The Future of Us:

Science Fiction and the Short Story

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Rationale

The Science Fiction analyst Darko Suvin defines the concept of the *novum* in Sci-Fi as, "a strange newness" (1979, p. 4). There is, perhaps, no concept more essential to Sci-Fi than that of the *novum*. It is the element that separates the worlds created by Sci-Fi authors from our own, the agent of radical change whose presence challenges us as readers to fit it into our concept of reality. The thematic aim of this unit is to acquaint students with one of the most prevalent and impactful *novums*, changing definitions of humanity. In works from *The Terminator* to *Ender's Game*, authors and producers explore the outer bounds of humanity. These texts force all who view them to grapple with internally defined values of acceptance, life, and "The Other". This unit is worth teaching because it attempts to engender a dialogue with each student about those values, expose them to the vital analytical concepts of genre and theme, and acquaint them with a genre that is growing in both popularity and impact.

The concept of a literary genre is the bedrock upon which many types of literary analysis rest. There is no intellectual process more basic than grouping texts by "a particular form, style, or purpose" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2011), and yet, there are simultaneously few skills so vital to a student's understanding of the process of literary analysis. This unit will help students to define a genre that has a few discrete, objective traits, an easy introduction to a process that will become more complex as those same students move through their high school careers. Students will be able to define Sci-Fi via the application of one key term (*novum*) and several broad traits (allegory, use of technology, symbolism), a simplicity which will lend itself to a quick transition to higher order thinking about genre classification. That is to say, this unit will

allow students to quickly move from simply defining a genre, to placing texts inside of that genre, and analyzing how each text differently defines Sci-Fi.

This unit will also require that students do a deep analysis of the way that one theme is replicated throughout Science Fiction. This requirement helps students to gain mastery of one of the main points in the Common Core Standard's "College and Career Readiness Standards for Reading", which states: "Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take" (2011, p.31). The value of this aspect of the unit is, however, greater than simply fulfilling one point of a national standard. For the exploration of one repeated theme will allow students to gain modular skills for the analysis of any text. Once students have gained the ability to find the different instances of the theme "What is it to be human?", they will be able to find themes and ideas that run through multiple texts in every situation that they encounter. This will allow them to, for example, read between the lines of an argumentative essay, or analyze the requirements of an assignment in their future careers. The theme study aspect of this unit will also allow students to engage in the aforementioned dialogue as an act of meaning making.

The pedagogy in this unit is based on the concept of a dialogical classroom (Smagorinsky, 2008), wherein students are engaged in various dialogues both with themselves and the text. The concept of a dialogical classroom is important because it is the foundation of the meaning making that students will be lead to through this unit. The assignments and activities contained in this packet are designed, in large part, not to engender a "correct" answer from each student, but to ensure that each one develops his or her own personal set of answers for the questions that naturally flow from the unit's theme. When engaging in a discussion concerning Sci-Fi's changing definitions of humanity, there are a logical set of questions that

arise. "How do I define humanity?", "Who/what in my life do I think of as less than human?", "Who/what in my life do I think of as more than human?", and "Who do I discriminate against because I consider them to be less than human?" are but a few examples. The introductory activity and personal journal are specific assignments in this unit designed to lead the students to ask these and questions like them, and help them to the final act of meaning making, their short story assignment. This assignment is designed as an opportunity for students to employ the often-allegorical nature of Science Fiction to set down their thoughts on the unit's main theme. Students will write these stories in part based on journal entries wherein they describe a real life example of when they were treated as less or more than human, which is where the essential act of meaning making will take place. When students are lead to address their own conceptions of humanity, they will have an opportunity to crystallize their life experiences into a coherent set of beliefs which can help them in many aspects of their lives outside of the classroom. This is an important step in terms of framing the material that students will have to analyze. As the students internalize the concepts taught in the unit, the Sci-Fi they read will be less about abstract stories set in outer space, and more about characters encountering the real-life issues and difficulties that the students themselves must deal with day-in and day-out. This unit is not simply viable because it is designed to engender dialogue, however, but additionally because it concerns a genre that is relevant and emerging in the current cultural zeitgeist.

The most logical, and perhaps most obvious, criticism of this unit is that it focus on a genre that has very little representation in the traditional literary canon. One might ask, for instance, whether Science Fiction is as important for students to read as, say, Shakespeare. While there is no quantifiable way to measure Science Fiction's merits relative to traditional texts, there can be no doubt that the cultural value, and therefore the value of this unit, is high. A recent study

of Locus Online (an aggregator for published book reviews), found that the number of Science Fiction book reviews are increasing at the second fastest rate of all categories (Ivanov, 2009). While this trend does not indicate intrinsic literary value of Sci-Fi, it does suggest that the genre is firmly implanted in the public consciousness, and that the authors are producing more and more Science Fiction works of note. Anecdotal evidence also supports this suggestion. Recent Sci-Fi movies such as *Avatar¸ District 9¸* and *Inception* received budgets, profits, and critical accolades on par with movies in traditional realist genres, pointing to a general popularity that has, in the past, escaped Science Fiction. It is important to note that this unit does not attempt to replace any major canonical works, but rather, to raise into academic prominence a genre which has already achieved a cultural imprint. The Common Core Standards encourage a reading of materials across a broad spectra of genre and form (2011, p. 32), and this unit introduces to students a genre that they may have never encountered in an academic setting.

Another logical critique of this unit's value is that it is designed for a ninth grade Language Arts classroom; a place usually reserved for a focus on proficiency in various technical, pragmatic forms (Georgia Performance Standards, 2011). This critique ignores the fact that no genre is more in tune with modern pragmatic concerns than Sci-Fi. This unit places the concerns of argumentation and persuasive writing in an easy-to-access package of fictional plotlines. The nature of the personal journal and the cumulative short story assignment are that they require students to take a stance, if indirectly, on a hotly controversial topic. The short story, in particular, requires that students address the theme of "What is it to be human?", meaning that they must decide what their stance on that issue is, and then submerge that stance in the short story form. This unit supplements a focus on technical writing with a more abstract and therefore higher order, production of an argumentative text.

