

Incoming 11th Grade AP Honors English Summer Assignment 2010
Advanced Placement English Language and Composition: Focus Nonfiction and Essay Writing

This is a composition course. Rhetoric is the study of language and its potential to express our own ideas and influence other people's ideas. Rhetoric is concerned with the artful structuring, voicing and expressing of ideas through words and sentences. In addition to being a traditional composition course that focuses on rhetoric and grammar, this class will be structured thematically as a progressive investigation of what it means to be human in the age of science and technology, what it means to be human in the virtual society of the Internet versus the physical world, what it means to hold on to what is important about being human in a future of nanotechnology, anti-depressants, cloning, avatars, one-button shopping and instant gratification...because, ultimately what it means to be human is to be who you are. While we are going to take this journey together as a class, and read about and discuss many possibilities, we will all learn to discover and express our own individual ideas and opinions. We will agree on some points, and disagree on others about what it means to be human. We will learn to analyze and evaluate other writer's positions and arguments and to either refute them with our own contrasting views or to adopt, modify, and blend those arguments with our own personal perspective. We will join the centuries-old conversation about who we are as human beings and what matters most about being human, and how that is expressed as an art in writing. Most importantly, we will learn to pay attention to what other people think, consider their ideas seriously and respectfully, and to shape our own ideas in response, using centuries-old rhetorical methods. We will learn to "hold our own" among intellectuals (including each other), especially when we are writing for an academic audience.

Thematic Structure of the Course: Being Human in a Changing World

Increasingly, technology and mass media shape and dominate humans' day-to-day experience, including how we receive and process information and how we respond to it. Throughout the day, students are never without their cell phones and iPods. At night, students even sleep (or not) with their tiny ear speakers channeling anguished rock rhythms or mushy love melodies into their brains and into their dreams (if they are asleep long enough to have any), while, tucked within easy reach under their pillows, their iPhones or Blackberries vibrate and next to their beds humming computers glow green and blue, lighting the shadows of their rooms, waiting for them to plug back into text messages, email, Facebook and Twitter, or re-enter the virtual world of a video game set on pause.

Humans have always presented a public persona to the world (that's the proper behavior our parents hopefully taught us to express in front of others: polite, considerate, thoughtful, hard-working, conscientious, etc.), but now, the Internet and computers create many ways for humans to reinvent, define and express themselves in a public way and a place completely detached from the physical world. How does that change us, rewire our brains, affect our values and morals? Do we still maintain the lines between what is public and what is personal? Or do we blur them? Have we erased them completely? Or instead, do we think we have hidden our private selves completely when in fact we are over-exposed and don't know it? How does all of this affect our ability to think logically, responsibly and independently, to preserve and shape who we are within a system of increasingly polarized rhetoric, or to maintain our ability to stay civil and courteous, and even to allow ourselves to think, sometimes, we might be wrong about what we think while we are hiding behind a fictitious name and email address that we blithely think can't be traced back to us? Who holds us accountable if we don't hold ourselves accountable? During the course of the year, it will be your responsibility to develop your own ideas regarding these issues and concerns and to learn to express those ideas well in writing.

This writing course is about learning to communicate what we think accurately, articulately and succinctly. Because language is a slippery, evasive, complicated medium, we must study it closely—how do others use language well?—how does one persuade others to one's way of thinking?—how does one apply the elements (ideas, words, punctuation, metaphors, tone, etc.) to the page to ensure that what we *mean* is what the reader *understands*? Simply: we must practice it. The old adage "practice makes perfect" holds especially true for a task (writing well) which draws on all the powers of our minds and intellect to complete.

I. Required Texts (These specific texts are expected grades for the start of first semester):

<i>The Lost Origins of the Essay</i> by John D'Agata (\$23.00, \$15.60 online)	ISBN-13: 978-1555975326
<i>Being Logical: A Guide to Good Thinking</i> by D. Q. McNerny (\$12.95, \$9.30 online)	ISBN-13: 978-0812971156
<i>Style: an Anti-Textbook</i> by Richard A. Lanham (\$14.95, \$10.10 online)	ISBN-13: 978-1589880320
<i>Writing about Literature: A Portable Guide</i> by Janet Gardner (\$7.00)	ISBN-13: 978-0312607579

II. As individuals, we can't read everything in one summer that we'd ideally read for the discussions we are going to have this coming year. Fortunately, we are not just individuals, we are a community. The class will form itself into a community of thinkers and writers. Each of us is responsible for bringing fresh, controversial, exciting ideas to the class discussions. The list of books below will give us a starting place of ideas for thinking about technology and what it means to be intelligent, independent, *human*. We will share the task of bringing diverse ideas and positions to our discussions by splitting up the work of reading many different works, often looking at the same topic from opposite points of view to understand its complexities.

