

HUMA 6001C Chinese and Global Futures: Comparative Perspectives on Chinese Speculative Fiction

Course Information	Instructor Information
Fall 2026	Name: Zhiwen Hu
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Classroom: 5566	Office hours: By appointment

Course Description

This postgraduate seminar aims to examine Chinese speculative fiction in comparative and global paradigms. By engaging with literary texts alongside films, television series, video games, digital media, and other cultural forms, the course examines futuristic narratives in Chinese literature and popular culture against the background of emerging global futurisms, with particular attention to the representations of Chinese futures in the context of transnational mobility. Students will learn to analyze how different cultures speculate on the development of technology, the evolution of society, and the change of human-nonhuman relationality through interdisciplinary approaches. The course attempts to answer the following questions: How has Chinese speculative fiction reimagined the future in response to technological and social transformations? How does it compare with other global speculative traditions? What can comparative perspectives reveal about the cultural, ethical, and political implications of imagining future worlds?

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Develop sufficient understanding of Chinese speculative fiction in terms of its major authors, common themes and responses to social issues.
2. Cultivate literacy of Chinese speculative narratives within comparative and global

literary frameworks.

3. Apply interdisciplinary approaches to the study of speculative fiction, drawing on posthumanism, environmental studies, and philosophy of science and technology.
4. Compare Chinese speculative fiction with global speculative traditions from diverse cultural and historical contexts.

Course Materials

Most of the reading materials will be provided by the instructor, so you are not required to purchase textbooks.* However, you will need to rent or purchase movies on YouTube or other streaming platforms. The instructor will notify you about which movies to obtain.

*All copy-righted materials have been made available **for informational and educational purposes only**. Please delete them after this course ends. Students are not allowed to use these materials for other purposes during this course.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Each student can have up to 3 unpenalized absences, no explanation needed, in the whole semester. From the 4th to the 7th absence, each will result in a 2-point deduction from your final overall score. If you have 8 or more absences, you will get an F in this class. Significant extended illness or other legitimate excuses* are rare; such instances would be handled on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the university policies. Attendance will be taken after the drop/add period. If students are late and not present at the time of the attendance check, it is their responsibility to come to the instructor after the class to have the attendance record changed. Otherwise, it will be recorded as an absence.

*An absence with a legitimate excuse means that the student's nonattendance at a particular class can be justified with authorized proof, such as a doctor's note attesting

the student's illness or a medical emergency, or an official document verifying a university-related event, i.e., a conference, a competition, or a tournament, that s/he misses the class for.

Grading

01. Participation (10%)

Discussions in class and small groups are crucial for the students' understanding of the course materials and for inspiring new ideas. Students are encouraged to ask diverse questions while the whole class can contribute to looking for answers to these questions and furthering discussions on important issues. The primary goal in this class is not to get perfect answers but to actively participate in class discussions and make efforts to articulate ideas. Refusal to participate in class discussions or engaging in activities irrelevant to the class will negatively impact your participation grade.

02. Presentation (20%)

Throughout the semester, you will complete one group presentation in class. Each group will deliver a 15–20-minute presentation on an assigned topic, and every member is expected to make a meaningful contribution to both the preparation and the presentation. Presentations should demonstrate effective collaboration, clear organization, and thoughtful engagement with the course materials, while also showcasing each student's individual effort and understanding. Groups are encouraged to use multimedia to support their analysis and discussion. Detailed presentation guidelines and the grading rubric will be made available at the beginning of the semester.

03. Reading Journal (20%)

Throughout the semester, students are required to keep a reading journal. You need to

complete a total of **10 entries**, each about **300–400 words long**. Each entry accounts for 2% of your final grade. The journal will be submitted twice during the semester, with 5 entries included in each submission. The deadlines will be provided on the course schedule.

Reading journals should focus on your own understanding and interpretation of the assigned materials rather than simply summarizing the content. Strong entries should demonstrate personal engagement with the readings and films by raising questions, making connections, offering critical reflections, or explaining how your perspective has developed through the course. The goal is to showcase your individual thinking and analytical voice—qualities that distinguish thoughtful human interpretation from AI-generated summaries or descriptions.

04. Midterm Paper: Research Proposal, Bibliography, and Outline (25%)

For the Midterm Paper, you will prepare a **research proposal**, an **annotated bibliography**, and a **detailed outline** for your proposed Final Paper Project. The proposal should clearly introduce your research topic, research question, thesis (or tentative argument), and explain the significance of your project. The annotated bibliography should include a selection of relevant academic sources with brief annotations explaining how each source contributes to your research. The outline should present a clear and logical structure for your paper, including the main argument, supporting evidence, and the organization of each section.