This unit addresses a battery of standards and technical concepts while at the same time allowing students to make meaning of a genre that is both popular and deeply intellectual. The aim of this rationale is to demonstrate the value of both Science Fiction in general, and this unit in particular, to the 9th grade Language Arts curriculum. Students will benefit in a multitude of ways as they consider "The future of us".

References

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Materials

Short Story List

"Driftglass", Samuel Delany, 1971 ([Info](#))
"Article of Faith", Mike Resnick, 2008 ([Info](#))
"Johnny Mnemonic", William Gibson, 1981 ([Info](#))
"Exhalation", Ted Chiang, 2008, ([Info](#))
"Scales". Alistair Reynolds, 2009 ([Info](#))
"Last Son of Tomorrow", Greg van Eekhout, 2009 ([Info](#))
"Harrison Bergeron", Kurt Vonnegut, 1961 ([Info](#))
"The Last Question", Isaac Asimov, 1956 ([Info](#))
"Tower of Babylon", Ted Chiang, 1990 ([Info](#))
"The Elephant of Ponzan", Orson Scott Card, 2000 ([Info](#))
"Flowers for Algernon", Daniel Keyes, 1959 ([Info](#))
"Air Raid", John Varley, 1977 ([Info](#))

Introductory Activity Scenario Handout

Respond to the prompt below. Length, grammar, and spelling are not important, I only care that you choose a course of action other than doing nothing, and be honest in your response.

Recent advances in robotics have lead to an unparalleled breakthrough: we are now able to construct androids, or life-like robots, that are physically indistinguishable from human beings. These androids do not just look like humans, the move like us, think like us, and even feel like we do. Unfortunately for you, this advance in science has lead to a personal conundrum. One of your closest childhood friends is the lead researcher on the team that discovered the technology that allowed for the creation of androids. You have known this person all your life, and feel that he is almost a brother to you. Your friend has recently come under considerable public criticism, however, because he has fallen in love with one of the first androids. He claims that his love is legitimate and real, and that because the android is capable of real thought and feeling, that she is just as human as any other woman that he could fall in love with. This argument might, perhaps, have been easy to swallow, if not for another of your closest friends. She is appalled by the idea of androids, and believes that they are abominations in the eyes of her religion. She has cut all ties with your scientist friend, and joined the vicious protest movement aimed at his work. Now she is encouraging you to do the same. Your scientist friend, on the other hand, has asked for your help in defending himself from the same protest movement. What action will you take?

Dialogue Handout

There are accepted ways in which to present "dialogue," a word that refers to what people say in a story. The following exercises present a few simple rules for presenting characters' dialogue in your stories.

1. Converting an *indirect quotation* to a *direct quotation*

The following sentence provides a summary of what someone has said:

Daryl B. Trouble told me to go home.

This is known as an *indirect quotation* because Daryl's exact words are not reproduced; rather, they are summarized. In contrast, a *direct quotation* goes within *quotation marks* and reports exactly what someone has said, as in the following sentence:

Daryl B. Trouble told me, "Go home, fool!"

Rewrite each of the following five sentences so that the indirect quotation is presented as a direct quotation.

1. Roland Butter asked me when the soup would be ready.

2. At the beginning of class, the teacher told us to turn in our homework.

3. I got an email saying that I had just won a million dollars.

4. Bette DeRanch said that we should keep the noise down.

5. The principal congratulated us for being so well behaved.

2. Punctuating quotations

In the U.S., punctuation usually goes *inside* the closing quotation mark of a direct quotation, as in the following sentences:

"I am a happy camper."

"Those are delicious lima beans," said Jim Panzee.

Lauren Order shouted, "I'm free at last!"

"How did you do that?" asked the magician's assistant.

In the following sentences, place both quotation marks and punctuation in the proper locations:

1. We might be behind by 50 points, but we will win the game said the coach.

2. The chef exclaimed This is my greatest creation ever!

3. Why do you want me to do that I asked my mother.

4. The mayor declared No dog shall roam this town unleashed.

5. Ginger Snapps was told No more cookies for you by the cafeteria lady.

3. Quotations and paragraphs

A final rule regarding quotations in stories is that every time a new speaker begins, the writer should start a new paragraph. When two or more characters are speaking, the proper form looks like this:

"Hello!" said Ira Fuse to Kareem O'Wheat.

"And a big howdy to you!" replied Kareem.

Ira paused and asked, "What are you up to?"

Kareem paused to think. He then said, "I was just about to head into that dark and shadowy alley to see if anything pops out and tries to scare me."

"Great idea," said Ira. "What do you say we hide between those two dumpsters and see what happens?"

Kareem smiled and replied, "That's a fantastic idea! Last one in is a rotten egg."

"What a coincidence," said Ira. "It rather smells of rotten eggs in a rancid, fetid, repulsive sort of way."

"Well then," said Kareem, "I think we're doing the right thing."

"What could possibly go wrong?" inquired Ira as they headed in to crouch between the dumpsters and enjoy the remainder of the afternoon.

Out of Class Reading Options Handout

Over the course of this unit, you will be asked to read three Short Stories out of class over three separate weekends. You should choose three short stories out of the six listed below. The Thursday before the weekend you will read a story you should tell me what story you have chosen. You will have a written summary quiz for each of these stories the Monday after you read them, so be careful to read each story closely. Also, consider these stories to be your mentor texts when you right your short story. If you have a question about how to right good characters, dialogue, or with good detail, these stories are a good place to look.