Additional Required Texts—Choose one for fall semester and one for spring semester. One of these texts is an additional expected grade for the start of first semester; a second choice from the list is an expected grade for second semester:

<i>You are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto</i> by Jaron Lanier	ISBN-13: 978-0307269645
<i>The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains</i> by Nicholas Carr	ISBN-13: 978-0393072228
<i>True Enough: Learning to Live in a Post-Fact Society</i> by Farhad Manjoo	ISBN-13: 978-0470050101
<i>The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology</i> by Ray Kurzweil	ISBN-13: 978-0143037880
<i>The Digital Person</i> by Daniel Solove	ISBN-13: 978-0814740378
<i>The Future of the Internet—And How to Stop It</i> by Jonathan Zittrain	ISBN-13: 978-0300151244
<i>Designer Evolution: A Transhumanist Manifesto</i> by Simon Young	ISBN-13: 978-1591022909
<i>Beyond AI: Creating the Conscience of the Machine</i> by J. Storrs Hall	ISBN-13: 978-1591025115
<i>On Intelligence</i> by Jeff Hawkins and Sandra Blakeslee	ISBN-13: 978-0805078534
<i>Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge</i> by Cass R. Sunstein	ISBN-13: 978-0195340679
<i>Idiot America: How Stupidity Became a Virtue in the Land of the Free</i> by Charles P. Pierce	ISBN-13: 978-0767926157
<i>The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement</i> by Jean M. Twenge Ph.D. and W. Keith Campbell Ph.D.	ISBN-13: 978-1416575993
<i>Radical Evolution: The Promise and Peril of Enhancing Our Minds, Our Bodies -- and What It Means to Be Human</i> by Joel Garreau	ISBN-13: 978-0767915038

III. Extra Credit Fiction Reading (Chose one, two, three...as many as you like...). Writers of literary novels are always expressing an opinion about what it means to be human. They do it through narrative rather than through exposition. What do these stories say about the effects or influence of technology on human beings and on society in general?

Throughout the school year and as part of our course study, we will be reading a survey of classic American novels concerned with the values of being American, as well as human. For extra credit reading though, you are invited to explore books that directly deal with our thematic focus on the trans-human or post human world in which we continue to exist, but are substantially changed by technology. Some novels are utopian, but most are dystopian, because technology means the destruction of the human race, as we know it today. You read *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, and these books owe their existence in some part to this early trans-human story. The list of potential books is quite extensive. They are listed below on a separate, attached piece of paper. Some are great reads...i.e....hard to put down. I encourage you to read

IV. Finally, One More Extra Credit Activity: This new SyFy television series started in the spring of 2010. It is about a society on another planet that is just like earth. It tracks the merging of the biological humans (or human equivalent) with technology—machines, software, and a virtual world.

Caprica, Season 1 (Aired this spring on SyFy Channel and may replay in the summer or be available online for viewing)

Episode 1: The Pilot	Episode 6: Know Thy Enemy
Episode 2: Rebirth	Episode 7: The Imperfections of Memory
Episode 3: Reins of a Waterfall	Episode 8: Ghosts of the Machine
Episode 4: Gravedancing	Episode 9: End of the Line
Episode 5: There is Another Sky	

And the show will likely pick up again for its second season during the summer or early fall.

**Highland High School English 11 *Advanced Placement Language and Composition*
2010 Required Summer Reading Assignment**

Part A: Read the first 13 sections (starting with “To the Reader”), or pages 1-97, of John D’Agata’s *The Lost Origins of the Essay*. For each section, read and annotate the passage carefully. In the margins, place a star next to things you really like, a check mark next to things you agree with, a check plus for things you especially agree with, and a question mark next to things that are confusing. If you have specific questions or comments, write them in the margins. Underline or highlight the most striking or puzzling lines to bring up for discussion during the first couple of weeks of class. On lined notebook paper, choose one idea from each section and briefly explain why you chose it and why you think it is important in general, important to the development of nonfiction writing, and important to the writer who wrote it. Write about a half page response to each section. See sample below for help. Put these notes into the English Binder in the section titled Nonfiction Reading Annotations and Responses. No word-processed work will be accepted—hand-write everything.

