsha Rosengarten, *HIV Interventions*

**Week Seven: Science Fiction as Heuristic**  
Rabinow and Bennett, *Designing Human Practices*

**Week Eight: Student Research Presentations**  
Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature*
Week Nine: Student Research Presentations
Ziegler, Seed

Week Ten: The Dialectics of Culture and Science
Reading TBD by student projects.
Letters of Support from Chairs
Fwd: SFTS Minor and DE updates -- ACTION REQUIRED

Sherryl Vint
Professor of Science Fiction Media Studies
sherrylvint@ucr.edu
Editor, Science Fiction Studies
Editor, Science Fiction Film & Television
Receive regular Table of Contents alerts here: https://liverpool.metapress.com/content/121651/toc-alert

Begin forwarded message:

From: Sang-hee Lee <shlee@ucr.edu>
Subject: Fwd: SFTS Minor and DE updates -- ACTION REQUIRED
Date: 10 February, 2013 7:20:02 AM PST
To: Sherryl Vint <sherryl.vint@ucr.edu>
Cc: Juliet M McMullin <juliet.mcnullin@ucr.edu>, Yolanda Moses <yolanda.moses@ucr.edu>

Dear Professor Vint,

The Anthropology Department agrees to the listing of its courses (ANTH 143 and ANTH 162) for credit in the new minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies, and that it will continue to offer these course regularly.

The affiliated faculty from the Department (Professors McMullin and Moses) could be released to teach one of the SFTS courses at times.

Please let me know if this email is enough, or if you prefer a formal memo.

Sincerely,

Sang-hee Lee
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Anthropology
University of California, Riverside
Riverside, CA 92521-0418, USA
From: Thomas Scanlon  
Chair, Department of Comparative Literature and Foreign Languages  

To: Sherryl Vint  

Re: Science Fiction Technoculture Studies Minor  

February 10, 2013  

This is a letter that states that the Comparative Literature and Foreign Languages Department is in support of the Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies Minor program.  

We support CHI/RLST 107 (Taoist Tradition), PHIL 110 (Asian Philosophy) and CPAC 132 (Traditional Chinese and Hippocratic Medicine) being listed as giving credit to the Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies minor. These courses provide background on the Asian philosophy and religion that is central to some currents of Science Fiction.  

We also plan to convert existing graduate courses to upper-division undergraduate courses in the near future, and support upper-division versions of CPLT 274 (Representations of Science in Literature), CPLT 272 (Origins and Promise of Science Fiction), and CPLT 273 (Genre and Method in Science Fiction Studies) being listed as giving credit in the Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies minor.  

We will offer these courses regularly.  

We are willing to release Lisa Raphals occasionally to teach a designated SFTS course.  

Sincerely,  

[Signature]  

Thomas Scanlon, Professor  
Chair, Department of Comparative Literature and Foreign Languages
TO: Dr. Sherryl Vint & Rob Latham, Co-chairs
   Committee in Charge - SFTS Minor Proposal

FROM: Andrew Winer
   Chair, Department of Creative Writing

DATE: February 14, 2013

RE: Memo of Creative Writing’s support of SFTS Minor proposal

In line with our full support of the proposed Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies Minor, the Department of Creative Writing agrees to following:

1) The listing of CRWT 162 and CRWT 172 for credit in the SFTS Minor.

2) Regularly offering CRWT 162 & CRWT 172.

3) Release SFTS-affiliate, Professor Nalo Hopkinson, to occasionally teach a SFTS course.
February 21, 2013

To: Chair, Committee on Educational Policy, Academic Senate
Via: Sherryl Vint and Rob Latham, SFTS Program Co-Chairs
From: Deborah Willis, Chair, Department of English
Re: Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies Minor

The English Department strongly supports the establishment of a minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies and is happy to provide an administrative home for it. This minor will take advantage of the extraordinary resources UCR now has available for the study of science fiction and technoculture. The College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences now has a distinguished cluster of faculty with expertise in this interdisciplinary area, and students will be able to take advantage of UCR’s internationally renowned Eaton Collection of Science Fiction and Fantasy, the biannual Eaton Science Fiction Conference, and numerous events sponsored by the Center for Ideas and Society and individual departments. This minor will have wide appeal to undergraduates across campus and it will help to make UCR a destination campus for study in this area, useful in recruitment. No other campus in the UC system can match the distinguished faculty or resources that UCR has in this area, and offering this minor is an excellent way to build on this strength.