Harrison Burgeron by Kurt Vonnegut:
In the future everyone is finally equal in every way. How is this possible? Well, the government has their hand in it for sure, and they use handicapping equipment (such as birdshot weights on strong people, and ear piercing bursts of sound on people who concentrate too much) to pull talented people back down to "normal." In this oppressive environment one couple has a son who dares take on the government restrictions – with some very interesting results.

The Last Question by Isaac Asimov:
Multivac is a advanced computer that solves many of the world's problems. The story opens on May 14, 2061 when Multivac has built a space station to harness the power of the sun – effectively giving humans access to a nearly unlimited source of power. Ah – and that's the key, it is nearly unlimited. In fact two of Multivac's technicians argue about this very idea – how long will humankind be able to glean energy from the universe? They decide to ask Multivac for the answer, and all it can say is "INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR MEANINGFUL ANSWER." Oh well, it was a good idea, and through several smaller stories we see that many more people ask Multivac the same question. Multivac has a difficult time answering – it is a hard question after all! But when do we (and Multivac) finally learn the answer? As you've probably guessed – not until the very end of the story.

Tower of Babylon by Ted Chiang:
Hillalum has worked his whole life as a copper miner in the town of Elam, so he is filled with wonder and awe as his caravan approaches and begins ascending the fabled tower of Babylon. The thin line leading up to heaven is quite a sight to behold from the ground, but even more amazing is what he witnesses as he spends the next four months climbing to the top: entire villages of people who have never been to the ground, thousands of workers who are more concerned about dropping a tool than falling, vegetables that grow above the sun and structural damage from an ancient shooting star! But when he reaches the top and feels the last barrier to heaven little does he know that what lies beyond is even more amazing that what he has already seen!

The Elephants of Ponzan by Orson Scott Card:
Lukasz has had a hard life. When he was a child in Poland a horrible new plague swept across the world killing nearly everyone. Now he ekes out a living with a handful of other survivors. It is in this situation that his city receives some unlikely visitors – first a *real* family with a young woman who can still bear children, and then a group of African elephants who take a keen

interest in Lukasz life. Oh, and the two sets of visitors aren't entirely unrelated – as Lukasz is about to discover for himself!

Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes:
Charlie Gordon, the main protagonist, is a sweet-tempered and mentally disabled man. He has an I.Q. of 68 and works a menial job. He is selected to undergo an experimental surgical technique to increase his intelligence. This technique has already been successfully tested on Algernon, a laboratory mouse. The surgery on Charlie proves to be a success as well; his I.Q. triples. He surpasses everybody intellectually, including the scientists who performed the surgery on him. But as his intelligence increases, he becomes unable to relate to others who were once smarter than him.

Air Raid by John Varley:
Wearing make-up, wigs and dressed up as the airline crew members, the Snatch Team waits for the portal to activate and jump into action. They have to hurry, because 90 minutes or so after take off the plane will crash and everybody on board will die. But what is so important about this particular rescue mission? Or any other rescue mission for that matter?

Goals

Goal #1-Journal

  Students will be asked to maintain a personal journal (Smagorinsky, 2008 p. 85) of their responses to the texts and to directed prompts concerning themes that we have discussed. At the beginning of selected periods students will either be asked to spend time free writing, or respond at home to a prompt I assign.

  The writing can be exploratory in nature, and will not be graded on the basis of grammar or syntax. The expectation is simply that the students attempt to engage with the text or prompt they are assigned to write on. At the end of each week I will collect the journals and grade them on the basis of completion. Each student will be required to turn in five dated journal entries. These journals will be a launching pad both for our discussions in class and for the final narrative text the students will be asked to produce for the end of the unit. Bellow is the hand out that will be passed out at the beginning of the unit.

Journal Handout

       Throughout this unit, you will keep a personal journal in which you think through and reflect on the materials that you read and the conversations we have in class. You will keep your journal in the composition notebook that I give you. These journals will be completed both in the classroom and at home, depending on whether or not we have free writing time. At the end of each week you will turn in your journals to me. You will need to turn in all assigned entries written in a week every Friday. Your journal grade will come from how many entries you turn in over the course of the unit.. Given the fact that we will be writing these journals in class, you should be less worried about your grade, and more worried about giving an honest, in-depth response. Some things to consider when writing your journal:

- Your journal does not have to be written in formal English. I am less interested in your spelling mistakes, and more interested in your response to the text. I only care that your grammar and spelling do not get in the way of my understanding of your ideas.
- Your journal should include five entries per week, each one including at least one meaty paragraph (5-6 sentences). Put the date of each entry at the top of the page.
- Do not simply summarize the literature we read in the class. Refer to the texts, but concentrate on responding to them. You should focus not on what the text has to say, but on what you think.
- It's a good idea to consider your personal response to our reading and discussion. In other words, how did the material make you feel, and can you relate it to anything in your life?
- It's also a good idea to jot down any components of our reading that you think would be good to include in your culminating project for this unit, the Science Fiction short story. If there is a passage that strikes you or makes you react emotionally, write it down and discuss what you can do in your story to make your readers react the way you did.
- Keep in mind that I am required to share any thoughts or suggestions of violence, suicide, substance abuse, family abuse, or other harmful behavior with the school counselors.
- If there are any pages in your journal that you do not want me to read, please mark them with an x at the top.

Goal #2- Body Biography

     Based on which short story they chose as their second reading, students will break into groups and compose a body biography (Smagorinsky, 2008 p.36). For this assignment students will fill in the outline of a human body with images, symbols, and words that depict the experiences and relationships of a character of their choosing. Students will work in groups of 3-5 to complete this assignment. The biographies will be completed on sheets of butcher paper with markers provided by me. The body biography will be completed in class and will be introduced by the worksheet below, and graded by the attached rubric.