“To the Reader” by John D’Agata

I actually want to respond to more than one thing in this section by the editor of the collection. First, briefly, I have to comment on the amazing (shocking!) marriage contract he quotes from Ra-immun. The clear dominance of men in the culture resulting in the subjugation of women is scary; I can imagine only with horror going back to a culture like that, although I know they still exist, especially in the Middle East. As a woman, I feel very fortunate to have been born to a culture in which women are generally protected by the laws equally to men. To live in a culture in which my gender is seen as sub-human, as property, would really be awful. Second, I want to respond to D’Agata’s ideas about the human impulse to express one’s self. He uses the word “compulsion” and I do think that humans created language for the purpose of expression. The human brain is complex, the human experience rich with layers of emotion, logic, and as social animals, we need to communicate. We also fear death, the disappearance of our psyches. Writing allows us to make that communication more permanent, to make our selves last beyond the life span of our biological existence. I wonder whether that is part of our desire to possibly develop a virtual persona?

Part B: Read, annotate and outline on separate, lined paper, the complete ideas in *Being Logical: A Guide to Good Thinking*. Follow the organizational structure of the book. Do not word process your outline—hand-write your work. Place this work in the section of your binder titled **Academic Literature and Rhetoric Vocabulary**.

Part C: As you read each book, choose several quotes from each chapter that you think synthesize the main ideas and support presented by the writer. Then, explain the significance of the quotes you chose in 4-5 sentences, or a short paragraph. Title and put your collection of responses and explanations into the section of your binder titled **Nonfiction Reading and Annotations and Responses**. No word-processed work will be accepted—hand-write everything.

Part D: As you read the nonfiction book from the list, choose several quotes from each chapter that you think synthesize the main ideas and support presented by the writer. Then, explain the significance of the quotes you chose in 4-5 sentences, or a short paragraph. Title and put your collection of responses and explanations into the section of your binder titled **Nonfiction Reading and Annotations and Responses**. No word-processed work will be accepted—hand-write everything.

Part E: Most of you have already done the summer work for the last book, *Writing about Literature: A Portable Guide* by Janet Gardner before you started 9th grade. Simply transfer that work from your 9th grade binder into the 11th grade binder into the section **Essays and Writing Assignments**. No word-processed work will be accepted—hand-write everything.

Extra Credit Summer Reading

This part of the summer reading is optional. You will receive extra credit for doing this “Bonus” reading and it will help you be successful with some of the ideas and material in first semester.

Reading: Read one or as many of the novels as you like. As you read each book, choose one word or sentence within each chapter that you feel is significant to the meaning/theme of the story. Then, explain the significance of the word you chose in 4-5 sentences, or a short paragraph. Title and put your collection of words and explanations into the **Literature** section of your English Binder. **Write neatly. No typed papers will be accepted.**

And/or

Watching: Watch the series *Caprica*. In the show, the humans have technology that allows them to enter a virtual world where they can create their own persona, an avatar. The daughter of the technology’s creator has enhanced her avatar to the point that she has her own name and she develops into her own person. At the same time, her father is attempting to create a robot that functions like a human. One of the avatars living in the virtual world is created from data about a human who died before she was made. These technologies merge during the story and create intriguing questions about what makes someone human. Watch each episode and write a short reflection afterwards, about half a page, on your ideas about the virtual world shown in the episode and the complications expressed about what it means to be a real person.

YOUR ENGLISH BINDER (3” Three Ring Notebook) WITH THE COMPLETED SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT IS DUE 2ND DAY OF SCHOOL.

English Honors 11 AP Binder Instructions



Every year in honors English, you will be asked to save, organize and present your ongoing assignments, notes, exams, essays and writer's journal in a binder. The teacher will collect this binder at least once a quarter to check that all of your English assignments are completed, neatly organized and carefully maintained. Neatness and completeness are very important. This binder will count as a significant part of your grade. The English binder will serve as your writing handbook and dictionary of literary and rhetoric terms, as well as to remind you of important concepts and themes in the work we read. This will be an important resource as you prepare for the culminating AP and IB English exams and evaluations in 11th and 12th grades. Those exams ask you to write about any text you have studied in previous classes, including English 9 and English 10 Honors.

The summer work is to be completed and included in a new binder each fall. The new binder should be reserved exclusively for the work of the upcoming year's assignments and work.