The English Department is a good choice for the administrative home of this program. The co-chairs, Sherryl Vint and Rob Latham, are both English Department professors, and they will be advising students about coursework as well as monitoring course offerings in the participating departments. Our Undergraduate Staff Advisor, Linda Nellany, can provide the staff support needed to check requirements and ensure that students get proper credit for the minor on transcripts. Since the co-chairs will be providing a lot of hands-on management especially in the early phase of the program, it makes sense to have a staff support person available in their own building and department. Our Undergraduate Faculty Advisor, John Ganim, also supports this proposal and will provide additional assistance as needed.
Dear Profs. Sherryl Vint and Rob Latham:

I write in my capacity as Chair of Ethnic Studies to support the Proposal for a Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies Minor. After reviewing the proposal, and discussing it with my departmental colleague Jayna Brown, I have reached the conclusion that such a Minor will support the undergraduate mission of CHASS and contribute breadth, depth, and signature intellectual quality to the scholarly life of the university. Please consider the Dept. of Ethnic Studies as standing in support of this proposal.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dylan Rodríguez  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Ethnic Studies  
University of California, Riverside  
Riverside, CA, 92521  
Email: Dylan.rodriguez@ucr.edu  
Mobile: 951-756-4713
March 17, 2013

Dear Professors Vint and Latham:

I write to confirm the participation of our faculty member, Dana Simmons, in the new “Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies” minor. The History department cannot release faculty to teach in other departments but we are happy to collaborate by pledging to offer on a regular basis two courses (History 107 Disease and Society and History 105 Science in the Modern World) which we understand will fulfill certain requirements in the minor. We wish you best of luck in what looks like a most interesting minor and one sure to attract much interest among our undergraduates.

Yours,

James Brennan
Professor and Chair
From: Keith Harris

To: Sherryl Vint

Re: Science Fiction Technology Studies Proposal

February 10, 2013

This is a letter that states that the Media and Cultural Studies Department is in support of the Science Fiction and Technology Studies Minor program. We support MCS 146: Special Topics in Technoculture and Digital Music, MCS 151G Gender, Mechanization and Shape, and MCS 153: Digitized Bodies being listed as giving credit in the Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies minor. We will continue to offer these courses.

We are also willing to release Derek Burrill occasionally to teach a designated SFTS course.

Sincerely,

Keith Harris
Associate Professor
Chair, Media and Cultural Studies Department
UC Riverside
Riverside, CA 92506
February 1, 2013

Professor Sherryl Vint
Professor of Science Fiction Media Studies
University of California at Riverside
Riverside, CA 92521-0323

Dear Professor Vint,

The Department of Philosophy is happy to have Philosophy 134: Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy 137: Philosophy of Science, and Philosophy 167: Biomedical Ethics listed as giving credit in the Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies minor. These are all courses that we offer and will continue to offer on a regular basis. We are also happy to release Eric Schwitzgebel occasionally to teach a designated SFTS course.

Please let me know if you need anything more from our department.

Sincerely yours,

Andrews Reath
Chair, Department of Philosophy
TO: Sherryl Vint and Rob Latham
FROM: Stu Krieger, Theatre Department Chair
February 1, 2013

Dear Sherryl and Rob,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Department of Theatre to express our support for the proposed minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies to be added to the curriculum of the University of California, Riverside.

