



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
ENGLISH 203: EXPLORING SPECULATIVE FICTION  
WINTER 2021

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<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	T 1-2pm

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course has two major objectives, the first being imparting the basic suite of analytical and interpretive skills that characterize the discipline of English. These are how to close read texts; conduct library research and properly cite sources; use the critical tools, concepts, and terminology of the discipline to think about, discuss, and write on texts as scholars; and put all of these skills together in order to complete a well-researched, well-written academic essay about a text on the syllabus. By the end of the course, students will have a strong foundational groundwork of skills that will enable them to conduct further studies in English literature and more broadly excel on written assignments in humanities courses. The second objective is introducing students to the various popular genres grouped under the umbrella term “Speculative Fiction,” that is horror; science fiction; fantasy; the weird; and the metaphysical detective story. While this list of genres is hardly exhaustive, it is nevertheless a representative selection that enables students to compare and contrast genres, to gain a fundamental appreciation of their diversity while also learning to recognize the codes, conventions, and formulas that interrelate the works that collectively constitute the world(s) of Speculative Fiction.

**Delivery:** This course will take place **online** via Desire2Learn (D2L) and Zoom. To succeed in the course, students are encouraged to participate in the asynchronous learning tasks using the D2L learning environment as well as the synchronous Zoom sessions. The latter sessions will be held on Thursdays during the regularly scheduled course time, that is, from 11 to 12:15pm. Since participation in the latter sessions is crucial for success in the course, if you are ever unable to participate you must inform the instructor in advance so that an alternate activity can be arranged (this will most likely be a writing assignment in the form of a short analytical paper or a discussion board posting). The asynchronous component of the course predominately consists of watching Yuja lectures and posting on the D2L discussion board—which can be completed on Tuesdays—whereas the Thursday synchronous Zoom sessions will feature Q&A activities, class discussions, and writing workshops.

## **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Use close reading textual analysis in order to make evidence-based arguments about primary and secondary texts.
2. Deploy the critical tools, concepts, and terminology of the discipline of English in order to read, discuss, and write about the featured works of literature and essays as scholars working in the field.
3. Use the library to conduct research for their interpretive projects and essays, not only for this class but for subsequent English and humanities courses.
4. Critically reflect upon and fruitfully discuss their own personal encounters with the problems and issues presented in the primary readings such that these experiences become touchstones in their literary-critical arguments.
5. Understand the key features of, and relationships between, the diverse popular genres collectively referred to as “Speculative Fiction.”
6. Identify and comprehend the ethical problems, as well as material prospects, encoded in Speculative fiction texts, especially in regards to POC and Indigenous folks, whose communities have suffered due to systemic oppression and unequal access to high technology.
7. Contemplate how—in the personal, professional, familial, and civic facets of their lives—students might help to mitigate the problems, and maximize the benefits, of the new technologies explored in Speculative fictions.

## **TEXTS AND READINGS:**

- H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (Norton Critical Edition)
- Greg Egan, *Permutation City* (Nightshade Books)
- Nnedi Okorafor, *Binti: The Complete Trilogy* (Daw Books, Inc.)
- Annalee Newitz, *Autonomous* (TOR Books)
- Short stories by various Spec. fic. authors will be available on the course D2L webpage

## **LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

There is a D2L site for this course which contains many of the above required readings and other relevant class resources and materials, such as Yuja lectures and handouts (see [d2l.ualgary.ca](https://d2l.ualgary.ca)).

