

# SciPEP Suggests

**Science and science fiction favorites for  
your reading, watching, and listening  
enjoyment.**



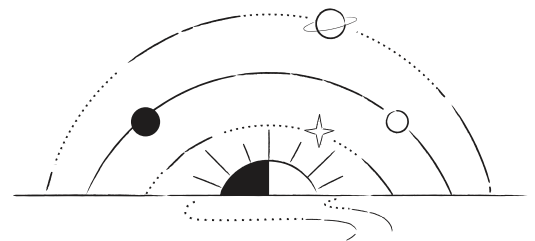
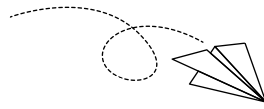
# Editors *Note*

***Thank you for attending SciPEP 2023:  
New Insights for Communicating Basic Science.***

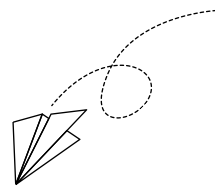
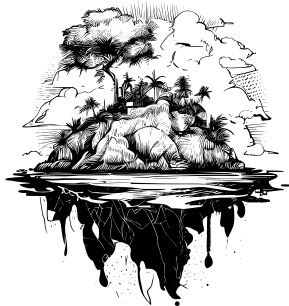
***This is a collection of science and science fiction  
favorites from the conference speakers and SciPEP  
team. You will find a little of everything here***



***from thought provoking***



***to world bending***



***to great and wild escapes.***

***Stretch out in a park, cuddle up in a cozy  
chair, invite friends for a watch party with  
aperitifs and enjoy!***

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## **Dozens of Science and Science Fiction Recommendations**

Get to know the conference speakers and the SciPEP team through a wide array of their favorite stories



SciPEP  
Suggests

# Movie

## Recommendations

### Pick from Melina Fuentes

#### **2001: A Space Odyssey**

*Director: Stanley Kubrick*

"Amazing! I went to a 2001: A Space Odyssey art installation too!"

### Pick from Olivia Ambrogio

#### **Alien (1979), Aliens, and Alien Resurrection**

*Directors: Ridley Scott, James Cameron, Jean-Pierre Jeunet*

"The three movies are not only terrific suspense/horror/action films, but they imagine fascinating (if occasionally conflicting) biology and physiology for the titular alien(s)."

### Pick from Jory Weintraub

#### **Beasts of the Southern Wild**

*Director: Benh Zeitlin*

"It's not truly science or sci-fi, but climate change is a central theme (the film has been described as an allegory for Hurricane Katrina), so I'm going to say it counts. It's a beautiful, haunting film that is IMO a visual masterpiece with a tour de force acting performance by the central character (named "Hushpuppy") who was played by a 9-year-old first-time actress named Quvenzhané Wallis. She was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actress and is the youngest person ever nominated for that award. I'm not eloquent enough to explain why I found this movie so moving, but it's one of a handful of films I've seen that felt somehow life-changing to me, with respect to how I view climate change in the context of race, class, and society."



## Pick from Brooke Smith

### Contact

*Director: Robert Zemeckis*

"The intersection of science, the unknown and faith. And I really connected with the strong female character who looks for data and brings in emotion."- Smith

## Pick from Nic Bennett

### The Thing (1982? 2011?)

*Directors: John Carpenter,  
Matthijs van Heijningen Jr*

During an exploration in Antarctica, a group of researchers come across a Norwegian facility near their research station. They soon come to realize Something horrible happened there. After discovering that the Norwegians had stumbled across something horrific; they leave, but something comes back with them.

## Pick from Erika Shugart

### Close Encounters of the Third Kind

*Director: Steven Spielberg*

"It is an iconic movie that features mashed potato sculptures and a sick alien beat. Does it have much science? Not really."

## Pick from Brooke Smith & Ken Goldstein

### Back to the Future

*Director: Robert Zemeckis*

"Like this one needs a reason :-)" - Smith

## Pick from Anthony Dudo

### Arrival, Interstellar, and Blade Runner

*Directors: Denis Villeneuve,  
Christopher Nolan, Ridley Scott*

"My favorite science fiction movie is 3-way tie between Arrival, Interstellar, and Blade Runner."

## Pick from Elaine Bui

### Donnie Darko

*Director: Richard Kelly*

"Combines physics and "parallel universes" and I love anything related to parallel universes."

