



**Constructing Identity via
the Lens of Science Fiction:
Art, History, and Politics**

GAB 214

Instructor Information

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Purpose/Goals

An inter-disciplinary (History, Art and Political Science) examination of questions like: Who are we? Why do we think we are who we are, and how do we view one another? How do these views matter?

Required Readings

Moore, Alan and Dave Gibbons. 1986. *Watchmen*. New York: DC Comics.

Robinson, Kim Stanley. 1993. *Red Mars*. New York: Bantam Books.

Additional readings as handouts/or via online distribution.

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

Troy University supports Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which insure that postsecondary students with disabilities have equal access to all academic programs, physical access to all buildings, facilities and events, and are not discriminated against on the basis of disability. Eligible students, with appropriate documentation, will be provided equal opportunity to demonstrate their academic skills and potential through the provision of academic adaptations and reasonable accommodations. Further information, including appropriate contact information, can be found at the following link: <http://www.troy.edu/humanresources/ADAPolicy2003.htm>.

Academic Honesty

As with all Troy courses, the expectation is that all students will conduct themselves with the highest standard of integrity in their coursework. Anything less will be in conflict with the standards laid out in university policy and will result in disciplinary penalties.

Grading

Weekly Participation (blog/discussion board format)	20%
In-class Participation	10%
Individual Presentations (two based on list of optional readings/media)	30%
Final Group Project	40%
Contract/Design	
Final Project	

Course Schedule

8/12: Introduction and Overview

Unit I: Who Are We?

A. The Other (8/19, 8/26)

Readings: History: primary documents regarding Japanese American internment during World War II

Political Science Reading: Parfit, Derek. 1971. "Personal Identity." *The Philosophical Review*. 80,1 (January): 3-27. (Available via JSTOR)

Art: [Col Tem Po, The W Project](#)
Images from Blade Runner [here](#)

Science Fiction Reading:

Movie/TV: Blade Runner
BSG: "Flesh and Bone" (from Season 1)

B. Gender (9/2, 9/9)

Readings: History: Excerpts from *Death of Nature*, Carolyn Merchant

Political Science Reading: Selection from Mary Wollstonecraft

Art: [Yasumasa Morimura](#). Could also relate to the Japanese internment readings.
[Rene Magritte, post-WWII kitchen & appliance design](#)

Science Fiction Reading: "The Matter of the Seggri," Ursula LeGuin

Movie/TV: *ST:TOS* "The Turnabout Intruder"; *ST:TNG* "The Outcast"

Unit II: The Individual v. the Collective

A. The Needs of the Many, or the One? (9/16, 9/23)

Readings: History: primary documents regarding the Second Red Scare - excerpts from congressional hearings (1950) and *Masters of Deceit*, J. Edgar Hoover (1958)

Political Science: selections from Marx, selections from John Stuart Mill, Peter Singer. 2009. "[We Why We Must Ration Health Care.](#)" *New York Times*. (July 15).

Art: possibilities include

[Hector Zamora, Swarm of Zeppelins](#)
[Ann Hamilton, Tropos](#)

Science Fiction Reading: "Harrison Bergeron," Kurt Vonnegut

Movie/TV: *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, B5: "Deathwalker"

B. Man and Superman (9/30, 10/7)

Readings: History: primary documents regarding the construction of a proslavery argument - excerpts from George Fitzhugh, Hammond

Political Science: selections from Plato's *Republic* and Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*: [excerpt](#).

Art: possibilities include

[Futurist movement](#)
[Matthew Barney, Cremaster Cycle](#)
design/illustrate superheros, graphic novels

Science Fiction Readings: *Watchmen*

Movie/TV: *Matrix*

Unit III: Constructing Our World

A. Utopia (10/14, 10/21)

Readings: History: primary documents relating to the Puritans early encounters with America; and views of the American West

Political Science: More, Thomas. *Utopia*: [excerpt](#). More Marx? Something on Manifest Destiny/American exceptionalism?

Art: possibilities include

[Pavel Pepperstein, Monuments of the Future](#)
[James Turrell's work, specifically Roden Crater](#)
[Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty.](#)

Science Fiction Readings: *Red Mars* should be finished by the start of this unit; "iCity," Paul Di Filippo

Movie/TV: Roden Crater show; Star Trek, *Wall-E*

B. Dystopia (10/28, 11/4)

Readings: History: rise of the New Left/1960s environmentalism

Political Science: Burke, Edmund. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*: [excerpt](#).

Art: [Jon Kessler - The Palace at 4 am](#)

Kurt Schwitters

Science Fiction Readings: *Red Mars* should be finished by the start of this unit; "iCity," Paul Di Filippo

Movie/TV: *Children of Men*

11/11 Happy Veterans' Day

11/18 Project Presentations

11/25 Happy Thanksgiving