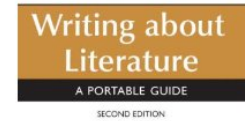
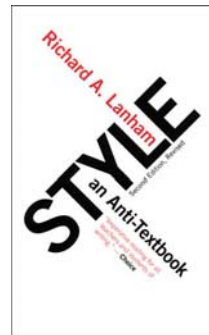
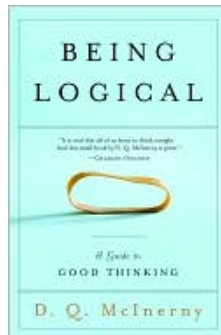
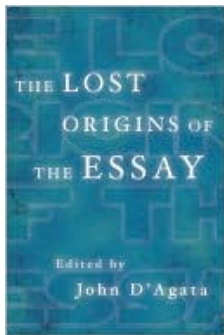
Instructions for making your English 9 binder:

1. Obtain a 2 ½" to 3" 3-ring binder in new condition, with a clear plastic cover.
2. Make a cover that includes your name and grade level. You may also want to personalize the cover, but make sure that your name and grade are clearly legible. Slide this cover in behind the clear plastic cover of the binder. You may also want to make one for the spine.
3. Either purchase or make tabbed section dividers. Label a section for each of the following categories:
 - a. Writer's Journal (please include your notebook here when the Binder is collected)
 - b. Academic Vocabulary
 - c. SAT Vocabulary (SAT Vocabulary Practice Packets and Quizzes)
 - d. Writing (Essays and Writing Assignments/Writing Handouts and Guides)
 - e. Literature (Fiction and Nonfiction Handouts, Assignments, and Activities)
 - f. Mechanics (Sentence Combining/Diagramming and Grammar Activities)
 - g. AP Practice Exams
4. Purchase a three-hole punched single subject wire-bound notebooks (ideally one for fall and one for spring) to use as your writer's journal. Please do not use the journal for other classes' assignments or notes. You need to carry this journal to school daily for periodic journals. Journals may be collected more frequently than the English binder.
5. Purchase loose leaf three-hole punched notebook paper for class work and writing assignments, including your summer work.
6. As assignments are completed, graded and returned, file them in the appropriate section of your binder.
7. On the days your binder is due to the teacher for scoring, place your journal into the Writer's Journal section of the binder so it is complete.
8. At the end of the year, store your binder somewhere safe at home so that you have it for future reference. You may be asked to present your 11th grade binder for review prior to enrolling in the 12th grade AP course, particularly if space is limited, which has happened in the last few years.

HHS 2010 English 11 AP Language and Composition Required Summer Reading

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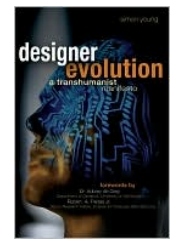
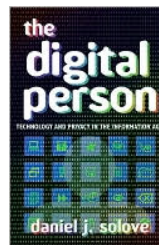
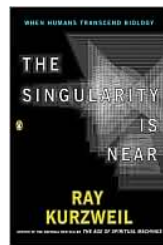
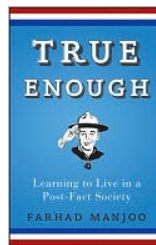
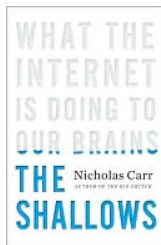
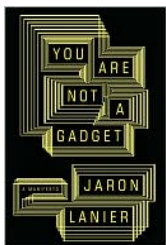


Janet E. Gardner

Chose one of the following for first semester and one for second semester:

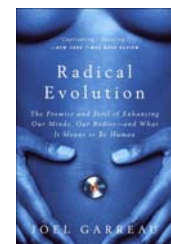
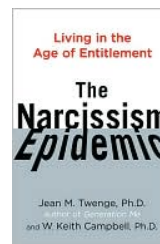
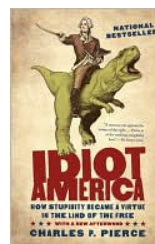
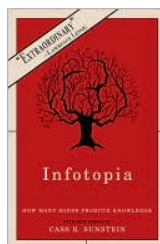
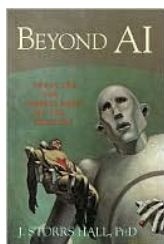
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English 11 AP Language and Composition: Extra Credit Reading List

This list comes largely from the *io9* web site, which currently has a series of articles on the ideas of post-humanism. I've added other titles that are both literary classics and/or are recommended by readers I know who are passionate about the specific books listed as great reads and that also address trans-humanism of post-humanism.

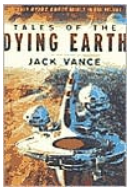
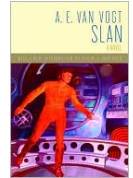


The Time Machine, by H.G. Wells

Wells' often-retold 1895 tale is less about time travel than human evolution. When our protagonist arrives in a far-future Earth, he discovers Homo sapiens has evolved into two separate species: The peaceful but aimless Eloi, and the industrious, subterranean Morlocks. This is a dark vision of posthumanity, with our progeny locked into species warfare that appears to have grown out of class divisions.