This is an individual assignment, and the use of ChatGPT or any other generative AI tools is strictly prohibited. The purpose of this assignment is to assess your ability to independently develop an original research idea, identify and evaluate appropriate academic sources, and organize a coherent research plan.

This assignment serves as a foundation for the Final Paper Project. You may choose to further develop this proposal into your final paper, or you may begin a new project if you decide to pursue a different research topic later in the semester.

05. Final Paper (25%)

At the end of the semester, you will submit an individual research paper of approximately 10 pages (around 3,000–4,000 words), excluding the title page and Works Cited page. The paper must follow MLA style and demonstrate original research, a clear thesis, critical engagement with relevant scholarship, and close analysis of the primary texts discussed in the course.

The Final Paper may build upon your Midterm Research Proposal, Annotated Bibliography, and Outline, although you are also welcome to develop a new topic with the instructor's approval. The final paper should present a well-supported argument based on careful research and independent critical thinking.

The use of ChatGPT or any other generative AI tools in the writing of the Final Paper is strictly prohibited. Students are expected to complete all stages of the research and writing process independently. Failure to comply with this policy may be treated as academic misconduct.

The detailed grading rubric and submission guidelines will be published on Canvas later in the semester.

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessment	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Participation	ILO1, ILO2	Assesses students' engagement with course discussions and their understanding of major authors, key themes, and comparative perspectives in Chinese speculative fiction.

Presentation	ILO1, ILO2, ILO4	Evaluates students' ability to analyze Chinese speculative fiction, compare it with global speculative traditions, and communicate their ideas effectively through an oral presentation.
Reading Journal	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	Assesses students' understanding of the assigned readings and their ability to apply interdisciplinary perspectives, develop personal interpretations, and critically engage with speculative fiction.
Midterm Paper	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	Evaluates students' ability to formulate a focused research question, identify relevant scholarship, and design an interdisciplinary research project on Chinese speculative fiction.
Final Paper	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4	Assesses students' ability to conduct independent research, develop an original argument, apply interdisciplinary methods, and compare Chinese speculative fiction within global speculative traditions through a well-supported MLA-style research paper.

Schedule*

Week	Topic
Week 1 (09.03)	Procreation and Creation
Week 2 (09.10)	Posthuman Creativity
Week 3 (09.17)	Poetics of Space

Week 4 (09.24)	Posthuman Cannibalism
Week 5 (10.01)	Critical Plant Studies
Week 6 (10.08)	Communism and Its Discontent
Week 7 (10.15)	Capitalism and Its Discontent
Week 8 (10.22)	Fantasies of the Womb
Week 9 (10.29)	Fox Fairies and Steampunk Fox Fairies
Week 10 (11.05)	Ancient Robots and Their Comeback
Week 11 (11.12)	Responses to Western Scientism
Week 12 (11.19)	Digital Parenting and Parenting the Digits
Week 13 (11.26)	Techno-Daoism

*A detailed course schedule, including weekly topics, assigned readings and films, assessment deadlines, and submission instructions, will be made available on Canvas at the beginning of the semester. Any updates or adjustments to the schedule will be announced in advance through Canvas.

Grade Scale

A: 93.00-100.00	A-: 90.00-92.99
B+: 86.00-89.99	B: 83.00-85.99
B-: 80.00-82.99	C+: 76.00-79.99
C: 73.00-75.99	C-: 70.00-72.99
D: 60.00-69.99	F: 0.00-59.99

Late submission Policy

To ensure fairness for students who submit assignments on time, a penalty for late submission is listed as follows:

- Late submission within 12 hours, 25% penalty will be applied.
- Late submission between 12 to 24 hours, 50% penalty will be applied.
- Late submission for more than 24 hours will not be accepted.

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Students who have further questions should consult the instructor within five working days after the feedback is received.

Course AI Policy

The use of Generative AI is permitted and requested to assist students with brainstorming, drafting, and writing their papers.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to Academic Integrity | HKUST - Academic Registry for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

Course Assessment Rubrics

01. Participation (10%)

Criteria	90–100 Excellent	80–89 Good	70–79 Satisfactory	60–69 Limited	0–59 Unsatisfactory
Attendance & Preparation	Always prepared, completes all readings, and consistently demonstrates initiative.	Usually prepared with only minor omissions.	Generally prepared but occasionally misses required preparation.	Frequently underprepared and relies on others.	Rarely prepared and shows little evidence of completing assigned work.

