|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| http://www.filmsite.org/images/sci-fifilms.gif | **INTRODUCTION TO SCIENCE FICTION FILMS** |

<http://www.filmsite.org/sci-fifilms2.html>

Complete the following activities and fill out the worksheet. The questions follow the information in order in this online article. Email the finished version. In most cases on the chart you are being asked to give examples of films in these sub-genres and categories of Sci-Fi films.

**Science Fiction Films** are usually scientific, visionary, comic-strip-like, and imaginative, and usually visualized through fanciful, imaginative settings, expert film production design, advanced technology gadgets (i.e., robots and spaceships), scientific developments, or by fantastic special effects.

|  |
| --- |
| Films that portray the dangerous and sinister nature of knowledge ('there are some things Man is not meant to know')  |
| Film | Release date | Issues of concern addressed in film |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Sci-fi tales have a prophetic nature (they often attempt to figure out or depict the future) and are often set in a speculative future time. |
| Film | Release date | Issues of concern addressed in film |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Science fiction often expresses the potential of technology to destroy humankind through Armaggedon-like events, wars between worlds, Earth-imperiling encounters or [*disasters*](http://www.filmsite.org/disasterfilms.html) |
| Film | Release date | Issues of concern addressed in film |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| In many science-fiction tales, aliens, creatures, or beings (sometimes from our deep subconscious, sometimes in space or in other dimensions) are unearthed and take the mythical fight to new metaphoric dimensions or planes, depicting an eternal struggle or battle (good vs. evil) that is played out by recognizable archetypes and warriors |
| Film | Release date | Issues of concern addressed in film |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Borrowing and Hybrid Genre Blending in Sci-Fi Films:** insert definition |
| Film | Release date | Issues of concern addressed in film |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| [**Le Voyage Dans La Lune (A Trip to the Moon) (1902)**](http://www.filmsite.org/voya.html), was made by imaginative, turn-of-the-century French filmmaker/magician Georges Melies, approximating the contents of the novels by Jules Verne (*From the Earth to the Moon*) and H.G. Wells (*First Men in the Moon*). Go to <http://www.archive.org/details/Levoyagedanslalune> and watch the clip. |
| Image | Counter number |  |
| a modern-looking, projectile-style rocket ship blasting off into space from a rocket-launching cannon (gunpowder powered?) |  |  |
| a crash landing into the eye of the winking 'man in the moon' |  |  |
| the appearance of fantastic moon inhabitants (Selenites, acrobats from the Folies Bergere) on the lunar surface |  |  |
| a scene in the court of the moon king |  |  |
| **The first science fiction feature films** appeared in the 1920s after the Great War, showing… |
| Go to <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0017136/synopsis> and read the full synopsis of Metropolis (1927, German silent film) |
| Metropolis Transformation sequence http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1L2dOjGx6Q&feature=PlayList&p=7174A34B38089CD3&index=0 |
| Metropolis Rotwang’s partyhttp://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yC4XHKwZTzA&feature=PlayList&p=7174A34B38089CD3&index=81 |
| Alexander Korda's epic view of the future **Things to Come (1936)** predicted (list 5 things): |
| In the 1930s, the most popular films were the low-budget, less-serious, space exploration tales portrayed in the popular, cliff-hanger Saturday matinee [*serials*](http://www.filmsite.org/serialfilms.html) with the first two science-fiction heroes - Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers.  |
| **Alien Invader Films in the Cold War Era:** Many other sci-fi films of the 1950s portrayed the human race as victimized and at the mercy of mysterious, hostile, and unfriendly forces. Cold War politics undoubtedly contributed to suspicion, anxiety, and paranoia of anything "other" - or "un-American." Allegorical science fiction films reflected the (fill in the blank) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and often cynically commented upon political powers, threats and evils that surrounded us (alien forces were often a metaphor for Communism), and the dangers of aliens taking over our minds and territory.  |
| Film | Release date | Issues of concern addressed in film |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| The Golden Age of Science Fiction (name the decade):  |
| Film | Release date | Issues of concern addressed in film |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Disaster-Tinged Science-Fiction:** Stanley Kramer's masterpiece **On the Beach (1959)** dramatized the realities of an apocalyptic world, with survivors waiting for their radioactive doom in Australia, the last refuge on Earth in 1964 |
| <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=upg2eqNbF3w> |
| **The Mutant Creatures/Monsters Cycle:** With the threat of destructive rockets and the Atom Bomb looming in people's minds after World War II, mutant creature/monster films featured beasts that were released or atomically created from nuclear experiments or A-bomb accidents. The aberrant monsters were the direct result of man's interference with nature. There were many examples of low-budget 50s films about the horrors of the Atomic Age:  |
| Film | Release date | Issues of concern addressed in film |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Forbidden Planet - 1956Hollywood pursued the commercial success of these post-war SF films with many more. One intelligent, lavishly-expensive science fiction film was MGM's **Forbidden Planet (1956)** - it told the story of a journey by astronauts of United Planets Cruiser C57D (led by commanding officer Leslie Nielsen in one of his earliest roles) to a distant planet named Altair-IV. There, they investigated the fate of a colony planted years before. The studio-bound film inspired the look of many future films and works, notably TV's *Star Trek* by Gene Roddenberry and *Star Wars* creator George Lucas. Shot in Cinemascope and color, it re-worked Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and has been psychoanalyzed as a dramatization of repressed sexual desires. The film has been best-remembered for Walter Pidgeon as Dr. Morbius (the Prospero figure) on a tour of the ill-fated Krell laboratories, and his pretty daughter Altaira (Anne Francis as the Miranda character who has never seen men). *The Tempest's* Ariel was represented by a language-fluent, lumbering Robby the Robot (its first appearance in a film), and Caliban by an invisible Id-monster that attacked and was electrocuted on electric fences. The popularity of Robby the Robot spawned another film, **The Invisible Boy (1957)** with a supporting role for the 'good' computer robot. Robby also served as the prototype for the robot in the *Lost in Space* TV series (1965-68).  |
| Films based on classic Science Fiction literature: Many SF films were (and still are) a futuristic combination of the work of visionaries (fill in the blank) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and (fill in the blank) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1866-1946).  |
| Film | Release date | Based on what … |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Sci-Fi Flops and Turkeys:** There were also any number of dreadfully grotesque, cheesy low-budget science-fiction flops or turkeys - now often regarded as kitsch or cult classics, drive-in specials, or as "the most enjoyable bad films of all time." [Many of these films would eventually end up on the satirical TV show *Mystery Science Theatre 3000*.] They included some of the following:  |
| Film | Release date | What was bad about it… |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Look down/scan the rest of the article. You will be asked to do a research project on one of the films cited here. Your project may take either of the following forms.**

* **You can watch the film and do a 5-8 minute presentation which features clips/examples/scenes to illustrate your main points.**
* **You may do a PowerPoint or Photostory about the filmmaker and his contributions to the development of Science Fiction films.**
* **You may choose a decade and create a presentation which illustrates, through the Science Fiction films produced during that time that “Art is a reflection of the time in which it is produced.”**