Slan, by A.E. Van Vogt

This novel, serialized in the early 1940s, is about a group of engineered humans called "slan." Some have tendrils and are psychic, while others look perfectly human but are superstrong as well as hyperintelligent. Humans hunt these constructed beings to near-extinction, and the novel deals with one psychic slan's fight to stop the genocide.

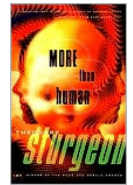


Dying Earth, Jack Vance

A series of linked stories set in and around the city of Almeria, *Dying Earth* speculates about what happens to humanity in a far-future age when the sun is slowly dying and the planet is plunged into cold twilight. A mixture of fantasy and sci-fi, the stories focus on the magical powers possessed by a dwindling population scrabbling to survive among weird monsters. The collection, first published in 1950, has been incredibly influential among SF writers and gamers. Many attributes of magic users in Dungeons & Dragons are taken from *Dying Earth*. And if you've ever killed a Grue, you can thank Vance for inventing that legendary creature.

More Than Human, by Theodore Sturgeon

This 1953 novel, based on some of Sturgeon's short stories, is about the first *Homo gestalt* - an entity created by the "bleshing" of several humans with psychic powers. Possessing telepathy, teleportation, and other superpowers, the humans of the gestalt are crazy and helpless without each other. But together, they are the next step in evolution.



Slave Ship, Fredrick Pohl

One of the first novels to explore species "uplift," this 1956 anti-war satire is about humans who have developed psychic powers and are using them to speak with animals. Using this psychic link, the military is training animals (the slaves of the title) to fight alongside humans in a global war being fought over religion.

The Ship Who Sang, by Anne McCaffrey

People born with disabilities are wired into the command systems of spaceships, which become their new bodies. Published in 1961, this is one of the earliest novels to explore the idea that disabled people will become the first true posthuman cyborgs.

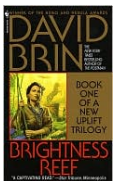


Dune, by Frank Herbert

In the far future, AI has been outlawed so humans have taken over the roles that computers once held in their society. Heavily modified by technology and drugs, these humans form guilds responsible for space travel and political futurism.

"The Girl Who Was Plugged In" by James Tiptree Jr.

In this prescient 1960s short story, Tiptree explores the emotional life of an ugly teenage girl who is recruited by a company to control the avatar of a beautiful young starlet. Locked in a high-tech closet, the girl ports her mind into a gorgeous, manufactured meatsack who cavorts with rich men and does product endorsements. Things go wrong when she tries to veer off the corporate script for her avatar.



Uplift Series, by David Brin

The books and stories in Brin's series, which began in 1980, all deal in one way or another with what happens to humanity when we begin "uplifting" creatures like dolphins and apes, giving them human-equivalent intelligence. What it means to be human is called into question when we're surrounded by other intelligent species, including aliens who have their own uplifted companion species.

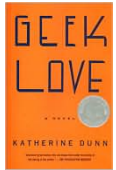
Marooned In Realtime, by Vernor Vinge

Humans time-traveling into the future by preserving themselves in stasis fields called "bobbles" come out of stasis to find that most of humanity has gone, leaving an empty planet behind. They decide to go back into stasis for thousands of years at a time, hoping to find more humans, or to meet another species with evolved intelligence, but they never do. As the sun dims, and all traces of humanity fade away, we reach a kind of *Dying Earth* scenario without the magic.



Geek Love, by Katherine Dunn

Geek Love is a gorgeous, literary novel about a family where the parents expose their children to toxins in order to make them circus freaks. The family, including Siamese twins, a dwarf, and a boy with flippers, makes its money from freak show tours. Told from the point of view of the mutant children, this is like *X-Men* set in the realistic family psychodrama world of Jonathan Franzen. And it's incredible.

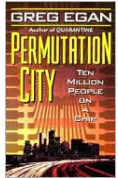
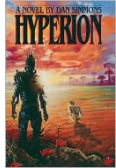


Beggars In Spain, by Nancy Kress

In a world where genetically-engineered superhumans called Sleepless can outperform human Sleepers, one of the raging moral questions is how to treat the relatively unproductive "beggars in Spain." When part of the population is engineered to always contribute more to society, what kinds of welfare should those people provide to the non-engineered, non-contributors?

Hyperion Series, by Dan Simmons

Set in the far future, this series is - among other things - an exploration of what happens when some humans evolve into a godlike state.