## Pick from Melina Fuentes

### Dune

*Director: Denis Villeneuve*

"Timothée Chalamet and Zendaya, duh!"

## Pick from Olivia Ambrogio

### Edible Insects (NOVA)

*Director: Peter Chinn*

"This documentary showed many types of insect agriculture and entomophagy as well as environmental reasons to consider it."



**Pick from Keegan Sawyer, Marina Joubert, and Xinnan Du**

**Don't Look Up**

*Director: Adam McKay*

"Masterful satire. Speaks to my soul to see scientists portrayed with feelings, fears, confusions, impulses, and failings alongside their scientific brilliance." - Sawyer

"This gave us much to reflect on in terms of how scientists are perceived by society. It was great fun to work with a team of editors and researchers to produce a set of commentaries on this film" - Joubert

"Although the focus was not on science, it actually underlined how astrophysics may have an "actual" impact on our lives and the future of the human race. " - Du

**Pick from Brooke Smith**

**E.T.**

*Director: Steven Spielberg*

"Reese's pieces and more."

**Pick from Melina Fuentes**

**Ex Machina**

*Director: Alex Garland*

"Domhnall Glesson OMG!!!!!!!"

**Pick from Xinnan Du**

**her**

*Director: Spike Jonze*

"I thought this was a very forward-looking movie that raised some potential problems with AI being too integrated into our lives. I certainly didn't expect the fiction part to become reality this soon (we are basically living in the story of "Her" right now)."

**Pick from Elaine Bui**

**Inception**

*Director: Christopher Nolan*

"Star studded cast, how powerful the subconscious mind is."

**Pick from Brook Smith, Elaine Bui, Erika Shugart, and Anthony Dudo**

**Interstellar**

*Director: Christopher Nolan*

"Beautifully produced, pulls on the heartstrings." - Bui

"Great science, big names stars, amazing acting, and a family drama. There are all sorts of theoretical physics in this movie." - Shugart

**Pick from Brook Smith and Lauren Budenholzer**

**Jurassic Park**

*Director: Steven Spielberg*

"Jurassic Park may be one of the best examples of science communication to a broad public audience I have ever seen - there is an incredible ~90 second segment on DNA that is absolutely amazing." - Budenholzer

**Pick from Nic Bennett**

**Meshes of the Afternoon  
(1943)**

*Directors: Maya Deren and Alexandr Hackenschmied*

A woman returning home falls asleep and has vivid dreams that may or may not be happening in reality. Through repetitive images and complete mismatching of the objective view of time and space, her dark inner desires play out on-screen.

## Pick from Eve Klein

### **Moon (2009)**

*Director: Duncan Jones*

"I think a lot about Moon. It's an extremely compelling movie, but also serves as a deep exploration about the complexity of being human amidst ever-advancing technology."

## Pick from Brooke Smith

### **Star Wars Episodes 4 - 6 (plus shout out to Rogue One)**

*Directors:*

*George Lucas, Irvin Kershner,  
Richard Marquand, Gareth Edwards*

The story of the original trilogy focuses on Luke Skywalker's quest to become a Jedi, his struggle with the evil Imperial agent Darth Vader, and the struggle of the Rebel Alliance to free the galaxy from the clutches of the Galactic Empire.

## Pick from Melina Fuentes

### **Sunshine**

*Director: Danny Boyle*

"Cillian Murphy! The sun is dying! Ahhhh!"

## Pick from Marina Joubert

### **The Martian**

*Director: Ridley Scott*

"An excellent bit of scicomm, especially because science basically helped the hero to survive."

## Pick from Melina Fuentes

### **Fifth Element**

*Director: Luc Besson*

"Fun Movie!"







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# Book

## Recommendations

### Pick from Jayatri Das

#### **A Wind in the Door**

*by Madeline L'Engle*

"A Wrinkle in Time and A Wind in the Door captured my imagination about kids trying to navigate the world against the backdrop of science at a vast range of scales - from across the universe to inside our cells."

### Pick from Cynthia Friend & Jayatri Das

#### **A Wrinkle in Time**

*by Madeline L'Engle*

"This book really influenced me when I was younger. I was really drawn to it." - Friend

### Pick from Olivia Ambrogio

#### **Always Coming Home**

*by Ursula K. Le Guin*

"This brilliantly envisioned anthropology of a people who "might be going to have lived" in the far future in what is now California does everything that good science fiction should in making us question what is and what could be."