Discussion & Engagement	Leads discussions with insightful comments, thoughtful questions, and constructive responses.	Participates regularly with relevant contributions.	Participates occasionally but contributions are mostly descriptive.	Speaks infrequently and contributes little to discussion.	Rarely participates or remains disengaged.
Critical Thinking	Consistently offers original interpretations, evaluates multiple perspectives, and supports ideas with evidence.	Demonstrates clear analytical thinking with occasional originality.	Shows basic understanding with limited analysis.	Primarily summarizes ideas with little interpretation.	Demonstrates little understanding or critical engagement.
Professionalism	Always respectful, attentive, and contributes positively to the learning environment.	Generally professional with only minor lapses.	Usually respectful but occasionally distracted.	Frequently distracted or inattentive.	Disruptive or unprofessional behavior negatively affects the class.

02. Presentation (20%)

Criteria	90–100 Excellent	80–89 Good	70–79 Satisfactory	60–69 Limited	0–59 Unsatisfactory
Content &	Demonstrat	Demonstrat	Demonstrat	Demonstrat	Demonstrate

Understanding	es an outstanding understanding of the topic with accurate, insightful, and comprehensive coverage. Shows mastery of the course materials.	es a strong understanding with only minor omissions or inaccuracies. Covers the topic effectively.	es an adequate understanding of the topic but lacks depth or completeness in some areas.	es only a limited understanding with noticeable inaccuracies or superficial discussion.	s little or no understanding of the topic. Significant inaccuracies or missing content.
Critical Analysis	Presents an original and sophisticated analysis supported by convincing evidence. Demonstrates independent critical thinking.	Presents thoughtful analysis supported by appropriate evidence, though some points could be further developed.	Includes some analysis but relies heavily on description or summary. Critical engagement is limited.	Analysis is weak, inconsistent, or largely descriptive with minimal critical engagement.	Provides almost no analysis. Discussion consists primarily of unsupported description or irrelevant information.
Organization & Structure	Presentation is exceptionally well organized with a clear introduction, logical development, and effective conclusion. Ideas flow smoothly.	Organization is clear and logical with only minor issues in transitions or sequencing.	Organization is generally understandable but may contain abrupt transitions or uneven development.	Organization is difficult to follow. Ideas are loosely connected or poorly developed.	Presentation lacks logical organization and is difficult to understand.
Delivery & Communication	Speaks confidently	Speaks clearly and	Delivery is understandable	Delivery lacks	Delivery is ineffective,

ion	and professionally with excellent pacing, clarity, eye contact, and audience engagement .	confidently with only minor issues in delivery or pacing.	ble but may rely on notes or show occasional hesitation.	confidence or clarity, making communication difficult at times.	unclear, or largely unreadable from notes.
Use of Evidence & Visual Materials	Effectively integrates textual evidence and visual materials to strengthen analysis. Sources are appropriately acknowledged.	Uses relevant evidence and visuals effectively, with only minor weaknesses .	Uses some evidence and visuals but integration or explanation is uneven.	Limited or inappropriate use of evidence or visual materials.	Little or no supporting evidence or visual materials are provided.

03. Reading Journal (20%)

Criteria	90–100 Excellent	80–89 Good	70–79 Satisfactory	60–69 Limited	0–59 Unsatisfactory
Personal Engagement	Demonstrates deep personal engagement	Shows clear personal engagement with	Includes some personal response but	Personal engagement is limited and largely	Primarily summarizes the reading with little or

	through thoughtful reflections, meaningful questions, and genuine intellectual curiosity rather than simply recounting the reading.	thoughtful reflections and reactions.	remains partly descriptive.	superficial.	no personal response.
Critical Thinking	Develops insightful interpretations, evaluates ideas critically, and considers alternative perspectives with supporting reasoning.	Provides thoughtful analysis that goes beyond summary.	Shows basic interpretation with limited critical analysis.	Relies mainly on description with minimal interpretation.	Shows little evidence of critical thinking or understanding.
Connections	Makes sophisticated connections	Makes several relevant and well-developed	Makes some appropriate connections with limited	Connections are weak, isolated, or only	Fails to connect the journal to other course

	among readings, films, theories, class discussions, or broader social and cultural issues.	ed connections.	development .	loosely relevant.	materials.
Originality & Individual Voice	Demonstrates a distinctive analytical voice and independent thinking that clearly differs from AI-generated summaries or generic observations .	Shows originality and an identifiable personal perspective.	Some independent ideas are present but not consistently developed.	Limited originality; observations are predictable or derivative.	No clear individual voice; writing resembles summary or generic AI-style responses.
Writing Quality	Writing is exceptionally clear, coherent, well	Writing is clear and well organized with only	Writing is generally understandable despite some	Writing lacks coherence and contains	Writing is difficult to follow because of serious

	organized, and virtually free of language errors.	minor errors.	organization al or language issues.	frequent language problems.	organization al or language errors.
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04. Midterm Paper (25%)