Permutation City, by Greg Egan

Most of Egan's novels take place in a posthuman universe where human and machine have merged, but *Permutation City* tackles head-on the question of what it means to be a person in a world populated by so-called artificial life. Like all of Egan's work, the novel is half-philosophy, half-rip roaring storytelling.

The Bohr Maker, by Linda Nagata

An impoverished woman accidentally stumbles upon "the bohr maker," a piece of nanotech that turns its possessor's body into a nanofabrication machine. She's now at the heart of a struggle between posthumans trying to guide evolution in different directions.



Nanotech Quartet series, by Kathleen Ann Goonan

In this mind-blowing series, humanity has been completely rewritten by nanotech viruses that emerge from sentient cities bent on recreating masterpieces of American literature.

Patternist series, by Octavia Butler

This wide-ranging series explores what happens when humanity evolves into two different species: the animalistic Clayarks, mutated by an alien virus; and the Patternmasters, psychic humans who exist in collective minds like Sturgeon's *Homo gestalt*.

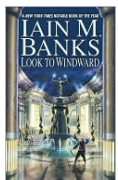


Vurt by Jeff Noon

In this surreal alternate history, humans have been transformed by taking a drug called Vurt, which completely blurs the line between virtual and real life.

Blue Light, Walter Mosley

Exposure to a mysterious "blue light" of alien origin turns several humans in Northern California into superpowered posthumans. The main character receives a blood transfusion from one of the blue lighters and becomes their hybrid, part-superpowered companion, devoted to studying the new forms of culture that these mutants create.

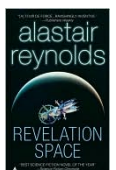


Look to Windward, by Iain M. Banks

Part of Banks' Culture series, which deals with a galactic civilization of posthumans, aliens and their AI companions, *Look to Windward* contemplates the ultimate posthuman problem. What happens to a war machine that has decided to turn itself into the Mind that runs an Orbital, or human habitat. How does PTSD affect an AI who has returned to the homefront, and how do its struggles overlap with the humans around it?

Revelation Space series, by Alasdair Reynolds

In this series of books and stories, which span millions of years, Reynolds tells the story of humanity's evolution into transhumanity among many alien species. Like Iain M. Banks, Reynolds takes for granted the idea that humans may



gain what amount to superpowers, but they will still fall prey to human foibles like anger, jealousy, and deception. The series began publication in 2000.

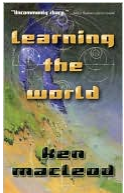


Black Hole, written and illustrated by Charles Burns

When teenagers start mutating in this dark graphic novel, they run away from their suburban homes to create a weird, unhappy subculture of outcasts living in the forest. It's like a grunge version of *Geek Love*.

Blindsight, by Peter Watts

A group of heavily-augmented posthumans, including an ancient vampire resurrected via genetic engineering, attempt to make first contact with alien life at the edge of the solar system. What they find is a form of intelligence that causes them to question the nature of consciousness itself.

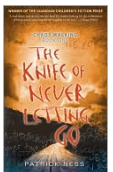
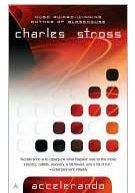


Learning the World, by Ken MacLeod

MacLeod has made a (brilliant) career out of exploring posthuman society, especially the transition from human to posthuman. But in *Learning The World*, a gentle, strange far-future tale, he gives us a bizarre picture of human society so far evolved that it's almost unrecognizable. Except for the fact that teenagers still keep journals online - while they learn to build their own space habitats using geoeengineering techniques.

Saturn's Children and Accererando, by Charles Stross

Many would argue that Stross' great posthuman epic is *Accelerando*. But consider also *Saturn's Children*, because here the author tells a truly posthuman tale of what happens after humans go extinct - but the robots they create live on, self-replicating and wondering about the biological creatures who created them.

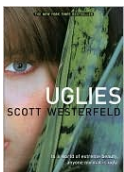
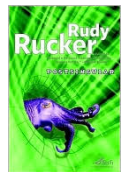


The Knife Of Never Letting Go, by Patrick Ness

Set on a planet colonized by Christian separatists, Ness' novel is about what happens when a virus makes all human men psychic and kills all the women. Except it seems that some women may have survived, and they've been discovered by a boy and the dog he's connected with telepathically.

Postsingular, by Rudy Rucker

A blindingly surreal, clever exploration of different ways in which the world could become cyber. After nanites almost consume the entire planet and plunge us into a "virtual Earth," a genius decides to protect the planet by giving every single object on Earth a form of artificial intelligence and expanding human abilities to include telepathy and telekinesis. And that's just the beginning of the weirdness.