### Pick from Claudia Fracciollo

#### **Beamtimes and Lifetimes: The World of High Energy Physics**

*by Sharon Trawick*

"Even though it was written before I became a particle physicist, I completely related and recognized the stories narrated in the book. It made me feel like I definitely belong to that community."



## Pick from Olivia Ambrogio

### **Ammonite**

*by Nicola Griffith*

"A fast-paced and beautifully written novel about an explorer to a planet that harbors a virus that changes some of the basic ways in which we understand humanity. A great mixture of clever molecular what-if science, smart plotting, and interesting characters."

## Pick from Rick Borchelt

### **Blackfish City**

*by Sam Miller*

Blackfish City is a remarkably urgent—and ultimately very hopeful—novel about political corruption, organized crime, technology run amok, the consequences of climate change, gender identity, and the unifying power of human connection.

## Pick from Bruce Lewenstein

### **Foundation (series)**

*by Isaac Asimov*

"I like fully conceived worlds."

## Pick from Olivia Ambrogio

### **An Anthropologist on Mars**

*by Oliver Sacks*

"Sacks once again relates deeply empathetic and fascinating medical stories about people with a variety of conditions, describing the neurology as best we know it but just as importantly showing that people do not need, nor should be asked, to be neurotypical to live fulfilling lives."

## Pick from Erika Shugart

### **I, Robot**

*by Isaac Asimov*

"Classic sci-fi. It is a great introduction to how we should think about the limits we put on technology."

## Pick from Nic Bennet

### **Metropolis**

*by Thea Von Harbou*

This city of the future encompasses two worlds: that of the hedonistic ruling class and that of a segregated subculture, toilers in a mechanized underworld who labor to provide the rich with their pleasures.



## Pick from Olivia Ambrogio

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"This brilliantly envisioned anthropology of a people who "might be going to have lived" in the far future in what is now California does everything that good science fiction should in making us question what is and what could be."

## Pick from Anthony Dudo

### Contact

by Carl Sagan

The future is here...in an adventure of cosmic dimension. When a signal is discovered that seems to come from far beyond our solar system, a multinational team of scientists decides to find the source. What follows is an eye-opening journey out to the stars to the most awesome encounter in human history. Who—or what—is out there? Why are they watching us? And what do they want with us?

## Pick from Brooke Smith

### Station 11

by Emily St. John Mandel

"I did not like the show but LOVED the book - the writing and the weaving together of different histories and perspectives."

## Pick from Rick Borchelt

### Red Rising (novels)

by Pierce Brown

"Explores how resource extraction travels with Earth colonists as they establish a presence on multiple planets and systems--and how extractive economies are inevitably inequitable. Wonderful world-building and careful attention to physics and engineering in detail. Fans of classical Latin especially will appreciate the eventual leadership hierarchy."

## Pick from Lauren Budenholzer

### Braiding Sweetgrass

by Robin Wall Kimmerer

"Robin Wall Kimmerer is a fantastic storyteller and I loved hearing how she brought together indigenous teachings with traditional scientific practices in her life."

## Pick from Sara Yeo

### The Mars Trilogy

by Kim Stanley Robinson

The Mars trilogy is a series of science fiction novels by Kim Stanley Robinson that chronicles the settlement and terraforming of the planet Mars through the personal and detailed viewpoints of a wide variety of characters spanning almost two centuries. Ultimately more utopian than dystopian, the story focuses on egalitarian, sociological, and scientific advances made on Mars, while Earth suffers from overpopulation and ecological disaster.

## Pick from Nic Bennet

### Parable of the Sower

by Octavia. E. Butler

When global climate change and economic crises lead to social chaos in the early 2020s, California becomes full of dangers, from pervasive water shortage to masses of vagabonds who will do anything to live to see another day.

## Pick from Rose Hendricks

### Not Too Late: Changing the climate story from despair to possibility

by Rebecca Solnit

"It's a compilation of essays from people who understand both the science and the emotions of our planetary health crises, and who share compelling visions of a thriving, just future."

