

Syllabus World Futures (FORE 6371)

Spring 2024

Course Time: Tuesdays, 5:30-8:30pm CST

Zoom: [https://uh-edu-](https://uh-edu-cougarnet.zoom.us/j/9091039346?pwd=aklzajN0MEhNU1BBUGJmYnkxSjE2dz09&omn=86850442113&from=addon)

[cougarnet.zoom.us/j/9091039346?pwd=aklzajN0MEhNU1BBUGJmYnkxSjE2dz09&omn=86850442113&from=addon](https://uh-edu-cougarnet.zoom.us/j/9091039346?pwd=aklzajN0MEhNU1BBUGJmYnkxSjE2dz09&omn=86850442113&from=addon)

Instructor: Andy Hines

Office: Cameron 229

Office Hours: Monday 9-11am, schedule by <https://calendly.com/ahinesfuturist/office-hours>

Contact: Please use Canvas email; if urgent: ahines@uh.edu

Overview

World Futures is primarily a content course, in which we explore the long-term future of the globe by looking at various STEEP+ categories. Students will do a framework project, a group archetype project, a book review, and present at the end of the semester.

Objectives

The objectives of the course are for students to demonstrate:

- a comprehension of the major issues affecting the global future
- an ability to identify emerging global trends and issues
- an ability to explain global issues, trends and drivers of change from multiple perspectives
- competence in tools and techniques used to identify and explain global trends and issues

Required Texts

Readings are provided in Blackboard each week. Some are required of all, and others are “distributed” in that one class member leads the online and classroom discussion on them.

Coates, Hines, & Mahaffie, 2025: *Scenarios of US and Global Society as Reshaped by Science and Technology*, Oakhill Press, 1996. Available as a PDF in the Canvas discussion forum “2025 Book”.

Each student will select a **book relating to an area of world futures**, or an overview of world futures, at the beginning of class and present on it in class on Week 14. You must post your choice in the Canvas discussion forum “book about the future,” and I must reply with my approval. I have a few **suggestions** below, but you may pick a book not on this list (as long as I approve it).

- Bostrom, Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies
- Brynjolfsson & McAfee, The Second Machine Age
- Drexler, Engines of Creation
- Friedman, The World Is Flat
- Jones, Future Agenda
- Harrari, Sapiens or Homo Deus
- Homer-Dixon, The Upside of Down
- Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers
- Kelly, The Inevitable or Out of Control
- Kuan Yew, From Third World to First
- Kurzweil, The Singularity
- Lanier, Who Owns the Future
- Meadows, Limits to Growth: Thirty Year Update
- Peterson, Out of the Blue
- Picketty, Capital
- Scharmer, Leading from the Emerging

- Future
- Schwab, The Fourth Industrial Revolution
- Schwartz, The Long Boom
- Scrinek & Williams: Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World

- Without Work
- Slaughter, The Biggest Wake-Up Call in History
- Taleb, Black Swans
- Zuboff, The age of Surveillance Capitalism

Approach

The foundation of the course is built around this syllabus and the schedule document. Your first step is to study these documents, ask any questions you wish, and then get into the introductory activities. After the first two weeks, each week will focus on a different domain of world futures (e.g., values, resources, etc.).

Personas, Fishbowl & online discussions

Students will be assigned a persona in Week 1 or 2 that they will use to provide an interpretation of their readings from the viewpoint of that persona.

For most of the “content” weeks (e.g., values, demography, etc.) we will do a Readings Fishbowl in which 3-5 students will have **five minutes each** to present on their assigned reading (NOTE: This will be timed and enforced – your task is to make your points succinctly). Please following the “Assigned Reading Guide” posted in the Canvas discussion forum. Three-five students will be assigned to listen as well, and discuss how their **personas** might be impacted by the reading.

The instructor will typically then follow with a presentation to introduce some ideas about the topic we are covering that week. We’ll have several game activities as well.

At the end of each class, we will identify what we think are the most important driving forces for the future of that topic, aka “building blocks” for the scenario archetypes that will be the focus of a group presentation at the end of the semester (more on this below).

Most weeks there will be one or two discussion posts for you to respond to. If you post on time, you get two points; if you’re late, you get one point.

Group project

We will form teams that will be assigned a different scenario archetype. Each team will be responsible for developing a scenario for their archetype and presenting it at the end of the semester. It’s only a one-page summary with supporting slides, that be informed by “building block slides” developed in class each week. At the end of each class, we’ll decide what we think are the 3-5 key drivers or building blocks for the future of that topic. Each group then identifies how they think that building block will “play out” given their archetype (pattern of change). So we’ll develop three or four scenarios of world futures by the end of class.

Individual framework project

Each student will pick a world futures-related topic to develop a framework forecast around. The pieces

of the framework are chopped up into smaller bites in “assignments,” so you work on it throughout the semester.

You will see that there is some variation for the “classic” framework process. Each student will have a choice between three different scenario techniques: the 2x2, CLA, or Sci Fi Prototyping. Instead of the implications and options that we then do in the class framework in Futures Research, I will ask you to come up with 5 Key Strategic Questions raised by your scenarios.

Scanning hits

Each student will submit 25 annotated scanning hits to our World Futures “library” at Diigo/Raindrop/Factr.

Book review

As mentioned above in “Books,” you are asked to select a book about World Futures and you will analyze it using a template that has ten questions.

Topical Schedule (see separate Schedule doc for details on each week)

- Week 1: Orientation, theory
- Week 2: Approaches/methods
- Week 3: Values
- Week 4: Demography
- Week 5: Environment & Resources
- Week 6: Technology
- Week 7: Choose your Scenario technique
- Week 8: Economics
- Week 9: SPRING BREAK
- Week 10: Geopolitics
- Week 11: Education & Work
- Week 12: Space & Transportation
- Week 13: Wildcards
- Week 14: Book Presentations
- Week 15: Group Archetype presentations

Grading

The breakdown:

Assignments: Domain framework (+book review)	60%
Group Activities: Archetype presentations	15%
Activities: Discussion postings	15%
Assignments: Scanning library	10%

Interaction

The course is conducted virtually on Zoom. All course materials are housed on Canvas.

Other policies

Academic honesty policy All UH students are responsible for knowing the standards of academic honesty. Please refer to the UH catalog. Plagiarism, using research without citations or using a created production (such as other people’s words) without quotations or citations, will result in a grade penalty or failure of the course. Internet sources must be credited according to the sites recommended citation guideline if available. If no citation guideline is provided by the web source, then the date, URL site owner, and author must be included with the web material used.

Disabilities: If you have a disability and need a special accommodation consult first with the Coordinator of Health Disabilities Services, Bayou 1402, telephone 283-2627, and then discuss the accommodation with me.

Incompletes: A grade of "I" is given only in cases of documented emergency or special circumstances late in the semester, provided that the student has been making satisfactory progress. An Incomplete Grade Contract must be completed.

Withdrawals: Last day to withdraw drop or with a “W” for Spring 2024 is Wednesday **April 17th**.