Body Biography Handout

You and your group will work today on a body biography. Choose a character from "Driftglass" that you think is interesting or compelling in some way. For your chosen character, create a visual and written portrait that shows several aspects of the characters life within the short story. You will do this by drawing a physical outline of your character's body, and then filling it in with significant words, drawings, and symbols. The body biography must include:

- A review of significant events in the story
- Visual symbols that represent events or objects important to your character
- The character's three most important lines from the story
- Symbols to show how the character is defined as human or inhuman inside the story. In other words, use elements of your body biography to place your character inside our ongoing discussion about how Science Fiction deals with the definition of humanity.

Try to make your own series of symbols that reveal the most important things about your character. Here are some examples and suggestions for things you might include:

- Placement: Carefully choose the placement of your text and artwork. For example, the area where your character's heart would be might be appropriate for illustrating the important relationship within his or her life.
- Virtues and vices: What are your character's most admirable qualities? His or her worst? How can you make us visualize them?
- Color: Colors are often symbolic. What color(s) do you most associate with your character? Why? How can you effectively work these colors into your presentation?
- Symbols: What objects can you associate with your character that illustrate his essence? Are there objects mentioned within the story that you could use? IF not, choose objects that especially seem to correspond with the character.
- Changes: How does your character change throughout the story? What can you do to demonstrate these changes within your text and/or artwork?

Body Biography Rubric

	4	3	2	1
Review of Significant Events	Reviews the most significant events in the story as they relate to the character.	Reviews significant events, but does not relate them to chosen character.	Somewhat reviews the most significant events, does not relate them to chosen character.	Does not review the most significant events in the story.
Visual Symbols	Symbols are truly representative of the character.	Symbols given but one is weak or one symbol missing.	Symbols given but are weak or are not representative of the character.	Symbols missing.
3 Quotes	Three relevant quotes.	Two relevant quotes.	One relevant quote.	Quotes missing.
Definition of Humanity	Clearly demonstrates how the character is defined as human or inhuman.	Somewhat demonstrates how the character is defined as human or inhuman.	Barely demonstrates how the character is defined as human or inhuman.	Does not demonstrate how the character is defined as human or inhuman
Use of Class Time	Used time well during each class period. Focused on getting the project done. Never distracted others.	Used time well during each class period. Usually focused on getting the project done and never distracted others.	Used some of the time well during each class period. There was some focus on getting the project done but occasionally distracted others.	Did not use class time to focus on the project or often distracted others.

Goal #4- Science Fiction Short Story

The culminating text the students will produce is a Science Fiction short story. This will require the students to demonstrate both a facility with the narrative techniques they have learned, but also to enter into a conversation with the Sci-fi genre in terms of how it defines humanity. The story must be at least 1000 words in length, and will be graded based on the attached rubric. This essay will be produced across three drafts and multiple pre-writes. Students will have access to both peer and teacher feedback throughout the entire writing process. This goal is designed to allow students to access both the conventions of the genre and their own creative side.

Science Fiction Short Story

Your final project will be to create a short story in the Science Fiction genre which in some way addresses the theme we have discussed throughout the unit: "What is it to be human?"

The story must be typed and in MLA format (12 point Times New Roman, double spaced, 1" margins) and must be a least 1000 words. There are very few other restrictions on your story. It can be set in the future, present, or past. It can have many characters, or just a few. You can even, if you want, rewrite a real-life experience that you have had into your story. The only other restriction is that your story must be in the Science Fiction genre. This means it must contain, as we have discussed in class, a *novum,* and address in some way the concept of *alterity*. If you have any question on whether or not your ideas is Science Fiction, feel free to ask me, or refer to the working definition that we discussed earlier in this unit.

Your paper will be graded based on the rubric that you received with this handout. In particular it is important that your story be written with *specific details* that you choose in order to make your audience react in some way. You should be able to find plenty of great examples of specific details in your personal journal, or in any of the class activities we did on writing with detail. It is also important that your dialogue be written in proper form, and that your entire story is well edited and free of most grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors.

You will write your story not all in one sitting, but over time in a series of drafts and pre-writes which lead up to your final product. All drafts other than your final paper will only be graded on completion, and will mainly serve to help you improve your writing. The schedule for this assignment is as follows:

- [Monday of week three]: Begin pre-writing, turn in pre-writes for my comments
- [Wednesday of week three]: Receive my comments on pre-writes, choose your two best ideas from, conference with a partner to decide which one you will settle on
- [Friday of week four]: Turn in rough outline or plot summary, conference in small groups over outline
- [Monday of week five]: Turn in rough draft to me for comment
- [Monday of week six]: Receive rough draft with comments, begin working on second draft
- [Wednesday of Week six]: Turn in second draft, conference with me and in small groups
- [Friday of week six]: Final essay due

Science Fiction Short Story Rubric

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Grammar & Spelling (Conventions)	Writer makes very few errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. Clear evidence of revision.	Writer makes some errors in grammar or spelling which distract the reader from the content, but paper is still well executed. There is evidence of revision.	Writer makes many errors in grammar or spelling which distract the reader from the content. There is little evidence of revision.	Writer makes frequent grammar or spelling which distract the reader from the content. There is no evidence of revision.
Specificity	The story includes many specific details that are selected to engage the reader.	The story includes some specific details, and some that are selected without an eye toward engaging the reader.	The story includes very few specific details, none of which are selected with an eye toward engaging the reader.	The story includes little or no specific details.
Ideas	Writing is original. Ideas are creative and well thought out. Story is captivating for intended audience and well rounded.	Writing is original, but a few ideas seem underdeveloped. Keeps reader's interest, but there is room for growth.	Writing is not original throughout the story. Some ideas seem creative while many seem generic. Fails to captivate intended audience in some areas and many scenes could be more thoroughly developed. There is little evidence of growth	Work is un original. Ideas seem generic and/or lacking personal interest. There is no growth
Theme	The story fully addresses the main theme of the unit, "What is it to be human".	The story somewhat addresses the theme, in a manner that is superficial or shallow.	The story hardly addresses the theme.	The story in no way addresses the theme.
Genre	The story fully employs the most important conventions of the Sci-fi genre.	The story somewhat employs the most important conventions of the Sci-fi genre.	The story barely employs the most important conventions of the Sci-fi genre.	The story barely employs the most important conventions of the Sci-fi genre.