In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students taking online courses are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security, antivirus, and malware blocking software
- A current and updated web browser
- Webcam (built-in or external)
- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone
- Broadband internet connection.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

- Attendance (5%) and Participation (5%): 10%
- Critical Reader Response (1200 words): 20%
- Discussion Board Postings (roughly 1 post every two weeks): 20%
- Zoom Seminar Presentation (20%)
- Final Paper (7-page research paper with secondary sources): 30%

1. Attendance and Participation: attendance and participation in the Zoom sessions and on the D2L discussion board are absolutely essential to the success of this course. Attendance and participation are each worth 5% of your final grade. Attendance will be monitored at every Zoom session and participation will be evaluated based upon both the volume and quality of your contributions to our interactive Zoom discussions and the D2L discussion board. Any unexcused absences in excess of one Zoom session will reduce your final attendance and participation grade by 20% per absence. An illustrative grading rubric for the participation component follows:

A = Student engages in all the course's Zoom sessions, frequently contributing thoughtful and analytically incisive comments and questions to our class discussions which enhance understanding of the texts being studied. The student does likewise on the D2L discussion board, to which they contribute frequently (at least once every two weeks, if not more) and insightfully.

B = Student engages in the vast majority of Zoom sessions and posts regularly on the D2L discussion board, offering decent comments and questions that help to propel fruitful conversations.

C or lower = Student shows little to no evidence of engagement in Zoom sessions and on the D2L discussion board; comments, when offered, are neither particularly helpful nor stimulating, and/or suggest neglect of the course readings.

2. Critical Reader Response: This shorter assignment functions as an exploratory laboratory wherein students hone potential central arguments for the final paper. Nevertheless, responses must meet standards of acceptability for turned-in written work at the U of C. That is to say papers are evaluated according to clarity, organization, grammatical fluency, and argumentative sophistication. In formulating a robust thesis statement, students are expected to identify a critical problem or question that a text poses, suggest an answer to it, and then explain the significance of their answer to how one reads and interprets the text.

3. D2L Discussion Board Postings: These are critical to demonstrating the extent of a student's engagement with, and understanding of, the course readings, not to mention generating productive conversations that open up the assigned texts' aesthetic, philosophical, and political dimensions to our analysis and enjoyment. At least once every two weeks, students will go onto the D2L discussion board and post comments and questions about the course readings. While there is no set limit on the length of these postings, they should nevertheless be sufficiently long enough to treat course materials with scholarly rigor. Thus, postings should be predicated on *argumentation* (as opposed to opinions not backed up by textual evidence) and therefore need

to *cite and close read quotations* from primary and/or secondary sources on the syllabus. The possible approaches to doing a discussion board posting are virtually limitless. A student could, for instance, formulate a question about a challenging passage; answer another student's question; discuss their affective and intellectual responses to a particular plot twist, character, or authorial attitude, etc.; or creatively push another critic's (or student's) interpretation into new or unexpected territory. It should go without saying that all the same standards of politeness, respect, and collegiality by which we abide in typical classroom discussions apply to the D2L discussion board. In other words, I will not tolerate any rudeness, abuse, or attacks on anyone's personal character and/or beliefs. If you disagree with someone, do so in an immanently courteous manner. For further details, please review the conduct statement below.

4. Zoom Seminar Presentation: the main purpose of this ten-minute presentation is to prompt exploration of the primary and secondary readings for a particular week. Therefore, while students should present arguments about the various texts, they should also pose discussion questions for debate and further investigation. Although the formal presentation is only ten minutes long, students are encouraged to consider themselves discussion leaders for the seminar in which they deliver their presentations. Note that the in-class presentations require no written work to be handed in, and the instructor will provide written feedback and a grade roughly one week after the presentation.

5. Final Research Paper: This 7-page paper must make use of at least six secondary sources—historical, literary- critical, and/or theoretical in nature—in order to further investigate any work from our syllabus. Students propose their own topics and are highly encouraged to consult with the instructor about the specifics of their central arguments. Several class periods will be devoted to workshopping the final paper. Note that this essay must include a works cited page and must follow MLA formatting and style guidelines. If need be, please refer to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* for clarification.

