

Science fiction course taught by English, physics, psychology profs

COMMERCE, Tex. (AP) — From the "Late, Late Show" to the college classroom. That's where science fiction is heading, with a new course being offered at East Texas State University.

A four-man team of instructors is teaching an undergraduate course in science fiction. The course, listed in the university catalog as Physics 416, is directed by instructors in physics, psychology and English.

Dr. Arlen Ray Zander, assistant professor of physics, is the primary instructor. Assisting him are Dr. Steve Ball, instructor on psychology and special education, and Drs. Mike Brown and Jim Reynolds, instructors in the English Department.

All four teachers are under 30 years old, and all began teaching here in the fall of 1970. "We're really trying to make this an interdisciplinary course," Zanders said of the new three-

hour credit course. "I hope that the students react in an unbiased manner to it, that they treat it as a new kind of course rather than a physics course."

In naming the course an interdisciplinary one, the four instructors are attempting to combine the scientific, literary, and psychological aspects of science fiction.

Films, guest lecturers, open discussion and possible telephone hookups with leading science fiction writers will be employed to

ensure the student that the course is interesting.

"One of the things that we want to show students is that a physicist can talk to an English professor," Brown explained. "People ought to be concerned about scientists and scientists ought to be concerned about people."

Reynolds said that from a literary standpoint the two English instructors want to give the students "a kind of awareness of the area where science and fiction

meet. We'll be looking at the material from a humanistic standpoint . . . in terms of literature."

How does psychology enter into the world of science fiction?

"I think psychology is a science in the first place," Dr. Ball said. "I'll be concerned with whether or not the human responses the author shows us are truthful and valid from a psychological point of view."

"Many science fiction writers are very careful about their psy-

chics facts and very careless about their psychological facts," the instructor said. "We'll be checking to see if the characters in the science fiction stories are psychologically realistic."

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Roller, Dahm awarded NSF grant

Two A&M professors have been awarded a National Science Foundation

grant expected to total \$890,000 for basic studies concerning the role of hormones in development.

The grant was awarded to Dr. Herbert A. Roller, professor of biology, and Dr. Karl H. Dahm, associate professor of biology and chemistry. They have been working as a team since 1966.

Dr. Roller said the NSF grant is intended to support basic research to learn more about insect hormones and, in turn, about hormones in general.

Insects are the best-suited organisms for studies of this nature, Dr. Dahm pointed out.

"The development of a normal full-grown organism from a single egg cell is an extraordinary achievement," Dr. Roller noted. "Hormones have been recognized as taking part in these events,

participating in the process of growth, morphogenesis and differentiation in both plants and lower and higher animals."

Through previous research, the two professors are credited with the isolation, elaboration and chemical synthesis of the juvenile hormone, one of the two hormones in insects which regulate developmental processes.

Their findings have served as a basis and stimulant to industrial development of hormonal methods of insect control.

"The central strategy for this new approach to pest control is the derailment of normal development by substances which imitate the insect's own juvenile hormone," Dr. Roller explained.

Several chemical companies have already obtained encouraging results in field tests, and

commercial development is in progress. The materials used appear to be completely non-toxic to other forms of life, the professors emphasized.

The new NSF grant includes research involving chemical communication among insects.

Dr. Roller and Dr. Dahm joined the TAMU faculty in 1968 after previously working together at the University of Wisconsin.

The NSF grant includes \$154,000 for the current year and provides for awards of slightly larger sums for the next four years. Counting NSF grants supporting the two professors' previous studies, research funds for the project are expected to total more than \$1 million by the end of the five-year period.

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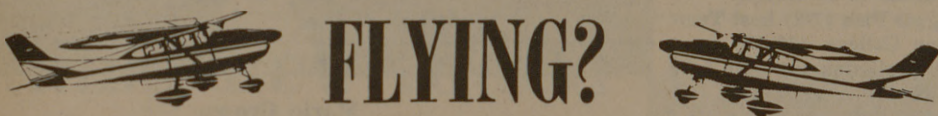
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A&M has a record spring enrollment of 13,816 students, Registrar Robert Lacey reported Thursday.

Nirenberg to present math lecture

Prof. Louis Nirenberg, director of New York University's Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences, will present a graduate lecture Feb. 14 at A&M.

The lecture, sponsored by TAMU's Mathematics Department and entitled "Remarks on Linear Partial Differential Equations," will be held at 4 p.m. in Room 207 of the Academic Building.

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