## Pick from Nick Bennet & Rick Borchelt

### The Broken Earth Trilogy

by N.K. Jemison

"Terrific future-Earth worldbuilding based on fundamental geology (although it took me forever to catch on to that!)." - Borchelt

## Pick from Keegan Sawyer

### The Change Agent

by Daniel Suarez

"I picked up this book, a fast-paced sci-fi thriller, as my "escape" at a time I was inundated with extra intense ethical conversations about the uses of gene editing. It is a wild and fun vacation read. Of course, I shared it with all the others in my meetings."

## Pick from Olivia Ambrogio

### The Cold Canyon Fire Journals

by Robin Lee Carlson

"A mixture of nature writing and illustration as the author explores one of her favorite locations in California as it changes after a 2015 fire."

## Pick from Rick Borchelt

### The Darkover series

by Marion Zimmer Bradley

"The entire series postulates what would happen to a founding population from Earth stranded and lost to contact on a remote planet -- Darkover -- without all the extractable resources like metals that form the basis of our civilization."

## Pick from Brooke Smith

### The Martian

by Andy Weir

"I also love the movie, but the book is my first love. I can read it over and over. It is smart, witty, funny, informed."





### Pick from Reyhaneh Maktoufi

#### **Jurassic Park**

*by Michael Crichton*

"I wanted to become a paleontologist after I read the book :)  
I loved the adventure, but also just knowing about a niche (dinosaurs and all!) that not everyone knew."

### Pick from Rick Borchelt

#### **The Essex Serpent**

*by Sarah Perry*

"All the historicity of Hilary Mantel with great resonance for how marginalized people in a society turn to science/discovery/research for affirmation. It is also a TV mini-series which I have not seen."

### Pick from Sara Yeo

#### **The Hyperion Cantos**

*by Dan Simmons*

On the world called Hyperion, beyond the reach of galactic law, waits a creature called the Shrike. There are those who worship it. There are those who fear it. And there are those who have vowed to destroy it. In the Valley of the Time Tombs, where huge, brooding structures move backward through time, the Shrike waits for them all.

### Pick from Jeanne Garbarino

#### **Klara and the Sun**

*by Kazuo Ishiguru*

"This book describes a future where children go shopping for their best AI friend since they are completely preoccupied with academics and have no time for a social life (at least, true for the wealthy ones). The book is narrated by Klara, an AI friend who waits for someone to buy her. Once this happens, Klara shares her journey toward understanding what love is among humans. This book shook me in particular, as it relates to my identities as a mother and a scientist. For the former, I cannot imagine such a lonely future for children!! It's just so sad. As a scientist, it feels very relevant to how so many are moving ahead with AI tech just because we can -- it's scary! Also, I just love this book for the character development. It is a great read."

### Pick from Nic Bennet

#### **The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas**

*by Ursula K. Le Guin*

Some inhabitants of a peaceful kingdom cannot tolerate the act of cruelty that underlies its happiness.

### Pick from Todd Neman

#### **Thinking Fast and Slow**

*by Daniel Kahneman*

"I read this book right after I graduated from college. It shaped my interest in cognitive and social psychology."

### Pick from Olivia Ambrogio

#### **The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating**

*by Elisabeth Tova Bailey*

"A science memoir about a woman dealing with chronic pain and illness whose world exists at the pace of a snail brought in on a plant and who discovers the intricate world of the snail as she observes and lives alongside it."

### Pick from Erika Shugart

#### **Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy**

*created by: Douglas Adams*

"I love it in all of its forms because I always know where my towel is. Science - not so much, but you can learn a little about local zoning ordinances."

### Pick from Matthew VanDyke

#### **Science on a Mission: How Military Funding Shaped What We Do and Don't Know about the Ocean**

*by Naomi Oreskes*

"I am currently reading alot about the history of science."

### Pick from Laura Lindenfeld

#### **The Exceptions**

*by Kate Zernike*

"This was such a powerful read for me in that it documents the story of Nancy Hopkins, who led a group of 16 women at MIT. The group documented systematic discrimination against women. Throughout the book, we learn so much about genetics research and get deep insights into how basic research in this area works."

### Pick from Olivia Ambrogio

#### **Gods of the Upper Air: How a Circle of Renegade Anthropologists Reinvented Race, Sex, and Gender in the Twentieth Century**

*by Charles King*

"The title sums itself up."