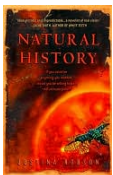
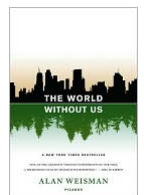


Uglies Series, by Scott Westerfeld

In the far future, humans use plastic surgery and brain alteration to enforce peace by making everyone Pretties who look equally beautiful - and think the same conformist thoughts. But some of the pre-surgery Uglies are getting ready to rebel.

The World Without Us, by Alan Weisman

A futurist thought experiment, Weisman imagines what would happen to the planet if Homo sapiens disappeared tomorrow. Based on research and interviews, this work of narrative nonfiction reads like apocalyptic SF about the posthuman world.

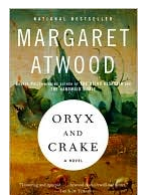


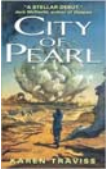
Natural History, by Justina Robson

Humans have divided into the Forged, human-machine hybrids capable of spaceflight and other feats, and the Unevolved, or unchanged, wild-type humans. The Forged want to strike out on their own and colonize another world, but political machinations among the humans may prevent them from continuing their evolution beyond *Homo sapiens*.

Oryx and Crake, by Margaret Atwood

A mad genetic engineer has created a virus that destroys humanity. He's also engineered a new kind of intelligent hominid that's immune to the virus. He hopes to restart humanity using his new species, which he believes will never experience sexual jealousy nor war.





Wess'har War series, Karen Traviss

Human evolution is altered forever when aliens draw humanity into a war between several competing species. Start with the first novel, *City of Pearl*.

Windup Girl, by Paolo Bacigalupi

In this magic realist eco-thriller, Bacigalupi imagines a world where genetically-engineered crops are ravaged by viruses and humans scabble to survive on the few foodstuffs that remain. Gene-tweaked "New People," scorned by many, may be humanity's only hope.

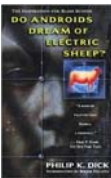
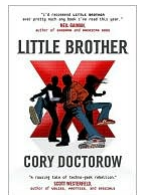


Never Let Me Go, by Kazuo Ishiguro

Set in the 1990's, Kazuo Ishiguro's quietly disturbing novel aims to make us question the ethics of science even though the author never directly raises the topic.

Little Brother by Cory Doctorow

When he ditches school one Friday morning, 17-year-old Marcus is hoping to get a head start on the Harajuku Fun Madness clue. But after a terrorist attack in San Francisco, he and his friends are swept up in the extralegal world of the Department of Homeland Security. After questioning that includes physical torture and psychological stress, Marcus is released, a marked man in a much darker San Francisco: a city of constant surveillance and civil-liberty forfeiture. Encouraging hackers from around the city, Marcus fights against the system while falling for one hacker in particular. Doctorow rapidly confronts issues, from civil liberties to cryptology to social justice.

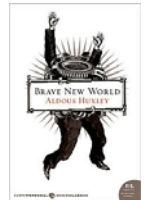


Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Philip K. Dick

By 2021, the World War had killed millions, driving entire species into extinction and sending mankind off-planet. Those who remained coveted any living creature, and for people who couldn't afford one, companies built incredibly realistic simulacrae: horses, birds, cats, sheep. . . They even built humans. Emigres to Mars received androids so sophisticated it was impossible to tell them from true men or women. Fearful of the havoc these artificial humans could wreak, the government banned them from Earth. But when androids didn't want to be identified, they just blended in.

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

"Community, Identity, Stability" is the motto of Aldous Huxley's utopian World State. Here everyone consumes daily grams of soma, to fight depression, babies are born in laboratories, and the most popular form of entertainment is a "Feelie," a movie that stimulates the senses of sight, hearing, and touch. Though there is no violence and everyone is provided for, Bernard Marx feels something is missing and senses his relationship with a young women has the potential to be much more than the confines of their existence allow.

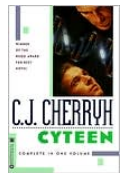


Where Late The Sweet Birds Sang: A Novel by Kate Wilhelm

The spellbinding story of an isolated post-holocaust community determined to preserve itself, through a perilous experiment in cloning. Sweeping, dramatic, rich with humanity, and rigorous in its science, Where Later the Sweet Birds Sang is widely regarded as a high point of both humanistic and "hard" SF, and won SF's Hugo Award and Locus Award on its first publication.