The Department of Theatre agrees to participate by offering our course, THEA 166C, *Rewrites for Screen and Television*, as part of the regular rotating curriculum for this minor. The course offers students the opportunity to develop the plots, structure and characterizations for stories of their choosing. It is ideally suited to be adapted in the appropriate quarters to focus specifically on science fiction writing for film and television. While this is an undergraduate class, our MFA students would also be able to be admitted with an additional component of work earning them the appropriate 292 credit.

We also would be willing to allow affiliated faculty a release to teach a class in the SFTS program as needed, with the understanding that all supporting faculty will share this burden on a fair and reasonable basis.

Given the vast resources already available on campus, and the enormous popularity of science fiction work in literature and the cinematic arts, we strongly believe the Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies minor has the potential to be a groundbreaking program. The fact that it is designed to draw on CHASS faculty from many different areas of expertise will provide an exciting opportunity for our students to be exposed to a wide and varied sampling of the talented UCR professors.

Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to help move this program forward.

Best,

Stu Krieger
February 20, 2013

TO: Prof. Sherryl Vint, English Dept.
FR: M. Waller, Chair, Women's Studies Department
RE: Support for Science Fiction Minor

Dear Sherryl,

I am writing to confirm our strong departmental support of the proposed minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies (SFTS) at UCR. The Women's Studies Department is in the process of developing proposals for B.S. programs focused on Gender and Sustainability Studies and Gender and Health Studies. These proposed undergraduate tracks and our proposed graduate program would have areas of overlap and shared interests with the proposed minor and designated emphasis in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies; hence, our great interest and support of this proposal.

Among our courses, WMST 106: Feminist Bioethics, WMST 161: Gender and Science, WMST 185: Gender, Race, and Medicine, WMST 187: Women, Gender, and Technology, and WMST 189: Gender, Technology, and the Body would fit well within the SFTS program. Chikako Takeshita teaches these courses regularly, on rotation with other core WMST courses. Tamara Ho also has direct interests in Science Fiction (evinced by her Winter 2010 CHASS Connect course “The Feminine Fantastic: Gender, Science Fiction, and Futurity,” which she plans to propose as a regular WMST course). Other WMST faculty with interests in environmentalisms and sustainability are also developing undergraduate course proposals focused on the political economies of food and biopower that might also support the SFTS minor. In the future, WMST faculty who are affiliated with SFTS program might, in principle, be released to teach one of the SFTS undergraduate or graduate courses as long as the department is able to cover our own curricular and teaching responsibilities.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Waller
Chair, Department of Women's Studies
Professor of Women's Studies and Comparative Literature
UC Riverside
External Letters of Support
Sherryl Vint
Rob Latham
Department of English
University of California, Riverside
Riverside, CA 92507

February 13, 2013

To the Committee in Charge,

I’m writing to fully support the proposed minor field of study in the field of Science Fiction and Technoculture. To quickly establish my bona fides, I’m the author of *Terminal Identity: The Virtual Subject in Postmodern Science Fiction*, which was not only one of the first book-length explorations of what came to be called “cyberculture,” but which is, astonishingly, still in print two decades after its initial publication. My subsequent research has explored the intersections of technology and the body in the realm of popular media. I’ve also taught numerous courses on SF literature and film.

I’m not sure whether the purpose of this letter is to justify the field of study itself, or whether it’s the specific proposal that needs support. I’m happy to address both.

The centrality of science fiction to contemporary thought cannot be overstated. We live in a world that has, for some decades, seen itself as science fiction. The rate of technological advance continues to accelerate, technologies become ever more intimate and enmeshed in all aspects of our daily lives, relationships are increasingly mediated through technological means, and issues of climate change and income disparities loom over all. Students are simultaneously hyper-aware of technology in their lives and rather blasé about it. Science fiction has, for a much longer period, enabled people to think about technological change as well as consider means of change and adaptation to altering circumstances. It defamiliarizes technological culture. One could see at least a part of the genre of science fiction as a set of thought experiments, positing the impact of change on societies, psychologies, and ecologies. Science fiction becomes a kind of philosophical toy that has frequently operated far in advance of more traditional disciplines — including philosophy and sociology. It is as much a way of thinking about the world as it is a literary/filmic genre.

