Syllabus
World Futures (FORE 6371)
Spring 2017
Course Time/Location: Thursday, 5:30-8:30 pm US Central Time
Cameron 229
Instructor: Andy Hines
Office: Cameron 221
Email: ahines@uh.edu
Telephone: 832-367-5575
Skype: ahinesfuturist
Appointments: By request
Prerequisites: none

Overview

World Futures is primarily a content course, in which we explore the long-term future of the globe by looking at various STEEP+ categories. Students will do a framework project, a group archetype project, a book review, and present at the end of the semester.

Objectives

The objectives of the course are for students to demonstrate:
- a comprehension of the major issues affecting the global future
- an ability to identify emerging global trends and issues
- an ability to explain global issues, trends and drivers of change from multiple perspectives
- competence in tools and techniques used to identify and explain global trends and issues

Required Texts

Readings are provided in Canvas each week. Some are required of all, and others are "distributed" in that one class member leads the online and classroom discussion on them.

Coates, Hines, & Mahaffie, *2025: Scenarios of US and Global Society as Reshaped by Science and Technology,* Oakhill Press, 1996. Available as download from http://josephcoates.com/2025_PDF.html or instructor can provide physical copy.

Each student will select a book relating to an area of world futures, or an overview of world futures, at the beginning of class and present on it in class on Week 13. Books must be approved by instructor. If you need suggestions, check the "content" section of the UH Foresight bibliography in the "Learning Company" on Canvas. A few suggestions:

- Bostrom, Superintelligence: Paths,   Dangers, Strategies

- Brynjolfsson & McAfee, The Second Machine Age
- Drexler, Engines of Creation
- Friedman, The World Is Flat
- Jones, Future Agenda
- Homer-Dixon, The Upside of Down
- Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers
- Kuan Yew, From Third World to First
- Kurzweil, The Singularity
- Lanier, Who Owns the Future
- Meadows, Limits to Growth: Thirty Year Update
- Peterson, Out of the Blue
- Picketty, Capital
- Scharmer, Leading from the Emerging Future
- Schwartz, The Long Boom
- Slaughter, The Biggest Wake-Up Call in History

Approach

The foundation of the course is built around this syllabus and the schedule document, which can both be found under "syllabus" in Canvas. Your first step is to study these documents, ask any questions you wish, and then get into the introductory activities.

After the first two weeks, each week will focus on a different domain of world futures (e.g., population, resources, etc.).

Class activities
The instructor will typically lead off with a short PPT to introduce some ideas about the topic we are covering that week. We'll then review the readings. Each student is responsible for leading the discussion on their assigned reading for that week (we may not always get to them) At the end of each class, we will identify what we think are the most important driving forces for the future of that topic, aka "building blocks" for the scenario archetypes that will be the focus of a group presentation at the end of the semester (more on this below).

Online activities
Each week students are required to post a brief summary of their "distributed" reading for other students to comment on. For "credit," you get a point for posting and a point for responding to at least one other post in a substantive fashion. The following questions are recommended for you to answer in your posts:
- What is the main point(s) of the reading?
- What evidence or examples are supplied or are otherwise available to illustrate the point?
- What agree and disagree with?
- What is an alternative explanation from that offered by the author?

There will also be other occasional activities.

Group project
The class will be organized into three groups at the beginning of the semester. Each group will

be assigned a different scenario "archetype" that they will be responsible for developing a very simple scenario for, and presenting at the end of the semester. It's only a one-page summary (so don't freak), but it will be accompanied by "building block slides" developed in class each week. At the end of each class, we'll decide what we think are the 3-5 key drivers or building blocks for the future of that topic. Each group then identifies how they think that building block will "play out" given their archetype, which is basically a pattern of change. Teams will be responsible for keeping track of their building blocks over the semester and then summarizing how you think they will interact in a one-slide scenario summary, and presenting it to class. So, we'll develop three scenarios of world futures by the end of class.

Individual [or group] framework project
Each student will pick a world futures-related topic to develop a framework forecast around. The pieces of the framework are chopped up into smaller bites in "assignments," so you work on it throughout the semester (no big push at the end).

You will see that there is some variation for the "classic" framework process, as you will do a GBN 2x2 for your forecasts and a client recommendation/presentation instead of implications and options (of course, you may use these to help generate your recommendation).

I am offering the option to do a small group framework project (2-5 people) instead of an individual one. You will submit one assignment on behalf of the group; there will be a peer review at the end of the semester in which you evaluate one another – basically if some "free rides" you can point that out in the peer review and I will account for that in the grading.

Scanning hits
Each student will submit 5 scanning hits to "assignments", using the form, related to the framework project. They are completed early in the semester so they can help with your framework project.

Book review
As mentioned above in "Books," you are asked to select a book about World Futures and you will analyze it using a template that has ten questions.

Topical Schedule (see separate Schedule doc for details on each week)

Week 1: Orientation, theory
Week 2: Approaches/methods
Week 3: Demography
Week 4: Resources
Week 5: Infotech
Week 6: Bio & Nano
Week 7: Economics
Week 8: Geopolitics
Week 9: SPRING BREAK

Week 10: Environment
Week 11: Social life
Week 12: Wildcards
Week 13: Book Presentations
Week 14: Group Archetype presentations
Week 15: Make-up (if needed)

Grading

The breakdown:

Assignments: Domain framework (+book review)	50%
Group Activities: Archetype presentations	20%
Assignments: Scanning hits	15% (5@3% each)
Activities: Discussion postings*	15%

3-Point Discussion Post Scoring
For discussion posts, we are going to use a "3-point" system: You get 1 point for your own post, 1 point for a substantive reply to a colleagues post, and one point for both being on time. If you are late, you can still earn two of the three points – you simply miss the on-time bonus point.

Interaction

The course is conducted online. Grading and assignments are housed on the Blackboard website (www.uh.edu/blackboard). Daily interaction (except for assignments) will be conduct on Canvas. https://canvas.instructure.com/. All instructions, materials and submissions are done through the websites.

Classes are held on Thursday evenings in Cameron 229. Students can come to the classroom, or link in via AdobeConnect, or listen to an archived recording of the class. Adobe Connect offers two-way voice interaction and a shared desktop. We are encouraging students who come to the Cameron 229 classroom to bring a laptop or pad.

Other policies

Academic honesty policy All UH students are responsible for knowing the standards of academic honesty. Please refer to the UH catalog. Plagiarism, using research without citations or using a created production (such as other people's words) without quotations or citations, will result in a grade penalty or failure of the course. Internet sources must be credited according to the sites recommended citation guideline if available. If no citation guideline is provided by the web source, then the date, URL site owner, and author must be included with the web material used.

Disabilities: If you have a disability and need a special accommodation consult first with the Coordinator of Health Disabilities Services, Bayou 1402, telephone 283-2627, and then discuss

the accommodation with me.

Incompletes: A grade of "I" is given only in cases of documented emergency or special circumstances late in the semester, provided that the student has been making satisfactory progress. An Incomplete Grade Contract must be completed.

Withdrawals: Last day to withdraw drop or with a "W" for Spring 2017 is March 31st.