המחלקה ל ספריות זרות ובלשנות, תשע"ט2019

Name of the course: Linguistics through Science Fiction
Lecturer name: Ariel Cohen
Course number:

Short course description (5-10 lines) with key words at the end of the paragraph

Science fiction, as its name suggests, is a kind of fiction that involves science. Often, speculation about fictional situations can tell us a lot about the real science. In this course we will try to do just that, and our science will be linguistics.

Course requirements:
Attendance required   yes
Choose one of the following options:

1. A final exam.

2. Choose *three* of the readings, write a brief (up to 2 pages) report of the *linguistic significance* of the reading (not the story!), and submit it *by the beginning of class* in which it is discussed. Late submissions will not be accepted. You may submit four reports (but no more!), in which case the best three will be counted.

3. Write a short Science Fiction story with a substantial linguistic content. The story will be graded on its linguistic significance, not its general literary value. If you chose this option, make sure you approve the topic of your story with me first.

סילבוס מפורט של הקורס (נושאים, לוח זמנים, ספרות חובה/בחירה וכדומה)

In this course we will cover some of the following topics:

• A machine that uses the productivity of language. . .

• Taking the referentiality of language to its extremes. . .

• What would a non-referential alien language be like?

• Logical analysis of the diplomatic language of galactic kings and emperors. . .

• A magical land where there is no vagueness. . .

• Disambiguation of language using time travel. . .

• The importance of the context in the interpretation of an alien languae. . .

• Does language affect thought?

• Are the principles of language universal? How different can alien languages be?

• Galactic languages and language development. . .

• How would an alien linguist view a human language?

Course readings:

There is no textbook for this course, but there will be readings of short stories or excerpts from longer works. Some of the material will be presented in class. Other readings will be available before class, and you will be required to read each one before the relevant class.

Prerequisites: The course assumes no previous knowledge of linguistics.