Publication	Student submitted final short story and all rough drafts by the deadline.	Student failed to submit one or more rough draft(s) draft by the deadline.	Student failed to submit the final draft by the deadline.	Student failed to submit final short story and all rough drafts by the deadline

Lesson Plans

*Note: Much of this lesson plan, especially the format used to teach the Short Story form, is lifted directly from Ch. 3 of *The Dynamics of Writing Instruction* (Smagorinsky et al., 2010)

Week 1
Day 1

10 Minutes: Housekeeping and attendance

5 Minutes: Hand out Introductory Scenario and read it aloud twice.

15 Minutes: Individual free writing on introductory scenario in Journals. Students may write in whatever format, genre, or style the like, so long as they respond to the prompt. Important to note that students cannot respond to the prompt by saying they would do nothing. I will circulate to keep them on-task.

20 Minutes: Small groups. Students will divide into groups based on their own preferences. The groups will contain no more than 4 people. I will make it clear that if a group is not functioning to foster discussion, they may lose the right to choose their own groups. This will be the small group format for the rest of the unit. I will ask students to discuss the prompt based on their reaction to it. If everyone in the group agrees on the best course of action in the introductory scenario, then they should discuss what makes that course of action the best one. If they disagree, then they should discuss why they feel differently about the scenario.

Day 2

5 Minutes: Housekeeping and attendance

10 Minutes: Get into small groups from yesterday to refresh everyone's memory of the discussions from yesterday/continue those discussions.

5 Minutes: Go over group discussion format and rules. Be sure to discuss decorum for group discussion, and how each group will have a chance to speak their mind.

25 Minutes: I will help to foster a student led discussion based on their small groups from yesterday and today. If no one seems inclined to talk, I will try to elicit a response by simply asking several students to justify their individual response to the scenario. Some questions I might ask:

- Is the android human?
- Why should the scientist be/not be allowed to marry the android?
- Is your religious friend right to object to the potential marriage?
- Would you be willing to become friends with the android?

5 Minutes: Shift the focus of the group discussions on how views have changed by asking:
- Has anyone changed their mind since the time when the first responded to the scenario?
- If so, what made you change your mind?
- If not, what about the course of action you chose made you unwilling to change your mind?

5 Minutes: (If time allows) Independent writing reflections in journals on whether or not views have changed. Did our discussion change your views on your best course of action in the introductory scenario? Why or why not?

Day 3

5 Minutes: housekeeping and attendance

20 Minutes: Mini-lesson to introduce the concept of the Novum, which Suvin defines as "That strange newness", the first large component of Science Fiction. Discuss how the Novum is the foundation of any definition of Sci Fi, and how it is different than simply new technology or extra terrestrial life.

20 Minutes: Form up in small groups. Discuss what the novum of the Introductory Scenario is, and then try to define the novum of the following examples of popular Science Fiction (or other examples that the entire group has read or seen):
- *Avatar*
- *Star Wars*
- *Inception*
- *Star Trek*

Be sure to discuss what examples you have found, if any, that do not contain a novum.

5 Minutes: Write in journals over how your discussions changed what you think about each of the examples. Do you still consider them to be Science Fiction? Why or why not?

Day 4:

5 Minutes: Housekeeping and attendance

20 Minutes: Introduce the concept of a read aloud, and then read aloud the first two pages of "Driftglass" by Samuel Delany.

15 Minutes: Respond in journals to following prompt:
Based on what you have heard of "Driftglass" what do you believe the novum of the story to be? Is this a true novum, or simply something that is slightly different from our world today? Additionally, what are your initial reactions to the story? Do you find it to be interesting? Boring? Do you believe it to be Science Fiction based on the elements that we have discussed?

5 Minutes: Pair off into partners at your discretion and discuss responses to journal prompt. I will circulate and keep groups on task.

5 Minutes: Introduce out of class story assignment and handout. I will make it clear that these three stories are separate from the one they will choose to do their body biography on, and that they will only be graded on this assignment through reading quizzes.

Day 5:

5 Minutes: Housekeeping

10 Minutes: Write in journal responding to the following question:
Is there any animal or thing in your life (e.g. pet, car, possession) that is not human, but you still treat as though it was? Why or why not?

20 Minutes: Introduce the concept of shared reading: wherein I read as students read along with the text in front of them. Read the next three pages of *Driftglass* shared.

10 Minutes: Pair up (student choice) and discuss whether or not the members of the Aquatic Corp (characters *Driftglass* who have gills, and can live both in and out of water) are human. If they are not human, are they less than human, or more than human?

5 Minutes: Take up first week of journals.

Homework: Read the remainder of *Driftglass* for next Monday, and first out of class story.

Week 2
Day 6

5 Minutes: Housekeeping and attendance

15 Minutes: Reading Quiz over out of class story. This is an open ended quiz where students will respond to the following prompt:

>Please write a brief (1 paragraph) summary of what happened in our assigned reading for today. Then write a second paragraph that highlights 2-3 of what you consider to be the most important characters, events, themes, or objects from our reading.

15 Minutes: Brief full class discussion over "Driftglass." This will be a time for students to give their ultimate opinions on what they thought of the short story. I will encourage students to be honest opinions, even if they have negative feedback.

15 Minutes: Mini lesson on the science fictional concept of extrapolation. I will give a brief lecture on the concept of extrapolation in Science Fiction, a technique that allows authors to imagine future events and technology based on the events and technology of today. Give examples of extrapolation such as: lightsaber from Star Wars (extrapolated from swords), phasers from Star Trek (extrapolated from taser)

Day 7

5 Minutes: Housekeeping and attendance

15 Minutes: Students will choose small groups discuss what extrapolation is in their own words, and raise questions for me and each other over the parts of extrapolation that they do not yet fully grasp. I will circulate the entire time, trying to insure that each group seems to have a handle on the concept.

