To my mind, one of the great values of philosophy is its ability to expand our imaginative and creative capacities. Philosophy achieves this by teaching us how to ask new questions and posit new ideas. Unfortunately, this component of philosophical thinking and analysis is one of harder philosophical skills to learn. Nevertheless, I am undaunted and so my hope for this course is to try to hone this skill of asking questions and exploring new ideas. In order to do this, I want to explore stories that spark wonder and use these stories to spur question-asking. Since this course is meant to be fun, I’ll focus on movies and short-stories. And rather than require that you learn various arguments, counter-arguments, and theories, I am instead going to require that you practice the art of asking questions.

**Required material:** All the required material will be posted on the course website or handed out in class.

**Course Requirements:**

Written responses (60%): There will be weekly written assignments where you will be asked to develop questions about the material that we read, listen, and watch. Since the aim of this course is to practice the art of asking questions, these written responses will constitute the main part of your grade. Each of these assignments will be worth an equal percentage of this grade. I expect there to be roughly 12 of these assignments and if that is the case, then each assignment will be worth 5%.

Class Participation (20%): This will be a discussion-focused course and so you must both attend and participate in class discussion. An A means that you did both, a B means that you attended but minimally participated, a C means that you either missed a significant amount of class (3 or more classes) or failed to participate, a D or F means that you were a distraction in class and/or you missed much of class (4 classes).

Group Presentation and write-up (30%): During the final weeks of the course, you will be asked to share a story (movie, short-story, etc.) that raises philosophical questions. You will responsible for selecting a story and guiding us through a discussion about the questions that you think the story raises. And so part of your task will be to develop your own weekly written assignment that the class will complete. While I’ve titled this course sci-fi and philosophy, you need to restrict yourself to (science)-fictional stories. After all, sometimes reality is stranger than fiction. You will also be asked to write up an exploration of the questions that you think the story raises. As we will see, part of the task of identifying questions and problem is explaining to other why these are questions and problems worth thinking about.