Criteria	90–100 Excellent	80–89 Good	70–79 Satisfactory	60–69 Limited	0–59 Unsatisfact ory
Research Topic & Question	Presents a highly original, focused, and significant research topic with a clear, compelling, and researchable question.	Presents a clear and appropriate research topic with a focused research question.	Presents an acceptable topic and research question, though they may be somewhat broad or underdevelop ed.	Research topic is vague, overly broad, or lacks a clearly defined question.	Research topic is unclear, inappropriat e, or missing.
Annotated Bibliograp	Selects high-quality	Selects appropriate	Includes adequate	Uses few appropriate	Sources are inadequate,

hy & Sources	academic sources that are highly relevant. Annotations demonstrate excellent understandi ng of the scholarship and its relevance to the project.	academic sources with generally clear annotations . Most sources support the proposed project effectively.	sources, though some may be less relevant or annotations may be descriptive rather than analytical.	academic sources or provides limited annotations with little evaluation.	inappropriat e, or largely missing. Annotations are absent or demonstrate little understandi ng.
Outline & Organizati on	Presents a well-structu red outline with a logical argument, clear progression of ideas, and effective organization .	Outline is clear and logically organized with only minor weaknesses .	Outline demonstrates an overall structure but lacks coherence or sufficient development in some sections.	Outline is incomplete, poorly organized, or difficult to follow.	Outline is missing or lacks any logical structure.
Research Design & Feasibility	Demonstrat es a highly feasible	Presents a feasible research	Research plan is workable but	Research plan is underdevelo	No coherent research

	research plan with a clear methodology and realistic scope for the final paper.	plan with a generally appropriate scope and methodology.	requires further refinement in scope or approach.	ped or unrealistic in scope.	plan is presented.
Academic Writing & MLA Format	Writing is exceptionally clear, professional, and virtually error-free. MLA documentation is consistently accurate.	Writing is clear and well organized with only minor language or MLA errors.	Writing is generally understandable but contains noticeable language or formatting issues.	Writing lacks clarity or organization, with frequent language and MLA errors.	Writing is difficult to understand and fails to follow basic academic or MLA conventions.

05. Final Paper Project (25%)

Criteria	90–100 Excellent	80–89 Good	70–79 Satisfactory	60–69 Limited	0–59 Unsatisfactory
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Research & Academic Sources	Integrates a wide range of high-quality scholarly sources effectively, demonstrating extensive research and a sophisticated understanding of the existing literature.	Uses appropriate scholarly sources effectively with only minor gaps in breadth or integration.	Uses an adequate range of academic sources, though engagement with the literature may lack depth.	Relies on a limited range of sources or demonstrates weak engagement with relevant scholarship.	Uses few, inappropriate, or insufficient academic sources.
Thesis & Critical Argument	Develops a clear, original, and persuasive thesis supported by sophisticated critical analysis and independent interpretation.	Presents a well-developed argument with thoughtful analysis and clear organization.	Presents a recognizable argument but relies more on description than sustained analysis.	Argument is weak, underdeveloped, or inconsistently supported.	Lacks a coherent thesis or meaningful critical argument.
Use of Evidence & Textual Analysis	Integrates textual evidence and scholarly research seamlessly to support a compelling analysis. Demonstrates close reading and critical interpretation throughout.	Uses relevant evidence effectively with generally strong analysis.	Uses appropriate evidence, though analysis may be uneven or insufficiently developed.	Uses limited or poorly integrated evidence with weak analytical discussion.	Provides little relevant evidence or fails to support claims with textual analysis.
Organization & Academic Writing	Writing is exceptionally clear, coherent, and well organized. Ideas progress logically, and	Writing is clear and well organized with only minor language or	Writing is generally understandable but contains occasional organization	Writing lacks coherence, and language or structural issues	Writing is poorly organized and difficult to follow because of

	the paper demonstrates a professional academic style with virtually no language errors.	structural issues.	al or language problems.	frequently interfere with clarity.	serious language or structural problems.
MLA Format & Academic Integrity	Consistently follows MLA style for formatting, in-text citations, and the Works Cited page. Demonstrates excellent academic integrity and independent scholarship.	MLA style is followed with only minor formatting or citation errors.	Generally follows MLA conventions but contains noticeable formatting or citation inconsistencies.	Frequent MLA errors or incomplete documentation reduce academic credibility.	Fails to follow MLA style or demonstrates serious academic integrity concerns.