#### **ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS**

- It is necessary to complete all course assignments in order to receive a passing grade.
- There are no extra credit assignments.
- Make-up assignments, excused absences, and extensions will only be issued by the instructor in the event of extenuating circumstances.
- If the course is to be worthwhile, students must contribute to the discussion board and come to the Zoom sessions prepared to engage with the texts, their fellow classmates, and the instructor. Therefore, students should complete all assigned readings before these sessions and have all the relevant texts at hand. To prepare for Zoom sessions, students are advised to read actively at home by annotating their books and making a list of questions and compelling ideas as they progress through the course readings; then, they can then draw from these lists during the sessions.
- Assignments will be submitted to the instructor via D2L Dropbox by the end of the day that they are due. The late penalty for assignments is 10% per day, which includes weekends and holidays. Note that late assignments will receive little, if any, feedback. Assignments more than four days late will not be accepted.

- If any extenuating circumstances arise which prevent a student from attending a Zoom session or turning in an assignment, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor as soon as possible so that proper arrangements can be made in the way of a make-up activity or assignment.
- Students should retain a copy of all assignments in the event that a technical glitch occurs while uploading. This goes for all assignments, from discussion board postings to final papers.

## **CONDUCT**

Students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. Members of the University community must exhibit conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

According to the University Calendar, "the University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars . . . to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community." The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a "positive and productive learning and working environment." This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that "seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff." Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.

## **USE OF INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES IN CLASS**

Laptop and mobile devices are acceptable when used in a manner appropriate to the course and classroom activities. Please refrain from accessing websites and resources that may be distracting to you or for other learners during class time. Students are responsible for being aware of the University's Internet and email use policy, which can be found at the following address: <https://ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-electronic-resources-and-information-policy>

## **GUIDELINES FOR ZOOM SESSIONS**

Zoom is a video conferencing program that will allow us to meet at specific times for a "live" video conference, so that we can have the opportunity to meet each other virtually and discuss relevant course topics as a learning community.

To help ensure Zoom sessions are private, do not share the Zoom link or password with others, or on any social media platforms. Zoom links and passwords are only intended for students registered in the course. Zoom recordings and materials presented in Zoom, including any

teaching materials, must not be shared, distributed or published without the instructor's permission.

The use of video conferencing programs relies on participants to act ethically, honestly and with integrity; and in accordance with the principles of fairness, good faith, and respect, as per the Code of Conduct. When entering Zoom or other video conferencing sessions (such as MS Teams), you play a role in helping create an effective, safe and respectful learning environment. Please be mindful of how your behaviour in these sessions may affect others. Participants are required to use names officially associated with their UCID (legal or preferred names listed in the Student Centre) when engaging in these activities. Instructors/moderators can remove those whose names do not appear on class rosters. Non-compliance may be investigated under relevant University of Calgary conduct policies (see the Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy). If participants have difficulties complying with this requirement, they should email the instructor of the class explaining why, so the instructor may consider whether to grant an exception, and on what terms. For more information on how to get the most out of your zoom sessions visit: <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/guidelines-for-zoom/>

If you are unable to attend a Zoom session, please contact your instructor to arrange an alternative activity for the missed session (e.g., to review a recorded session). Please be prepared, as best as you are able, to join class in a quiet space that will allow you to be fully present and engaged in Zoom sessions. Students will be advised by their instructor when they are expected to turn on their webcam (for group work, presentations, etc.).

The instructor may record online Zoom class sessions for the purposes of supporting student learning in this class, such as making the recording available for review of the session or for students who miss a session. Students will be advised before the instructor initiates a recording of a Zoom session. These recordings will be used to support student learning only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

## **GRADING SYSTEM**

The University of Calgary's four-point Grading System, as described in the Calendar, will be used in this course. All assignments will receive numerical scores that will be used to calculate the final grade, which in turn will be converted into a letter grade in accordance with the following departmentally standardized percentage conversion scale.

90 + %	A+	4.0	67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
85 – 89 %	A	4.0	64 – 66 %	C	2.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7	60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3	55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0	50 – 54 %	D	1.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7	0 – 49 %	F	0

Although the A+ is solely an honorific that entails no additional points in the 4-point system, the course instructor will employ this mark to distinguish superlative work that exceeds expectations in style, correctness, intellectual depth and breadth, sophistication, and originality.

According to the University Calendar (F.1) <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1.html>, instructors may use their discretion when rounding upwards or downwards when the average of term work and exams is between two letter grades.

