Ideas about science and ideas from science appear in our everyday lives in ways we take for granted: in the news sites we visit, in the tv shows and commercials we see, in the cartoons we tape to our office doors, in our interactions with nature in theme parks like Sea World – or even when you say, “He’s no Einstein!” or “If they could put a man on the moon, why can’t they… [fill in the blank]?” In this class we’ll look closely at what happens when science and popular culture meet.

We’ll study how science & scientists have been portrayed in media culture from the scientific revolution to our own time, explore how children in the past encountered science, and think about the call of the wild in a highly technological age. We’ll consider the tensions between scientific experts and the lay public about core values such as skepticism, contemplate the search for fantastic creatures in an age of experimental proof, probe how science fiction relates to science fact, and analyze huge catalogs from the counter-culture that merged spiritual visions of our blue planet with nuts-and-bolts details about modern mechanics. The goals for this course are for students to gain an awareness of how science is an aspect of the wider culture in different eras; to analyze the historical roots of contemporary practices; and to reflect on the ramifications of science and popular culture and the choices we make as individuals, social groups, and nations.

The structure for this course is a “blended” format: that means that we will meet in our classroom together on Tuesdays, and trade the other course time to allow you to probe more thoroughly primary source materials and diverse perspectives through online “lab” assignments. You’ll then bring your ideas-in-progress back to our in-class meetings to further develop as part of collective projects we’ll undertake. My reasons for having developed this course in a blended format are: 1) to take advantage of an abundance of online historical materials (especially multimedia ones) that aren’t found in books; 2) to allow for more active learning and creativity on the part of students; 3) to provide flexibility in scheduling, enabling you to try out experimental learning environments; and 4) to construct more targeted opportunities for student-to-student engagement and collaborative knowledge creation.
Required texts
*The Turk* / Tom Standage [any of the many available versions will work]
*The Lost World* / Arthur Conan Doyle [available in free online versions]
*In the Shadow of Man* / Jane Goodall [my preference is that you obtain the 50th anniversary 2010 edition, but others are fine as well]
*Rocket Dreams: How the Space Age Shaped Our Vision of a World Beyond* / Marina Benjamin
*Biopunk: Solving Biotech’s Biggest Problems in Kitchens and Garages* / Marcus Wohlsen
[any of the available editions]

Overview of Course Assignments
1) *The Turk* reflective essay and wiki contribution (due 9/8 and 9/11, respectively): 3-4 pp. (approx. 800-1200 words) 10%
2) Reflective essay on *The Lost World* and *In the Shadow of Man* (due 10/9): 4-5 pp. (approx. 1000-1350 words) / 20%
3) Contribution to online project on the *Whole Earth Catalogs* [due 10/27] / 5%
4) Reflective Essay on *Rocket Dreams* and *Biopunk* (due 11/15) 4-5 pp. (approx. 1000-1350 words) / 20%
5) Blog Postings and Blog Commenting (8 weeks in the period from weeks 4 to 13) / 20%
6) Individual Final Project ([Due Friday, December 13th, at 8-10 a.m., the Final Exam time for this class via d2l](#)). The Final Project is worth 25% of the course grade (7-8 pp., approx. 1800-2400 words). A Final Project description is due by week 12 (11/5). The Final Project description must be submitted and approved in order to turn in a Final Project paper at the end of the course.

Rules of the Road

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. Two unexcused absences are allowed for our in-class portion, and one unexcused posting absence is allowed for the online assignments; exceeding these limits will result in your course grade being lowered by one letter grade. Students are expected to use the allowed unexcused absences for an illness or injury not serious enough to receive medical attention, or for personal or family considerations. Three tardies equals one absence.

**Academic Misconduct:** Cheating will not be tolerated. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, copying the work of another student, using the written work of another author without attribution, or any conduct that seeks to compromise the examination process. *Such conduct will result in an automatic F on that exam and the student can be referred to the Dean for disciplinary action.*

**Due Dates:** Assignments will not be accepted if turned in late.

**Religious Holidays:** It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Please see me in advance.

**Students with Disabilities:** Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me as soon as possible, so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure your full participation and to facilitate your educational opportunities.

**Grading Scale:** The letter grades for this course conform to a 4 point scale, as follows:
4.0-3.5 = A (A=4.0, A- = 3.7, A-/B+=3.5)
3.49-2.5 = B (B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B-=2.7, B-/C+=2.5)
2.49-1.5 = C (C+ = 2.3, C = 2.0, C-=1.7, C-/D+=1.5)
1.49-0.5 = D (D+ = 1.3, D= 1.0, D-= 0.7)
0.5 and below = F