Instructor: Prof. LIU, Xiao  
Email: xiao.liu6@mcgill.ca  
Office hours: T/Th 4:00-5:00pm by appointment on Zoom

Course Description:  
This course focuses on science and technological imaginations in modern China through intensive reading of Chinese science fiction. The texts assigned in this class will be English translation, although enrolled participants are also encouraged to read in Chinese if possible. Since the 19th century science fiction has become a popular genre that is closely associated with the understanding of modernity, nation-state, the expansion of capitalism, history and temporality and other important issue. Recent years witnessed increasing interest in Chinese science fiction among global sci-fi fandom. This course will start with late 19th century initial emergence of this genre, and then focus mainly on contemporary sci-fi scenario.

Readings and Course Texts:  
Books Required:  

McGill library has either a paper or e-version of the books above. You can also purchase them from Amazon.  
Other readings will be posted online.

Course Requirements:  
1) Regular attendance at all classes and active participation in class discussion.  
2) Be prepared to read: This course involves intensive reading, with about 200-300 pages of literature texts and secondary materials each week.  
3) Weekly Posts (300-400 words): A weekly post is due on mycourses by 5pm on Sunday evenings.  
4) Class Presentations: You are expected to take turns to present course materials and lead class discussion.
5) *Two Essays.* You are expected to write two short essays (3-5 pages) throughout the
courses to review the books read in this class.

The paper must be submitted in the following format: double spaced, Times New Roman 12pt
font, 1" margins, numbered pages. Follow MLA format for citation.

**Evaluation:**
Weekly Posts: 20%
Class Presentations: 20%
Short Essays: 20%
Final Paper: 40%

**Delivery Methods:**
Live sessions on Zoom, with in-class activities and offline assignments and activities.
Recordings may be available upon class consent.

**Course Policies:**

**Academic Honesty:**
*McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the
meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code
of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more
information).*

*L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par
conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres
infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le
Code de conduite de l’étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples
renseignements, veuillez consulter le site [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest)).*

**Disability Accommodation:**
Students who require disability accommodations should contact the Office for Students with
Disabilities at McGill, to discuss the OSD Student Services may provide assistance:
http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/. The OSD will then contact Professor Liu, to discuss disability
accommodations.

*In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have
the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.*

*Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le
droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas
des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue).*

**In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content
and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.**
Schedule: (subject to changes)

9/14 Introduction

9/21 Evolutionary Thinking and Modern Chinese Culture
   Andrew Jones. Developmental Fairy Tales: Evolutionary Thinking and Modern Chinese
   Culture. Introduction and chapter 1

9/28 Care Robots
   “Conjugal Happiness in the Arms of Morpheus” “Robbie”
   Iovene, Paola. “How I Divorced My Robot Wife: Visionary Futures between Science and
   Literature.” In Tales of Future Past: Anticipation and the Ends of Literature in
   Contemporary China.
   Xiao Liu. “The Curious Case of a Robot Doctor” in Information Fantasies

10/5 World System and Three-Problem Trilogy(1)
   The Three-Body Problem (part one)

10/12 Thanksgiving. No class.

10/19 World System and Three-Problem Trilogy(2)
   The Three-Body Problem (part two)
   The Dark Forest (part one)
   * First Essay due

10/26 World System and Three-Problem Trilogy(3)
   The Dark Forest (part two)
   Death’s end (Part one)

11/2 World System and Three-Problem Trilogy(4)
   Death’s end (Part Two)
   “The Worst of All Possible Universes and the Best of All Possible Earths: Three-Body and
   Chinese Science Fiction” by Liu Cixin and Ken Liu,” in Invisible Planets by Ken Liu
11/9  “The Torn Generation” and Chinese Imagination (1)

“The Year of the Rat,” “The Fist of Lijian,” “The Flower of Shazui,” “Tongtong’s Summer,” “Night Journey of the Dragon-Horse”
“The Torn Generation” Chinese Science Fiction in a Culture in Transition” by Chen Qiufan

All in Invisible Planets by Ken Liu

* Second Essay Due

11/16  “The Torn Generation” and Chinese Imagination (2)

“What Makes Chinese Science Fiction Chinese” by Xia Jia

All in Invisible Planets by Ken Liu

11/23 Go Back to the Future

“A Brief Introduction to Chinese Science Fiction and Fandom” by Regina Kanyu Wang
“A New Continent for China Scholars: Chinese Science Fiction Studies” by Mingwei Song

All in Broken Stars edited by Ken Liu

11/30 Machines of the Mind

“The Robot Who Liked to Tell Tall Tales,” “The First Emperor’s Games,” “The Brain Box” in Broken Stars

“Poetry Cloud”

12/7 Wrap-up and presentation of your final project