With this in mind, the proposed new minor looks ideal in that it takes science fiction out of the English department and places it in dialogue with other areas, including histories of science and technology, film and media production, digital culture, and such interdisciplinary areas as “Gender, Mechanization and Shape.” This respects the power that science fiction has as a tool for making sense of technological change. It also sends students (read: “science fiction nerds”) out into the university where they will encounter the real-world implications — ethical, political, ecological — of this “escapist” fictional mode. I’ve taught a course at Stanford called “Cyborgs and Synthetic Humans” that attracted SF fans who gradually realized that they were studying issues of gender and power... but by then it was too late.
I'm also delighted to see that the products of the proposed curriculum will include both scholarly papers and works of fiction, and this is something that could be extended to include product designs, visual works, and performance pieces. This could encourage students to work outside their comfort zones and collaborate with others with different student profiles (a filmmaker working with an historian of science, for example). Without going overboard, I think that some more attention to, say, final projects in some courses, such as WMST 189: Gender, Technology, and the Body could be really productive.

The roster of existing classes that will be included in the minor looks very complete, assuming enough of them are taught frequently enough. I'm glad to see both introductory and capstone courses in the minor — with luck, this will help foster some cohesion among the students, despite this being only a minor.

The minor therefore looks both viable and exciting; I'd be delighted to see such an initiative at Stanford, and envy the faculty and students who will be involved in the first years of this venture. I hope my letter proves helpful.

Sincerely,

Scott Bukatman
Professor, Film and Media Studies
February 4, 2013

Professor Rob Latham, English (Co-chair)
Professor Sherryl Vint, English (Co-chair)
Co-chairs of the Committee in Charge, Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies
University of California, Riverside

Dear Colleagues,

It is a pleasure to provide a highly positive evaluation of the proposal for a minor at UC Riverside in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies. This fine interdisciplinary, interdivisional minor has a deep and diverse cooperating faculty and a thick, rich set of relevant courses. I find the structure of the minor, with required introductory course and capstone seminar and courses selected from arts, humanities, and social science divisions to be well thought out and academically sound. There is more than enough here to support an excellent minor in a generative vein of culture and science. I am particularly drawn by the courses described as currently under review (Science & Science Fiction and Science Fiction on Film), but there are many courses I would love to take and would surely advise my students to take. The multicultural, historically situated mode of attention is strong; and national ecologies, genders, racial difference, media, and genres all get solid attention in a range of courses. Offerings emphasize both analytical and expressive skills.

It is widely recognized that UC Riverside has long been a leader in science fiction studies and that this UC campus has a rich record in science and technology studies and history of science. It is a pleasure to see these strengths, added to others at UCR, especially in the Fine Arts Division, come together for students with this new minor.

In summary, in my judgment this well designed minor is of high quality, adds an important interdisciplinary offering to the curriculum at UCR, and also adds to and complements offerings in other institutions in southern California and UC broadly.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Donna J. Haraway
Distinguished Professor Emerita
February 4, 2013

Professors Rob Latham and Sherryl Vint
English Department
University of California, Riverside

Dear Rob and Sherryl,

I am delighted to support your initiative in creating a minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies. As you know, Science and Technology Studies (STS) is now well established as a discipline. The University of California, San Diego is one of the preeminent leaders in this field, along with programs in STS at University of California, San Francisco focusing on medicine, the interdisciplinary program in Rhetoric at the University of California, Berkeley, which for a time boasted having Evelyn Fox Keller on its faculty, an international star in this area, and the University of California, Davis’s program in Technoculture Studies, under the direction of Douglas Kahn. Your initiative, then, will join a distinguished group of UC programs in this area, as well as programs at such other leading universities as Harvard’s History of Science program and Duke’s Center for Science, Technology and Culture.