Cyteen by C.J. Cherry

A brilliant young scientist rises to power on Cyteen, haunted by the knowledge that her predecessor and genetic duplicated died at the hands of one of her trusted advisors. Murder, politics, and genetic manipulation provide the framework for the latest Union-Alliance novel by the author of Downbelow Station. Cherry's talent for intense, literate storytelling maintains interest throughout this long, complex novel.

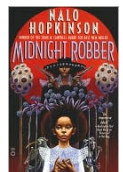


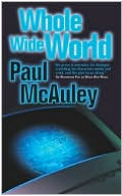
Galatea 2.2: A Novel by Richard Powers

As a visiting writer, his job is to bombard a computer network, which he comes to call Helen, with literature, music and conversation so that it will recognize beauty in some neuronal simulation, and therefore become conscious of it. In the course of tutoring Helen to be able to successfully interpret a piece of text in a manner indistinguishable from a human, Powers and Helen form an enchanting though eerie bond: she has "read" all his books; he knows her circuitry. Still, there remain mysteries that can't be accounted for by electron paths.

Midnight Robber by Nalo Hopkinson

On the Caribbean-colonized planet of Toussaint, Carnival is a Lollapalooza of music and dance, a Mardi Gras, a masquerade; and the Robin Hood of Toussaint legend, the Robber Queen, is just another costume, Tan-Tan's favorite. Then Tan-Tan's corrupt politician father commits a crime that sends them into exile on the extradimensional planet New Half-Way Tree, Toussaint's untamed quantum twin. As she struggles to survive the violent criminals, mysterious aliens, and merciless jungles of New Half-Way Tree, Tan-Tan finds herself taking on--or being taken over by--the mythic persona and powers of the Robber Queen.



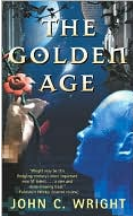
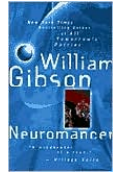


***Whole Wide World* by Paul McAuley**

In the wake of a virulent "information war," England has become a police state with surveillance cameras on every street corner, linked by an evolving artificial intelligence. The government controls all access to the Internet. Privacy is a fantasy. Porn is illegal. But a young British woman manages to transmit her sexual escapades over the World Wide Web--and the acts culminate in the live broadcast of her own murder. But even as another woman is slain in the same manner, the war veteran-policeman Dixon finds himself being pressured off the case by powerful sources ranging from his superior officers to the dead woman's uncle, the powerful CEO who created the artificial intelligence that sees all and, perhaps, knows all.

***Neuromancer* by William Gibson**

Case was the hottest computer cowboy cruising the information superhighway--jacking his consciousness into cyberspace, soaring through tactile lattices of data and logic, rustling encoded secrets for anyone with the money to buy his skills. Then he double-crossed the wrong people, who caught up with him in a big way--and burned the talent out of his brain, micron by micron. Banished from cyberspace, trapped in the meat of his physical body, Case courted death in the high-tech underworld. Until a shadowy conspiracy offered him a second chance--and a cure--for a price.

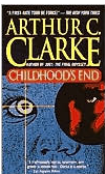


***The Golden Age Trilogy*, by John C. Wright**

In the far future, humans have become as gods: immortal, almost omnipotent, able to create new suns and resculpt body and mind. A trusting son of this future, Phaethon of Radamanthus House, discovers the rulers of the solar system have erased entire centuries from his mind. When he attempts to regain his lost memories, the whole society of the Golden Oecumene opposes him. Like his mythical namesake, Phaethon has flown too high and been cast down. He has committed the one act forbidden in his utopian universe. Now he must find out what it is--and who he is.

***The Hormone Jungle* by Robert Reed**

In the cyberpunk future of Reed's second novel, the terraforming of planets and moons has been matched by the genetic engineering of the human form to adapt to new environments. The divisiveness and prejudices provoked by the new races are minor, compared to the contempt most have for the new underclass these technologies have spawned, consisting of computer-generated personalities and test-tube creations. When one of the latter, a Flower (the name for a DNA-sculpted mistress) called Luscious Chiffon, runs away from her owner, she falls under the protection of Steward, a warrior from primitive northern Yellowknife who works as a sort of freelance private eye. This romantic noir tale of stock types plays out against Reed's intelligent, flavorful background and his astuteness for social and cultural nuances.



***Childhood's End* by Arthur C. Clark**

This tale tells of the sudden, but benign, invasion of Earth by a superior race from other space. The media dubs them "the Overlords". Clarke masterfully unveils their mysterious plans to midwife the human race as it unknowingly is about to give birth to the next generation. It will be a generation that bears very little resemblance to the ones before it.