20 Minutes: [Journal]{style="color:blue"} writing on the following topic:

>Yesterday we talked extensively on the concept of extrapolation. Today I would like you to briefly identify an example of extrapolation in an outside Science Fiction text. Choose a book, movie, or TV show that you believe is in the Science Fiction genre. In your chosen text, find an example of a technology that has been extrapolated into the future. Discuss why this example represents extrapolation, what assumptions the author makes (in other words, what does assume has happened to your example technology from present day until the time when your text is set), and how you might have made different decisions if you had been extrapolating your example.

10 Minutes: Split into pairs (student choice) and discuss what examples both of you chose. What where the similarities between your two examples? The differences?

Day 8

5 Minutes: Housekeeping and Attendance

30 Minutes: Extrapolation exercise. I will bring in several everyday items such as: a blender (sans blade), a cell phone, a book, an e-reader, sunglasses, and a sweatshirt. I will set these objects at the front of the class and pass out the following assignment for them to complete:

<div align="center">Extrapolation Exercise</div>

We have been talking about Science Fiction writers using the technique of extrapolation, wherein an author imagines how existing technology and events might be extrapolated into the future. Today we are all going to be Science Fiction authors and extrapolate one of the everyday items at the front of the class. Chose one of the items and then imagine how some future version of it may look 100 years from now. Write a paragraph describing what the future version will look like. Give specific details of how it will look, how it will work, and how people will use it in the future. If you think it would help, you could even draw a brief sketch of what the future item would look like. Next, explain why you think each new feature of the item will be included. For instance, if you think that 100 years from now, the blender will use lasers instead of blades to blend things, then you could explain that in the future, lasers will become a popular cutting tool. The only limit on this assignment is your own imagination. Because you are now a Science Fiction author, you get to decide what our future holds.

15 minutes: Take volunteers to read their descriptions of their future item. If no student volunteers, I will read mine, and then ask if any of the students have a different version of the item that I chose, and then ask that student to read theirs.

Day 9

5 Minutes: Housekeeping, attendance

10 Minutes: Outline plan for next short story reading and body biography. At this point I will tell the students that they will all choose between 4 short stories that they will read over the next week. They will then choose a group of up to 3 other students who are reading the same book they are, these will be their discussion and [body biography](#) groups.

20 Minutes: Introduce and give a brief description of each story. I will be sure to include a brief, spoiler-free plot synopsis (below), some relevant things I think are good about the story, and some "If you like *x* you'll like this story" statements for each one.

"Article of Faith" by Mike Resnick:

Jackson is the new robot that cleans the church and tends to its grounds. But he is different than the previous cleaning robots – he is thoughtful and kind, and asks some very deep questions concerning the nature of God. At first this is a pleasant surprise for Reverend Morris, who takes advantage of Jackson's nature to practice his sermons. But

as time goes on the Reverend learns that Jackson has bigger plans than just asking questions, and that makes the local congregation quite upset! (Source)

"Johnny Mnemonic" by William Gibson: Johnny is a low level criminal who is just barely surviving on the streets of a dangerous city. Things in his latest deal have gone horribly wrong, until Johnny is saved by the mysterious (and dangerous) Molly Millions. Johnny and Molly partner up for one last deal, one that has the potential to make them incredibly wealthy. But will this be the deal that finally makes them rich, or the one that leaves them dead?

"Exhalation" by Ted Chiang: Air is the source of life – at least that's what has long been believed by the air-driven mechanical beings in this story. Yet when reports of several fast clocks are spread, one being decides to use the opportunity to construct some devices that will allow him to dissect his own brain. Yikes! As he begins to learn what it is that really makes him tick (Ha! Pun intended!) he makes a startling and sad discovery not only about his own anatomy but also the universe in which he lives." (Source)

"Scales" by Alistair Williams: Nico hates the aliens, and agrees that they must die. That is why he is signing up for the war effort. They're ugly too – with their lizard heads and green scaly hides. But as Nico is forced to make several physical changes in order to become a better fighter he begins to realize that maybe the enemy isn't so different after all! Oh well, he has a job to do… right? (Source)

15 Minutes: Have students choose a story, and then read the first page. Next, they should break into groups based on which story they've chosen and discuss what their initial impressions are. Does the first page reveal who the protagonist is? Does it reveal the novum? Does it show any instances of extrapolation? I will circulate around and keep the students on task, in particular making sure that they students are relating what they've read to the concepts that define Science Fiction that we talked about in class.

Day 10:
5 Minutes: Housekeeping and Attendance

10 Minutes: Mini-Lesson to introduce (or re-introduce) the concept of allegory, specifically as it relates to Science Fiction. I will be sure to highlight *Avatar* as an example of an allegorical Science Fiction movie, and note that Science Fiction often allows authors to make a political, moral, or philosophical statement.

15 Minutes: Students should break up in to groups (per usual arrangement) and discuss allegory in Science Fiction by focusing on one particular text. Students should choose either a movie, tv show, short story, or book (including texts we have read already) that they believe to be allegorical. They should then discuss how that allegory functions. Is it attempting to get the audience to believe in a particular view? Does it make the text more or less impactful? Did it

make you and the members of your group like the text more or less? How could allegories relate to the theme, what is it to be human?

10 Minutes: Students should separate out of groups, and write a brief paragraph in their journals that discusses how allegories can relate to the theme we have been discussing throughout the unit: What is it to be human? What could more or less than human characters like the Aquatic Corp be said to represent in our world?

