Dr. David Janssen

2:00-3:15, MW

Office: Honors House, Office 2

Telephone: 678-359-5093

Office Hours: MTW, 1-2 and R 8-1

or by appointment

e-mail: [djanssen@gordonstate.edu](mailto:djanssen@gordonstate.edu)

**Future Tenses:**

**COLQ: 2994H**

*Human Consciousness is a specific form of consciousness that creates a model of the world and then simulates it in time, by evaluating the past to simulate the future.*

*-- Michio Kaku*

What do our tomorrows hold in store for us and what do we have in mind for them? What is the best of all possible worlds? What is the worst? Is there any concept as powerful as *the future* to elicit our most profound sublime awe and terror? Dreaming and worrying in the future tense are human characteristics, so of course scholars and artists across disciplines have been asking such questions for thousands of years. From Plato to *Black Mirror*, and many points in between, this course will examine our hopes, and nightmares, of the future. Whether utopian, dystopian, prophetic, or apocalyptic, simulations of the future can teach us much about our past and present as well. All fields of academic pursuit are concerned in one way or another with the future, and this course will encourage multi-disciplinary approaches, so there is something for everyone here, regardless of major. After all, who doesn’t have a stake in the future?

**Required Texts**:

Thomas More, *Utopia*

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

John G. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*

Elan Mastai, *All Our Wrong Todays*

Michio Kaku, *The Future of the Mind*

\*Note: In addition to the above list of required texts, students will also be responsible for acquiring their own copies of one of the books on the approved list for the Critical Book Review assignment.

Policies

Absences: The Latin *colloquium* means “together speaking.” To honor that term is our most important assignment and goal. This class is intended to be collaborative, and to that end, you will receive a grade for “colloquial engagement,” based on your record of attendance and level of participation in the class conversation this semester.

Late Work: Late work will be deducted 5 points for each calendar day that it is late. This includes exams and oral presentations.

Plagiarism: If you are caught plagiarizing, you automatically fail the course.

Cell Phones: Please turn off your cell phones before entering class.

Classroom Deportment: As a professor, I have dedicated my life to the academic pursuit. The classroom is my workspace, and I regard that space with reverence and sanctity. As a student in my class, I expect you to help me maintain the dignity of the classroom by respecting its collegial environment. If environmental problems do occur, I will address them accordingly. If such problems do persist, offenders may be asked not to return to class. Also, please keep in mind that this is your classroom as well, your environment, your college experience. And, while I intend to instill in you that same sense of reverence I feel for the classroom, I also hope to demonstrate and help you to discover that working in a healthy academic environment can be a blast.

**Title IX**

Gordon State College is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these incidents, know that you are not alone. All faculty members at Gordon State College are mandated reporters. Any student reporting any type of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking must be made aware that any report made to a faculty member under the provisions of Title IX will be reported to the Title IX Coordinator or a Title IX Deputy Coordinator. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, you must contact the Counseling and Accessibility Services office, Room 212, Student Life Center. The licensed counselors in the Counseling Office are able to provide confidential support.

Gordon State College does not discriminate against any student on the basis of pregnancy, parenting or related conditions. Students seeking accommodations on the basis of pregnancy, parenting or related conditions should contact Counseling and Accessibility Services regarding the process of documenting pregnancy related issues and being approved for accommodations, including pregnancy related absences as defined under Title IX.

**ADA and 504**

If you have a documented disability as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, you may be eligible to receive accommodations to assist in programmatic and/or physical accessibility. The Counseling and Accessibility Services office located in the Student Center, Room 212 can assist you in formulating a reasonable accommodation plan and in providing support in developing appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to all GSC programs and facilities. Course requirements will not be waived, but accommodations may assist you in meeting the requirements. For documentation requirements and for additional information, contact Counseling and Accessibility Services at 678-359-5585.

**Assignments**

This course is destined to land at a very specific point of the space-time continuum: the *Future Tenses Symposium*, which will be held during the last week of classes in the Student Center Auditorium. At the symposium, we will be presenting our final projects. More than anything, this Honors Colloquium is intended to assist you in the process and production of undergraduate research in a seminar-style environment. 50% of your grade will be based on the symposium project. You will also need to produce and present a critical book review, which will be worth 20% of your grade. We will have a midterm and a final exam (10% each), the contents of which will be based on class readings and conversation. The remaining 10% will be based on “colloquial engagement,” mentioned above.

**Assignment Percentages**

Midterm: 10%

Colloquial Engagement: 10%

Critical Book Review: 10%

Critical Book Review Presentation: 10%

Annotated Bibliography: 10%

Future Tenses Symposium Presentation: 15%

Final Project: 25%

Final Exam: 10%

**Schedule**

8/9: Introduction

Week of 8/14-8/16: *Utopia*

Week of 8/21-8/23: *Brave New World*

Week of 8/28-8/30: *Black Elk Speaks*

Week of 9/6: *La Jetee*

Week of 9/11-9/13: *The Future of the Mind*

Week of 9/18-9-20: *The Future of the Mind*

Week of 9/25-9/27: Review

Week of 10/2-10/4: Midterm

Week of 10/11: Symposium Planning (project proposals due)

Week of 10/16-10/18: Book Review Presentations

Week of 10/23-10/25: Conferences

Week of 10/30-11/1: Research Workshops

Week of 11/6-11/8: Presentation Planning and Peer Review

Week of 11/13-11/15: Film Viewing (class choice)

Week of 11/20: Symposium Rehearsal

Annotated Bibliographies Due

Week of 11/27-11/29: Future Tenses Symposium

12/6, 12:30-2:30: Final Exam

Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree. – Martin Luther

The only reason for time is so that everything doesn’t happen at once. – Albert Einstein

Every time I see a human on a bicycle, I no longer despair for the future of the human race. – H.G. Wells

Some people see things that are and ask, why? Some people dream of things that never were, and ask, why not? Some people have to go to work and never have time for all that. – George Carlin