

Final Exam: Understanding English Through Science Fiction

For your final exam for this class, you were asked to prepare some notes that will support you in constructing a “reading” of a work of English language SF of your choice. Your reading should do the following:

- Suggest how people ought to interpret or understand the piece of SF you have chosen, supported by details from that piece of SF.
- Connect your ideas to ideas we discussed in class, possibly including:
 - SF works being in “dialog” (like “The Cold Equations” and “The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas,” or “Story of Your Life” and *Arrival*.)
 - science-fiction-related concepts (such as “utopia” or “cosmic horror”)
 - theoretical approaches to understanding SF (such as Darko Suvin’s emphasis of the “tension” between the fear of change and the utopian possibilities change can offer, or Istvan Csicsery-Ronay’s discussion of the “Seven Beauties of Science Fiction”)
 - philosophical questions (such as “the trolley problem”)
 - works and authors we discussed (including any of the stories we read, and films and or television episodes we watched)

Your reading **does not need to summarize the plot of the story in great detail**, though a very short summary of a few sentences is possible if that summary helps you to make your point. Imagine you are writing for someone who has already read or watched the piece of SF you are writing about.

There is no specific wordcount limit or minimum for this exam. However, you should try to write a specific and clear reading, and to defend that reading comprehensively based on your arguments and details chosen from the piece of SF you’re writing about. Underdeveloped work will tend to score less well than more well-developed arguments.

I am not grading your work in terms of your English skill. I am focused only on the ideas you present. Therefore, do not worry about small grammar mistakes and problems, but please do make an effort to write as clearly and directly as you can, so that I can understand the ideas you are presenting.

On Preparation:

You are allowed to prepare notes that will support you during the writing of this exam. Your notes can include:

- Necessary English vocabulary that you expect you will need, along with definitions of those words if necessary.
- Notes about ideas that will be important to your “reading” (for example, a definition of “utopia” or a list of Csicsery-Ronay’s “Seven Beauties of Science Fiction”)
- A rough outline of what you plan to write.

Your preparation papers should be restricted to preparatory **notes**. They should not include fully-written paragraphs (not in *any* language), nor should they include a fully-written essay. Don't go further than an outline with some points on it. Significant amounts of pre-written material will result in a penalty to your grade.

You are free to write what you want to before the exam, but you cannot bring it to the exam.

At the end of the exam, you will hand in all of your preparatory notes along with your writing. All papers brought into the exam must be submitted as part of your exam submission.

On Technology:

Electronic technology is strictly forbidden during this exam. No smart phones, smart watches, smart glasses, tablets, or computers may be used. You will need a black pen (but bring an extra one just in case the first pen runs out of ink).

Paper dictionaries will be provided for your use (Korean-English, Chinese-English, and English-English). If you wish to bring your own paper dictionary, it must be inspected by the instructor before the exam.

You are welcome to bring a drink to class, such as a bottle of water, but please bear in mind that you cannot leave the classroom once the exam has begun until you have handed in your exam papers for grading. (If you leave, you cannot come back and write more on your exam!)