5 Minutes: Full class discussion on response to journal prompt.

5 Minutes: Take up journals.
Homework: Finish reading short stories for Monday.

Week 3
Day 11

5 Minutes: Housekeeping, attendance

15 Minutes: Reading Quiz over your selected short story. This is an open ended quiz where students will respond to the following prompt:
> Please write a brief (1 paragraph) summary of what happened in our assigned reading for today. Then write a second paragraph that highlights 2-3 of what you consider to be the most important characters, events, themes, or objects from our reading.

5 Minutes: Hand out body biography assignment and explain requirements and logistics.

25 Minutes: Students should form up into groups. The only restriction is that every student in a group must have read the same short story. In said groups students should choose a character to do a body biography of. I will remind students to keep in mind that the character should probably be one that figures prominently in the story, so that they can be sure they will know enough about their character to do a full body biography. Students should then make lists in their journals (while still in their groups) of characteristics they would like to represent in their body biography, and what body parts would symbolize each of those characteristics.
Move this

Day 12
5 Minutes: Housekeeping and attendance

45 Minutes: Pass out materials (butcher paper with human outline, markers), and work in groups on body biographies.

Day 13
5 Minutes: Housekeeping and attendance
45 Minutes: Work in groups on body biographies

Day 14
5 Minutes: Housekeeping and Attendance

20 Minutes: Each group should briefly present its body biography, explaining the symbolism and color choice of each element.

15 Minutes: Hand out copies of "Last Son of Tomorrow" and do a shared reading of the first 2 pages.

5 Minutes: Students should choose their second out of class story to read over the weekend and tell me their selection.

Day 15
5 Minutes: Housekeeping and Attendance

20 Minutes: Form up in small groups and answer the following questions based on what you have read in the "Last Son of Tomorrow":
    What is the novum of this story, if so what is it?
    Is there allegory in this story, if so, what is it and what does it stand for?
    Is there extrapolation in this story, if so what is the original technology or event being extrapolated?
    How do these three elements work together to enrich the story? In other words, in the places where these three elements of the story are connected or related, what is the effect of that connection on the story?

20 Minutes: Full class discussion on what we've found in our groups. Representatives of each group will discuss their findings, and then we will more generally discuss how the three main formative elements of Science Fiction relate, and more importantly, how they should relate in ours short stories.

5 Minutes: Pass out copies of out of class stories.

Homework: Finish "Last Son of Tomorrow" and chosen out of class story by Monday.

Week 4
Day 16
5 Minutes: Housekeeping and Attendance

10 Minutes: Reading Quiz over your selected short story. This is an open ended quiz where students will respond to the following prompt:

Please write a brief (1 paragraph) summary of what happened in our assigned reading for today. Then write a second paragraph that highlights 2-3 of what you consider to be the most important characters, events, themes, or objects from our reading.

15 Minutes: Students should write three paragraphs in their journals over the following topic: Think about all three stories we have read. How do the three concepts that define Science Fiction as a genre interrelate? Do you need all three to have a Science Fiction story? If you don't need all three is there one that is the most important that you must have?

20 Minutes: Full class discussion. We will hammer out what the roles of all three of these concepts (novum, extrapolation, allegory) are in Science Fiction, and what combination of the three we must have in our short stories.

Day 17

5 Minutes: Housekeeping and attendance

20 Minutes: Students should consider all of the texts they have read, and come up with essential characteristics that go across both stories. I will be careful to note that by essential characteristics, I mean things other than the elements of novum, extrapolation, and allegory that all of the stories share. I will stand at the board and record these characteristics. When have settled on a list, we will discuss how our short stories should also share those characteristics.

25 Minutes: I will put the picture embedded below on the overhead projector. This picture will be one example of the kind of setting that students may pick for their short story. I will ask students to give me words (especially specific action words) that describe the scene. Once we have compiled a list students will write a description of a place in that city in their journals, based on the following prompt:

Imagine that you are somewhere in the city pictured. Pick a place (it can be anywhere, inside or outside), and give a detailed description using some of the words from our list, or some specific action words like them. How does it feel to be in the place you've picked? What noise can you hear? What smells can you smell? What emotions are you having?

Day 18

5 Minutes: Housekeeping and Attendance

15 Minutes: Students should pair off and do the following exercise. I will explain this exercise as opposed to giving students a handout, as it may be one that is difficult to grasp when read.

> You and your partner are going to work today to find the essential conflict in your story. This conflict will be the issue that drives you characters through the story as they try to resolve it one way or another. We've talked a lot this semester about characters who are more or less than human, so I would like you to begin by imagining you are one of those characters, and that you are living in the city that you described yesterday. You are standing in the place you described, when suddenly another character walks up to you. They are upset because you are either more or less human. Your task today is to take the story from that point forward. How is it that you are more or less than human? Who is t his character and why are the upset at you? Are their many other characters that are also upset at you? You and your partner should have a conversation wherein you alternate imagining different conflicts based on this setup. Then you should consider each conflict based how feasible it is. In other words, do you and your partner believe it makes sense? It's important that we all take this assignment seriously, because it will provide us with the starting point for our short stories.

15 Minutes: Full class discussion. Each group will volunteer some of its best conflicts, and we will discuss how they can be incorporated into a Science fiction short story. Can they incorporate a novum? Can they become allegorical? We will attempt to answer these questions in order to decide what kind of conflicts fit best in our short stories.

10 Minutes: Students should write the conflicts that struck them the most in our small-group and full-class discussions. This assignment should go in student's journals.

5 Minutes: Take up journals. (This represents the pre-write check based on the short story handout schedule)

Day 19

5 Minutes: Housekeeping and Attendance

25 Minutes: Students should pair off and complete the [dialogue worksheet](#) I have attached in the other handouts section.

15 Minutes: Students should work individually in their [journals](#), responding to the following prompt:

> Choose the essential conflict situation from last week that you would like to be at the heart of your short story. Then write the scene, including dialogue, which occurs between the two characters in your essential conflict. This should represent a starting point for your short story, so be sure to choose a conflict that you think you can write on over the entire assignment.