### **Plagiarism:**

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university.

“Plagiarism” occurs when a Student presents the ideas, expression of ideas or work of another individual as the Student’s own. Work may include algorithms, code, composition, data, methods, design, formulae, images, indigenous oral teachings, art and ceremonies, organization of ideas, and scientific and mathematical concepts.

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-policy.pdf>

### **Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:**

The Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club (SMRWC) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. We strive to enhance the academic and social experience of undergraduate students by promoting academic excellence and interaction between students, faculty, and the community, through social, cultural, and academic events <http://english.ucalgary.ca/scribe-and-muse-english-club>.

Our email address is [smecuofc@gmail.com](mailto:smecuofc@gmail.com).

### **English Department Website:**

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/english>. Please note that the course outlines posted on the English Department website constitute the official course outline for purposes of appeals. **Students should verify any hard copies against this posted version.** For courses which employ numerical grades, the official departmental percentage to letter grade conversion scale is also posted on the department website.

### **Writing support:**

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

### **Library and Research Support:**

Melanie Boyd, Librarian for English, offers research support to students, including strategies for finding articles, books, and other library materials. Contact: [maboymd@ucalgary.ca](mailto:maboymd@ucalgary.ca).

Find The English Pages research guide here:

[https://library.ucalgary.ca/sb.php?subject\\_id=52619](https://library.ucalgary.ca/sb.php?subject_id=52619)

**Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:**



**Academic regulations and schedules:**

Consult the Calendar for course information, university and faculty regulations, dates, deadlines and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the University Calendar is <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/welcome.html>

**Grade appeals:**

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152 or email [adveng@ucalgary.ca](mailto:adveng@ucalgary.ca). Please note that “mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision.”

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

**Deferral of term work and final examinations:**

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an Application of Deferment of Term Work form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

**Student Accommodations:****ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

The student accommodation policy can be found at:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-1.html>

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6.html>

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available

at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-2.html>

**Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:**

Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Arts Students' Centre (ASC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at [ascarts@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ascarts@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at

<http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.

**\*RESEARCH ETHICS (if applicable)**

If a student is interested in undertaking an assignment that will involve collecting information from members of the public, they should speak with the course instructor and consult the CFREB Ethics (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/researchers/ethics-compliance/cfreb>) before beginning the assignment.



### **\*INSTRUCTOR'S INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

### **\*FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY**

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

### **\*COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION**

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright-policy.pdf>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>.

### **\*MEDIA RECORDING (if applicable)**

Please refer to the following statement on media recording of students:

[https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP\\_FINAL.pdf](https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP_FINAL.pdf)

#### **\*Media recording for lesson capture**

The instructor may use media recordings to capture the delivery of a lecture. These recordings are intended to be used for lecture capture only and will not be used for any other purpose. Although the recording device will be fixed on the Instructor, in the event that incidental student participation is recorded, the instructor will ensure that any identifiable content (video or audio) is masked, or will seek consent to include the identifiable student content to making the content available on University approved platforms.

#### **\*Media recording for self-assessment of teaching practices**

The instructor may use media recordings as a tool for self-assessment of their teaching practices. Although the recording device will be fixed on the instructor, it is possible that student participation in the course may be inadvertently captured. These recordings will be used for instructor self-assessment only and will not be used for any other purpose.

#### **\*Media recording for the assessment of student learning**

The instructor may use media recordings as part of the assessment of students. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that

occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

## **SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY**

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see the policy available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

## **\*OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Please visit the Registrar's website at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for additional important information on the following:

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

## **Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):**

"At the University of Calgary, feedback provided by students through the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) survey provides valuable information to help with evaluating instruction, enhancing learning and teaching, and selecting courses ([www.ucalgary.ca/usri](http://www.ucalgary.ca/usri)). Your responses make a difference – please participate in USRI Surveys."

## **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:
  - a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),

- b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>.

## **DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT**

According to the University Calendar

“The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, ..., to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community”. The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a “positive and productive learning and working environment.” This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that “seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff”. Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.