



SILVERSCREEN
PRIMARY
EDUCATION

The History of Science Fiction Cinema

By Adam Pepper

Session 4: 1960s

*1960s – The Space Race,
Kirk, Kubrick and some
damn, dirty apes!*



Welcome to Session 4 of this 'History of Science Fiction Cinema'!

Over ten weeks, we will journey through space and time to uncover the secrets behind some of the greatest science fiction stories, movies, directors and characters as we try to uncover what science fiction really is, and where it blurs with our reality today.

Session 4:

In this week's session, we are naturally dominated by the real life Space Race being 'fought' from East to West. As Russia make the first strides, 'boldly going where no man has gone before', America soon vows to achieve an even greater success, by landing humans on an astral body. But this achievement will not come without great cost.

And, as Vietnam, the death of a much-loved President, and the further freezing of the Cold War goes on, will this global mistrust, darkness, corruption and cynicism make its way into the sci-fi we start to see?

'You maniacs! You blew it up! Damn you!' – Colonel Taylor

Useful information for Session 4:

Gene Roddenberry

Eugene Wesley Roddenberry Sr. (August 19, 1921 – October 24, 1991) was an American television screenwriter, producer, and creator of *Star Trek: The Original Series*, its sequel spin-off series *Star Trek: The Animated Series*, and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

Born in El Paso, Texas, Roddenberry grew up in Los Angeles, where his father was a police officer. Roddenberry flew 89 combat missions in the Army Air Forces during World War II and worked as a commercial pilot after the war. Later, he followed in his father's footsteps and joined the Los Angeles Police Department, when he also began to write scripts for television.

As a freelance writer, Roddenberry wrote scripts for *Highway Patrol*, *Have Gun – Will Travel*, and other series, before creating and producing his own television series, *The Lieutenant*.

In 1964, Roddenberry created *Star Trek*, which premiered in 1966 and ran for three seasons before being cancelled. He then worked on other projects, including a string of failed television pilots. The syndication of *Star Trek* led to its growing popularity; this, in turn, resulted in the *Star Trek* feature films, on which Roddenberry continued to produce and consult. In 1987, the sequel series *Star Trek: The Next Generation* began airing on television in first-run syndication; Roddenberry was intimately involved in the initial development of the series but took a less active role after the first season due to ill health. He continued to consult on the series until his death in 1991.

Stanley Kubrick

Stanley Kubrick (July 26, 1928 – March 7, 1999) was an American filmmaker and photographer. Widely considered one of the greatest filmmakers of all time, his films were nearly all adaptations of novels or short stories, spanning a number of genres and gaining recognition for their intense attention to detail, innovative cinematography, extensive set design, and dark humour.

Born and raised in New York City, Kubrick was an average school student but displayed a keen interest in literature, photography, and film from a young age; he began to teach himself all aspects of film producing and directing after graduating from high school. After working as a photographer for *Look* magazine in the late 1940s and early 1950s, he began making low-budget short films and made his first major Hollywood film, *The Killing*, for United Artists in 1956. This was followed by two collaborations with Kirk Douglas: the anti-war film *Paths of Glory* (1957) and the historical epic film *Spartacus* (1960).

In 1961, Kubrick left the U.S. due to concerns about crime in the country, as well as a growing dislike for how Hollywood operated, and creative differences with Douglas and the film studios; he settled in England, which he would leave only a handful of times for the rest of his life. He made his home at Childwickbury Manor, which he shared with his wife Christiane, and it became his workplace where he centralized the writing, research, editing, and management of his productions. This permitted him almost complete artistic control over his films, with the rare advantage of financial support from major Hollywood studios. His first productions in England were two films with Peter Sellers: an adaptation of *Lolita* (1962) and the Cold War black comedy *Dr. Strangelove* (1964).

A perfectionist who assumed direct control over most aspects of his filmmaking, Kubrick cultivated an expertise in writing, editing, colour grading, promotion, and exhibition. He was famous for the painstaking care taken in researching his films and staging scenes, performed in close coordination with his actors, crew, and other collaborators. He frequently asked for several dozen retakes of the same shot in a movie, often confusing and frustrating his actors. Despite the notoriety this provoked, many of Kubrick's films broke new cinematic ground and are now considered landmarks. The scientific realism and innovative special effects in his science fiction epic *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) was a first in cinema history, and the film earned him his only Academy Award (for Best Visual Effects). Filmmaker Steven Spielberg has referred to *2001* as his generation's "big bang" and it is regarded as one of the greatest films ever made.



Films to look out for:

The Time Machine (1960)

The Day The Earth Caught Fire (1961)

Doctor Who & The Daleks (1965)

One Million Years BC (1966)

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)

Planet Of The Apes (1968)

For All Mankind (1989)

Forthcoming Sessions:

- 1970s – Star Wars, body snatching and Russian sci-fi
- 1980s Part 1 – Spielberg, replicants and phoning home!
- 1980s Part 2 – Cameron, C. Clarke, Herbert and Xenomorphs!
- 1990s Part 1 – Dinosaurs, double Armageddons, meteorites and 'get your ass to Mars'!
- 1990s Part 2 – Welcome To Earth! Bullet Time & Special Editions
- 2000s – Worlds of Wonder