The mainstream nature of the “Technoculture” part of your minor notwithstanding, its unique feature is joining science fiction with technocultural studies. The role of science fiction, as a popular culture genre, in mediating scientific and technical work for a wider general audience has long been recognized, not only by science fiction scholars but by scientists themselves. Indeed, Richard Feynman in his seminar speech envisioning nanotechnology, “There’s Plenty of Room at the Bottom,” drew on science fiction texts in order to imagine how this new technology might work. As you know, there are myriad other instances where science fiction texts have been crucially important in forecasting, explaining, and interpreting scientific and technical breakthroughs, with the result that they are frequently able to exert significant influence on how legislators, regulators, and other stakeholders think about the issues. To my knowledge, the kind of fusion you propose between science fiction studies and STS, although prominent in science fiction scholarship, has not been formally proposed as a basis for an academic program. This is a cutting-edge move that will establish a precedent other universities may well wish to follow.
For all these reasons, I am very enthusiastic about your initiative and look forward to its development as you move forward. It’s a brilliant idea, and perfectly suited to UC Riverside, with its extensive Eaton Collection of rare science fiction texts, its history of supporting science fiction scholarship, and its leadership in sponsoring national and international conferences in this area.

Sincerely yours,

N. Katherine Hayles
Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Literature Program, Duke University
Distinguished Professor Emerita, University of California, Los Angeles
Professor Sherryl Vint  
Professor Robert Latham  
Co-Chairs of the Committee in Charge  
Minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies 

Dear Professor Vint and Professor Latham,

I am delighted to write in strong support of the proposal for a new minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies at UC Riverside. The proposal maps out an exciting and robust field of inquiry at the intersection of science and technology studies (STS), science fiction studies, and media studies. For students enrolling in this minor program, the range of topics and innovative methods emphasized by the coursework will provide crucial analytic skills and perspectives on the cultures of knowledge production in our increasingly high-tech world. To me, a program of this nature seems absolutely essential today. More and more, students need and want this kind of critical foundation for understanding the feedback loops between technoscience, speculative discourse, and everyday culture. Your proposal excellently builds on the curricular formats of similar programs, both in the University of California and elsewhere, while also pursuing fresh and original configurations of emerging knowledge and pedagogy that will surely attract students to UC Riverside.

In the University of California system, currently only UC Davis offers an undergraduate major in Science & Technology Studies (STS). UC San Diego offers a minor in STS, and a number of the other campuses offer undergraduate coursework and programs in cognate areas (history and philosophy of science, and so forth). UC Berkeley offers an undergraduate “course thread” to help students navigate the various offerings of STS-related courses across a variety of departments (an institutional challenge faced by many interdisciplinary fields). There are also a few graduate-level programs in the system that focus on cultural, social, historical, anthropological, or philosophical approaches to science and technology. These STS-related programs and initiatives in the UC system are loosely connected through the University of California STS Network, and various system-wide activities bring together faculty and students on an annual basis, such as the UC STS Network Summer Retreat in Marin County. The specific area of technoculture studies is currently less institutionalized, especially at the undergraduate level. UC Davis offers a major and minor in Cinema and Technocultural Studies (featuring two separate tracks—either “Film Studies” or “Technocultural Studies”—but we are in process of merging them into a single track). There are a number of media and film studies majors and minors throughout the system, as well, but none with such a specific focus on intersections of scientific culture and media technologies. Yet although there are some similar programs in the UC and elsewhere, the minor that you are proposing for UC Riverside is rather unique.
Indeed, the minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies proposed at UC Riverside seems smartly designed to draw together best practices for training undergraduates in STS and media studies, while also bringing together the formal study of science fiction across different media (literature, cinema, games, etc.). To be sure, the methods and research topics of STS and science fiction studies often overlap to an extensive degree, and they benefit from each other’s perspectives tremendously. Understanding how the cultural work of science fiction both shapes and is shaped by the history of science and innovation seems absolutely essential to me, and it is an exciting area of research today. I am not aware of any other undergraduate program, in the UC or elsewhere, that so proactively and richly converges these areas.

