Required Texts and Schedule

9 January  -- Introduction
16 January  -- H.G. Wells, The War of the Worlds (Pan)
23 January  -- Arthur C. Clarke, Childhood's End (Del Ray)
30 January  -- Walter M. Miller, A Canticle for Leibowitz (Bantam)
6 February -- Ursula K. LeGuin, The Left Hand of Darkness (Ace)
13 February -- unfinished business & Midterm Exam
27 February -- Suzette Haden Elgin, Native Tongue (Daw)
6 March  -- John Brunner, The Sheep Look Up (Del Ray)
13 March  These final four classes will be devoted to short
20 March  stories, literary criticism, and cinema. The exact
27 March  schedule will be available in class by late
3 April  February and will also be posted on my office door.

Marking Scheme

Written Projects:
  Short Story Analysis  20%
  Creative Writing  20%
  Essay on Works in Syllabus  20%

Oral Work:
  Seminar  20%
  Classroom Participation  20%

Exams:
  Midterm  20%
  Final  40%

You may accumulate the necessary 100% as you see best from the above choices. There is one requirement: you must take at least one of the exams.
If you complete more than 100% worth, I will select your best marks in determining your final grade.
Writing Projects: General Instructions

1. All written work must be typed and double-spaced.
2. Each piece must have a title.
3. Approximate length of written assignments: 1000-1500 words each.
4. All sources must be documented. Failure to acknowledge your sources is plagiarism, which means an immediate 0.
5. It is a good idea to keep a copy of any work you submit (in this and all other courses you have).
6. Deadlines: If you are doing more than one writing project, you must submit the first by March 6 so that you may benefit from critical commentary as you prepare the next project(s), which is(are) due on March 30.
7. Yes, I will be considering your grammar, spelling, and writing style when I evaluate your papers.

A: Short Story Analysis

1. This is your only opportunity to write about something not on the syllabus. Pick any SF short story which you like and about which you have something interesting to say.
2. By February 13, you must present me with a clean copy of the short story you have selected, along with a paragraph describing the main idea/point you would like to explore in your paper. Before proceeding, you must get my OK for your topic.

B: Creative Writing

1. This is an opportunity to bring something of your own into the (usually) remote academic canon. Write a SF short story or play or, yes, even poetry.
2. Don't be afraid to be brilliant.
3. Please feel free to come see me to discuss your plans. Pass me a copy of your rough draft so that I may offer you some feedback.
4. You must make time available for a half hour interview with me within two weeks of handing in your final version. I will be asking you about the choices you made in creating your story (drama, poems) and I will be looking for your ability to analyze your own writing.

C: Essay

1. This is to be an in-depth study based on one or more of the works in our syllabus. As in the above projects, the exact topic is largely of your choosing, but you must get my OK on your proposal before you begin in earnest.
2. Here are some general suggestions for manageable topics:
   a) a comparison of two authors' treatment of an idea
   b) the effect of setting or point of view or narrative style in how one element of SF is portrayed in one or more stories
   c) the differing functions of familiar and unfamiliar characters and/or characterization
   d) an in-depth analysis of one crucial event or scene in a story
Seminar

1. At the beginning of each class, up to three students will give presentations based on the novel we will be studying that evening.
2. Sign up on a first come first serve basis. If you wish to drop from your commitment, you must give at least 7 days notice so that your spot can be offered to someone else in the class.
3. Aim for a presentation of 10 minutes duration. For that time, you will be the teacher / guest speaker / expert of the class. Remember, you are a professional.
4. Don't feel you have to be comprehensive and tackle the whole text. You should focus your discussion around an idea you find interesting and important.
5. Do not give us a plot summary. We have already read the book. We know the story. Tell us something new.
6. You may wish to confer with your co-presenters to discuss the text, to map out your own areas of concern, to agree on who speaks first, etc. It's entirely up to you whether you wish to work individually or as a group.
7. You must present me with an outline of the main points you will be discussing at least one hour before your presentation. (Maximum 1 page; note form is OK)

Exams

1. The midterm and final exams will include both short answer questions and essay questions. In all cases, you will have some degree of choice among which questions you will answer.
2. You will not have access to the texts during the exam. However, you will be allowed to make use of one sheet of paper (8 1/2 x 11) on which you may have prepared any notes you feel may be of help to you.

Hints for Surviving and Enjoying This Course

1. Read and follow instructions. If you goof up because of an oversight, I don't want to hear about it.
2. Read the assigned text(s) before class.
3. Make marginal notes and comments for yourself as you read.
4. Think about your response to a work. If you are bored by a text, why are you bored? If you love a story so much that you cry at the end, why are you so moved?
5. Think about the similarities and differences among the stories we cover. The essay questions on your exams will all involve comparisons and contrasts of two or more works.
6. Distrust the authors. Don't believe your classmates. Doubt everything the teacher says. Question your own attitudes.
7. Do the opposite of #6.