ES.S41, *Confronting the Alien in Alienation: A Tiny Survey of Science Fiction Films*

Preliminary Syllabus, Spring 2017, 6 units, P/F

**Instructor** Dave Custer, custer@mit.edu, office hours Tuesday evenings from 5:00 to 7:00, often found at ESG, when in doubt, send e-mail

**Meets** Tuesdays, 7:15-9:15 (? preferred time) in 24-619

**Subject description**
ES.S41 is casual investigation of a sparse scatter plot of “cult” science fiction movies that might address a mismatch between the individual and others. If the discussion goes well, participants will come away with a better understanding of how “being different” plays out in dramas and how such dramatizations reflect and affect viewers. Popcorn will be served.

**Assignments**
Participants are expected to watch movies together, respond to the movies via informal writing, discuss together, and collaborate to produce artifacts available on the internet that summarize the results of the investigation (e.g. wiki, video annotations, v/blogs, ...; the nature of this component is highly negotiable). The instructor will provide movies and a modicum of direction for the first half of the semester. As the semester progresses, other participants will take over direction and selection.

**Grading**
Grading is pass/fail. Come to class, watch sci-fi movies, comment on them informally, take advantage of the discussions, contribute to the summaries, live long, and prosper. Attendance is mandatory.

**Films**
A-list: *District 9, Brother from Another Planet, Repo Man, assorted shorts...*
The 2nd half of the semester will feature films according to the direction of participants.

**Warning**
Movies viewed in class include footage that portrays sex, violence, profanity, disparaging language, terror, and other elements that might make viewers uncomfortable and/or keep viewers awake at night. These elements are perhaps deliberate and beg the question of how taboo topics can be addressed in dramas that includes aliens.