FS 101: Descriptive Communication and Inquiry  
Section 5: “I, Robot (You, Robot?)”  
Fall 2006  
Bob Roos  
Home page: http://cs.allegheny.edu/~rroos/fs101f2006/  
or http://cs.allegheny.edu/wiki/fs101f2006

Course Description and Syllabus

Office Hours: My office is in Alden 105, extension 2883. My hours are Mon. and Fri. 1:30 – 2:30 p.m., Tues. and Thurs. 2 – 4:30 p.m., and by appointment. The best way to schedule an appointment is to send me an e-mail.

Texts: There are no textbooks for this course. You will receive readings in class and on the course Web page listed above.

Course Overview:

Grading: (All percentages are approximate!)

- Attendance approx. 10%
- Participation in discussions approx. 10%
- Two papers approx. 15% each
- Peer reviews of others’ papers approx. 10%
- Two oral presentations approx. 10% each
- Other assignments approx. 20%

In addition I reserve the right to give occasional surprise quizzes!

Policies:

E-mail. I will sometimes need to send out announcements to the class about things such as clarifications to assignments, changes in the class schedule, or other matters. I will use your Allegheny College e-mail account to do this. It is your responsibility to check your e-mail at least once a day, and to make certain that your e-mail is working correctly (able to send and receive messages).

Attendance and Participation. It is expected that students in this course will attend every class. Attendance will be taken periodically and a portion (roughly 10%) of the final grade will be determined by attendance. You are expected to be present in mind as well as body, so an additional 10% of your grade is allotted to participation in class discussions, asking questions of other student speakers during their oral presentations, and so on.

Some of you may have figured out that failure to attend class puts you in “double jeopardy” — you lose points for attendance and for class participation. That’s how it goes .

Whenever possible, advise me of legitimately excusable absences (such as illness, death in the family, or certain College sponsored activities) prior to the class you will be missing. (For instance, if you are ill on Tuesday evening and are fairly certain you will be unable to attend
Wednesday’s class, send me an e-mail or phone me to let me know the night before if at all possible.)

Here are examples of excuses that are not valid: “I’m going home for the weekend and my parents are picking me up at 10 on Friday.” “My alarm didn’t go off and my roommate didn’t wake me up.” “I have two exams on Monday and I need to study for them.” “I didn’t prepare my oral presentation so there’s no point in showing up.” (I could list many more examples!)

If you know in advance of specific conflicts due to athletic events or other College-related reasons, please have the coach or other college official provide me with a list of dates and reasons as soon as possible so I can avoid problems in scheduling discussions, oral presentations, etc.

**Late Policy.** Every assignment will have a given due date and time (usually the time will be “at the beginning of class” on the due date). If the assignment is handed in after that, there will be a late penalty (minimum of 15% of the grade, increasing as more time passes). No assignment will be accepted more than one week after the due date. In a seminar course, many writing assignments will be followed by a “peer review” in which you will look at some of your classmates’ papers. Failure to hand in a paper on time will be very disruptive to this process.

**Collaboration, Plagiarism, and the Honor Code.** You are encouraged to periodically review the specifics of the Honor Code as stated in the College Catalogue and elsewhere.

No collaboration with others is permitted unless specifically provided for as part of the assignment. All assignments must consist of your own, original work. Whenever specific phrases and sentences or, more generally, non-trivial ideas from outside sources are used, they must be clearly and unambiguously identified. Taking someone else’s ideas and simply paraphrasing them is not enough to avoid charges of plagiarism — you must cite the sources of ideas other than your own.

**Rough Schedule**

(Still under construction)

We will schedule several movies during the semester; titles, dates, and times will be announced later. Free pizza will be provided!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What is a Robot?</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Read <em>R.U.R.</em> excerpt; survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>R.U.R.</em></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Web assignment: history</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Results of Web assignment</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Read <em>Metropolis</em> excerpt</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><em>Metropolis</em></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Web assignment: journal</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Laws of Robotics</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td><em>I, Robot</em> excerpt (?)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Asimov’s robots</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Web assignment: first paper sketch</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Writing preparation</td>
<td>Class activity</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Opening paragraphs</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>First draft</td>
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<td>9, · · ·</td>
<td>To be announced</td>
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