The course offerings in the minor, distributed among an impressive assortment of departments and programs, will give students a range and depth of knowledge about the relations of science fiction, media culture, and technoscience that promises to be unrivalled. It is an inspiring and well-conceived program, and I wholeheartedly endorse the proposal. I think it could prove to be a model for the future of interdisciplinary media studies and science studies.

Warm regards,

[Signature]

Colin Milburn, Ph.D.
Gary Snyder Chair in Science and the Humanities
Associate Professor of English and Science & Technology Studies
Director, Humanities Innovation Lab
University of California, Davis
To:
Dr. S. Vint and Dr. R. Latham
Department of English
University of California, Riverside
Riverside, CA 92507

Dear Professors Latham and Vint,
I write in support of the Proposal for the UC Riverside Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies Minor.

The proposed Minor will play an important role in promoting research in Science Fiction Studies, and in putting UC Riverside on the map in an important emerging discipline. By examining the histories and cultures of science, technology, and medicine, students will come to better understand the role that culture and science influence each other.

I would be proud to be part of the new minor’s extended interdisciplinary constituency, in the southern California circuit of science fiction studies. The minor will provide an important home for interdisciplinary collaborative work. Its role in programming is not replicated by existing majors or minors. My own research addresses South Asian science, technology and history, with an emphasis on the global politics and cultures of scientific knowledge. Thus the exploration of changing forms and applications of scientific knowledge is central to my own research. I will value the proposed minor, as an individual researcher, as well as in my capacity as a UC faculty member and mentor of undergraduate and graduate students.

Please do not hesitate to contact me via email (kphilip@uci.edu) if I can provide any other information for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kavita Philip
Associate Professor, History
University of California, Irvine, CA 92697
kphilip@uci.edu
www.humanities.uci.edu/critical/kp
January 28, 2013

Dr. Sherryl Vint
Dr. Rob Latham
Co-Chairs, Committee in Charge of the Minor
In Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies
Department of English
University of California-Riverside
Riverside, CA 92507

Dear Professors Vint and Latham:

I am very happy to have had a chance to review your proposed minor in Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies. It is indeed a model of the best kind of work linking STS and cultural studies/science fiction studies, and should be a significant asset to your English Department offerings, not only because it is certain to attract student interest, but because it opens up a whole realm of courses that consider the agency of literature as an important medium of scientific, social and technological inquiry.

There is so much to admire in the way you have constructed this program: its interdisciplinary breadth, its attention to providing adequate context in the Humanities and Social Sciences for science fiction literatures, and in particular (from my perspective) its look at the full range of STEM issues (science, technology, ethics and medicine) as they play out (and are predicted and addressed) in science fiction.

Your decision to include creative writing, media studies, film and television writing as part of this minor is another original touch. I was pleased to see that you offer one class that includes a discussion of manga and comics (JPN 184: Japanese Media and Cultural Studies). Given the wide range of contemporary comics dealing with science fiction issues, from Charles Burns’s Black Hole (2008) to Brian Fies’s Whatever Happened to the World of Tomorrow (2012) and Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely’s We 3 (2004), I suggest that in the future you may wish to add courses on Graphic Medicine and Comics as Science Fiction. But those require time to obtain approval, and so they are merely aspects to work for. I admire the entire roster of Fine Arts list of courses, and will wager that you draw students in by that route who then move over to the Humanities and Social Sciences modes of analysis, and vice versa. And more importantly,
anyone who wants to understand science fiction in the current moment simply has to explore the media of fiction, film, and gaming.

I admire this course list and this ambitious and wide-ranging proposal, and wish you success in what is clearly at the cutting edge (if not the bleeding edge, if you’ll pardon that term) of university programs in science fiction studies.

With my congratulations and very best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Susan Squier
Julia Brill Professor of Women’s Studies and English
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802