**Robots, Rockets, and Ray Guns: Science and Man in Science Fiction**

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The category of Science Fiction covers a strikingly broad variety of writing styles and purposes. The plausibility of the math and science incorporated also varies widely. In this course, we will read approximately ten short stories and novel excerpts from the Science Fiction genre and then discuss both the overt and subtle portrayals of known scientific and mathematical principles which they contain. Furthermore, while Science Fiction is often thought of as simple space operas or entertaining page-turners, these stories often pose thought-provoking and surprisingly profound questions about man's relationship to creation, his place as a subcreator via science and engineering, and his relationship to his technological creations. Beauty, family, reason, faith, love of neighbor, progress, and humanity are topics that will most likely be centerpieces of the class discussions. Possible areas scientific inquiry that may be addressed include thermodynamics, artificial intelligence, computer programming, epistemology, the scientific method, chaos theory, interactive/information technology, chemistry, Newtonian mechanics, infinity, and probability.

This course is geared towards upper school students. Care will be taken to select works that do not contain objectional material, but the nature of some of the subject matter calls for an older cohort of students.

Students will be expected to read the assigned material and come to class prepared to participate in a thoughtful and respectful discussion. Students may be encouraged to make a presentation at the end of the course, such as a short story of their own, an overview of a scientific or technological invention or area of research, or even their own work such as a robotics project, a mathematical proof, model rockets, etc.

Dr. Clancy will provide excerpts of novels and links to valid sources for short stories. Every effort will be made to ensure that links are to reputable websites (educational, archival), but because other materials may be available through these sites parents may want to be aware of what information their students are accessing. It is likely that one novel will be needed, but it should be available at libraries if students would rather not purchase it. Every effort will be made to provide the other readings from free sources.