SCIENCE FICTION AND SPIRITUAL IMAGINATION

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and McCormick Theological Seminary
Masters level: LSTC ML/RHTH 400 MTS T / M 407
Fall Semester 2018, Wednesdays 8:30 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.
Classroom: Conference Room TBA, 5460 S. University Ave.
Hyde Park, Chicago 60615
(www.lstc.edu; www.mccormick.edu)

Instructors: Christine Wenderoth, Professor of Religious Education & Director, JKM Library (LSTC & McCormick); Robert Cathey, Professor of Theology (McCormick); Jennifer Ould, MDiv (McCormick), Educational Assistant.

Course Description: Science fiction literature, film, and other media are laden with religious and theological significance. This course aims at more critical and constructive levels of engaging and using this media. Sy Fy proposes new ways to read our cultures’ deep spiritual longings and fears. For public ministry, how might we address those longings and fears with spiritual imagination?

Required Textbooks:


Available for purchase at Seminary Co-op Bookstore (www.semcoop.com), 5751 S. Woodlawn Ave., Chicago 60637; 773.752.4381; info@semcoop.com; M-F 8:30-8, Sa & Su 10-6. You may purchase textbooks from any provider. Seminary Co-op is the finest collectively owned independent academic bookstore. Love thy neighbor, buy local.

Course Requirements:

1. Creative ministry-related assignments for preaching, teaching, youth and young adult ministry, etc., for example, a sermon outline or sermon, teaching outline, video of an event in your ministry, etc. that will be related to common readings of texts and viewings of a film or two TV episodes.

2. Semester research paper focusing on some of the critical literature about one key text / film / TV series in the genre of science fiction. (For purposes of focus, we are not including fantasy literature and media, for example, Harry Potter or Narnia. However, C.S. Lewis’ space trilogy <Out of the Silent Planet, et al.> and Madeline L’Engle’s A Wrinkle in Time series are relevant texts and media for this course.)

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Course Overview: You will be expected to complete assigned readings / viewings from the following sources (texts, films, websites, etc.):

- Everyone will read *The Sparrow* and *Parable of the Sower* for class discussion;
- All will read some required articles, chapters, and / or book reviews about science fiction and spiritual imagination / theology / religion (these will be posted in our Moodle course website at: [www.mccormick.moodle.edu](http://www.mccormick.moodle.edu)).
- We will provide a list of science fiction texts and media with topics, e.g., *Dune* and ecology; *Chasm City* and transhumanism; etc.
- We will view one required film from a list that includes: *2001: A Space Odyssey*; *Blade Runner* (1982 Director’s cut); *Arrival*; *Solaris*; *The Matrix* (the first film); *A.I.*
- Required TV episodes to be selected from a list that includes: *Star Trek*; *Twilight Zone*; *Dr. Who*; *The Prisoner*.

Please contact Prof. Cathey ([rcathey@mccormick.edu](mailto:rcathey@mccormick.edu); 773-947-6323) or Prof. Wenderoth ([cwenderoth@jkmlibrary.org](mailto:cwenderoth@jkmlibrary.org); 773-256-0735) with any questions.