10 Minutes: Have students pick an out of class story from the [handout](#).

Day 20

5 Minutes: Housekeeping and attendance

15 Minutes: Students should split up into groups and consider all of the Science Fiction texts they have read during the unit. I will hand out copies of the first pages of all five short stories. What is similar between the beginnings of each of these stories? The groups should work to develop a list of common techniques and methods that these authors use to begin their stories. As always I will circulate and keep students on task.

15 Minutes: The class will reform as a whole. Representatives from each group will give me their group's ideas, which I will write on the board. We will then discuss the methods listed, and then try to understand what makes them effective. We should remember to consider if their where any beginnings that we found to be ineffective, and also discuss why that is so.

10 Minutes: Students should individually work on a beginning to their short story based on the essential conflict scene that they developed yesterday. I will circulate and help students who seem to be stuck.

5 Minutes: I will pass out printed copies of the out of class short stories the students choose yesterday.

Homework: Read out of class short story.

Week 5
Day 21

*Note: I will have reserved this day in the school's computer lab ahead of time

5 Minutes: Meet in our classroom. Housekeeping and attendance. I will remember to be sure to remind students to bring their journals and all other work they have done to prepare for writing their short story.

10 Minutes: Walk to computer lab and settle in.

10 Minutes: Reading Quiz over selected short story. This is an open ended quiz where students will respond to the following prompt:
> Please write a brief (1 paragraph) summary of what happened in our assigned reading for today. Then write a second paragraph that highlights 2-3 of what you consider to be the most important characters, events, themes, or objects from our reading.

25 Minutes: Work on short stories. Students should start by typing up what they have written by hand, and then begin to draft their short story. I will circulate and help students develop their story, as well as attempt to keep them on task. At the end of the period, students should be sure to save their work.

Day 22

*Note: I will have reserved this day in the school's computer lab ahead of time

5 Minutes: Meet in our classroom. Housekeeping and attendance. I will remember to be sure to remind students to bring their journals and all other work they have done to prepare for writing their short story.

10 Minutes: Walk to computer lab and settle in.

35 Minutes: Work on short stories. I will circulate and help students develop their story, as well as attempt to keep them on task. At the end of the period, students should be sure to save their work. Students should also print of a copy of their most up to date draft, and give it to me for peer conferencing tomorrow.

Day 23

5 Minutes: Housekeeping and Attendance. At this point I will hand out the printed copies of each student's short story that I took up yesterday.

45 Minutes: Students should pair up for peer conferences. They will respond to each others prompts based on the following form:

1. The writer slowly reads the story aloud to his or her partner

2. Each partner tells the other, "The thing I liked most about your story was..."

3. Each partner points out any essential story elements that are missing and what might be included to make the story more engaging. The focus is on helping writers compose effectively within the narrative genre (in other words novum, extrapolation, and allegory) rather than on simply filling in categories.

4. Each student reads his or her partner's story silently. With the writer's permission, the reader corrects errors in spelling, punctuation, and indenting, paying special attention to the conventions for punctuating dialogue.

Day 24

*Note: I will have reserved this day in the school's computer lab ahead of time

5 Minutes: Meet in our classroom. Housekeeping and attendance. I will remember to be sure to remind students to bring their journals and all other work they have done to prepare for writing their short story.

10 Minutes: Walk to computer lab and settle in.

35 Minutes: Work on short stories. Students should begin by inserting the edits they received from their partners last week in peer conferences. I will circulate and help students develop their story, as well as attempt to keep them on task. At the end of the period, students should be sure to save their work.

Day 25

*Note: I will have reserved this day in the school's computer lab ahead of time

5 Minutes: Meet in our classroom. Housekeeping and attendance. I will remember to be sure to remind students to bring their journals and all other work they have done to prepare for writing their short story.

10 Minutes: Walk to computer lab and settle in.

35 Minutes: Work on short stories. I will circulate and help students develop their story, as well as attempt to keep them on task. At the end of the period, students should be sure to save their work. Students should also print of a copy of their most up to date draft, and give it to me for peer conferencing tomorrow.

Week 6
Day 26

5 Minutes: Housekeeping and Attendance. At this point I will hand out the printed copies of each student's short story that I took up yesterday.

45 Minutes: Students should pair up for peer conferences with different partners than they chose for the first conference. They will respond to each others prompts based on the following form:

1. The writer slowly reads the story aloud to his or her partner

2. Each partner tells the other, " The thing I liked most about your story was..."

3. Each partner points out any essential sotry elements that are missing and what might be included to make the story more engaging. The focus is on helping writers compose effectively within the narrative genre rather than on simply filling in categories.

4. Each student reads his or her partner's story silently. With the writer's permission, the reader corrects errors in spelling, punctuation, and indenting, paying special attention to the conventions for punctuating dialogue.

Day 27

*Note: I will have reserved this day in the school's computer lab ahead of time

5 Minutes: Meet in our classroom. Housekeeping and attendance. I will remember to be sure to remind students to bring their journals and all other work they have done to prepare for writing their short story.

10 Minutes: Walk to computer lab and settle in.

35 Minutes: Work on short stories. Students should begin by inserting the edits they received from their peer review partner. I will circulate and help students develop their story, as well as attempt to keep them on task. I will be sure to remind students that this will be their last opportunity to work on their short stories. At the end of the period, students should be sure to save their work, and print out a copy to turn in.

Day 28

15 Minutes: I will tell students how far they've come as writers, and how good the quality of their work is. I will then ask them to write me a brief letter explaining what parts of our unit helped them write their short story the most.

35 Minutes: Turn-in party. I will provide snacks. Students will first have the opportunity to read any portion of their short story. We will then put all of the stories at the front of the room, and allow students to read each other's work.