SCI 215SC – Film/Novel Critique

In this assignment, you will identify and critique the use of science in a popular science fiction film or novel. The critique will comment on whether the science is correct or incorrect, using references to popular books on the subject, the Kaku text, or other popular science readings focused on analyzing Hollywood science. You can also use your instructor as a knowledgeable resource to determine if your choice of science fiction work will help you complete the assignment. Any science fiction work may be used except for The Naked Sun by Asimov.

Assignment Guidelines
The paper should be approximately 600 words in length, so you should narrow your focus to one or two instances of science being used correctly or incorrectly in the work. Make sure you address the following in your review:

1. **Provide brief context:** Identify and describe a scene in the film or a passage in the text where the science concept you identify becomes an important plot device.
2. **Provide background:** Identify what we know about the scientific concept today. Explain this concept as if you are describing the phenomena to a neighbor.
3. **Evaluate the use of science:** How does the work take liberty with bending science or use correct science in the situation to move the plot along?

Moreover, make sure to:
- Write using correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- Construct and organize ideas into paragraphs.
- Use correct citations for all sources used in your analysis according to a style guide (MLA or APA), and reference these citations at the end of the paper.
  - One of these sources should be the film/text itself, one should be a primary source used to explain the science concept, and at least one additional source should be used, which may include a credible article found on the Internet about the science in the film or novel.

Resources
Examples of primary sources, accessible from the library in eBook format, available to assist with identifying the use of science in film:
- Kaku, M. (2008). *Physics of the Impossible* (the required text for this course)

In addition, many websites comment on the science contained in popular science fiction films. Please be careful about evaluating the credibility of these sites. It is best to corroborate descriptions of scientific phenomena with multiple sources to gain confidence in the proposed explanations. For websites that tend to do a better job with the science, visit [http://www.io9.com](http://www.io9.com) and [http://www.io9.com/science](http://www.io9.com/science).

A second option is to review a work appearing on lists of the least accurate science fiction novels or films. The *Popular Mechanics* article “The 10 Most (and Least) Accurate Sci-Fi Movies” is a good resource for this information.

Using Google to search the web will also help find sites describing the science in science fiction works. If your search begins with the phrase “Science of [Insert name of work]” you will usually find a few sites that will critique the work according to how well the science is portrayed in the film or novel.

Suggestions
Start with one of the books above (*Hollywood Science* or *Physics of the Impossible*) and read about an instance in which science is stretched in a science fiction film or novel. Then, view or read the movie or book to understand the context so you can frame the science concept to be explored within the plot or actions.
Remember, this critique is not meant to see if you can identify all aspects of the misuse of science in a science fiction work. You should aim to identify one or two missteps and do a great job in reporting why the universe doesn’t operate the way it is presented in the science fiction work.

**Submission**
You will submit this assignment to the Dropbox no later than Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT. (This Dropbox basket is linked to Turnitin.)

**Grading Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Level I (0-3 points)</th>
<th>Level II (4-7 points)</th>
<th>Level III (8-10 points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td>Limited descriptions of scientific knowledge or evaluation of use of science.</td>
<td>Provides description of scientific knowledge (background) or evaluates use of science.</td>
<td>Provides description of scientific knowledge (background) and evaluates use of science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fiction</strong></td>
<td>No context or not applicable to the science mentioned in paper.</td>
<td>Context is vague or not specific to the science explored in paper.</td>
<td>Provides clear context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>Several grammatical errors in the paper.</td>
<td>Several minor errors in the paper with phrasing/awkward sentences/word choice and sentence construction.</td>
<td>A few minor errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Construction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Citations</strong></td>
<td>One citation.</td>
<td>Two citations or citations are improperly formatted.</td>
<td>Three citations properly formatted.</td>
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**Total _____ / 40 points**