### Pick from Sara Yeo

#### **The Expanse**

*by James S. A. Corey*

Humanity has colonized the solar system—Mars, the Moon, the Asteroid Belt and beyond—but the stars are still out of our reach. Book one introduces a captain, his crew, and a detective as they unravel a horrifying solar system wide conspiracy that begins with a single missing girl.

### Pick from Olivia Ambrogio

#### **He, She, and It**

*by Marge Piercy*

"An early-1980s sci-fi that brings together 16th-century Prague and a semi-dystopic future in which most people work for corporation-countries or struggle to survive in the Glop (megalopolis). The book is one of the first to include elements of VR and cyberpunk, as well as climate-change predictions, and it asks important questions about what responsibility we have for what we author—whether it's ideas, creations, or children."

### Pick from John Besley

#### **The Science Officer series**

*by N.K. Jemison*

### Bonus News Article Suggestion from Dr. Asmeret Asefaw Berhe

#### **How US Presidential Elections Are Impacted By Geology**

*Forbes Article by David Bressan*

"Here is one of my all-time favorite soil science-related media."

[Article Link](#)



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# TV

## Recommendations

**Pick from Brooke Smith & Anthony Dudo**

### **Battlestar Galactica**

*Original Network: Sci-Fi*

"The early 2000s series - obsessed, quite possibly best series finale episode. Love the mix of science, technology, ethics, religion, faith, and politics."

**Pick from Marina Joubert**

### **Chernobyl**

*Original Networks:  
HBO (US), Sky Atlantic (UK)*

"I really like films or series based on real history - Chernobyl was definitely a favorite."

**Pick from Brooke Smith & Keegan Sawyer**

### **Firefly**

*Original Network: Fox*

"May it RIP. Its life ended way too soon."  
- Smith

"What's not to love about this space western dramedy? It had me hooked just from the premise that 500 years into the future, the dominant human language would be Mandarin. Firefly is my all-time favorite sci-fi TV series. And the math lesson - golden. "Ten percent of nothin' is ... let me do the math here ... nothin' into nothin' ... carry the nothin' ... " -Jayne " - Sawyer

Episode 13



## Pick from Claudia Fracciolloa

### Doctor Who

*Original Network: BBC One*

"The idea of TARDIS as a time machine/spacecraft that you can use to explore well beyond the known universe is fascinating and a connection with the characters."

## Pick from Brooke Smith

### For All Mankind

*Original Network: Apple TV+*

"An alternate history that shows the impact science and exploration can have on social issue and politics (and vice versa) and is so compelling. I also love how each season takes us through a whole new space exploration (land on the moon, colonize the moon, Mars...)"

## Pick from Tiffany Lohwater

### The Last of Us

*Original Network: HBO*

"Sci-Fi TV series with great acting, zombies, a platonic love story, and social commentary. What's not to love?"

## Pick from Brooke Smith

### Fringe

*Original Network: Fox*

"One of my favorite sci-fi shows. Each episode unpacks a really interesting scientific question. The experimentation they do to figure things out really shows how science is a process. And the story line/arc throughout the whole series - and having it conclude - was powerful. Also, Lance Reddick (love him, may he rest in peace - gone way too soon) and Joshua Jackson (swoon!)."

## Pick from Todd Newman

### Planet Earth (2006)

*Original Network: BBC One*

"This show aired right when HD televisions were becoming mainstream. I felt like I was being transported to different areas of the world."

## Pick from Chris Volpe & Claudia Fracciolloa

### Star Trek (the original series)

*Original Network: NBC*

"It delved into contemporary issues from both humanistic (emotional) and rational (intellectual) lenses, showcasing that living is the act of striving to strike a balance between them." - Volpe

"The idea of traveling through space. The existence of the hyperspace jump to go across different systems and the spaceships and worlds." - Fracciolloa

## Pick from Fanuel Muindi

### Star Trek: The Next Generation

*Original Network: First-run syndication*

"I love the exploration of humanity across multiple dimensions in the show. In particular, I like how the show grapples with many ethical and moral dilemmas amidst the vastness of space."





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# Podcast

Recommendation

**Pick from Mónica Feliú-Mójer**

## **Am I Normal?**

*with Mona Chalabi*

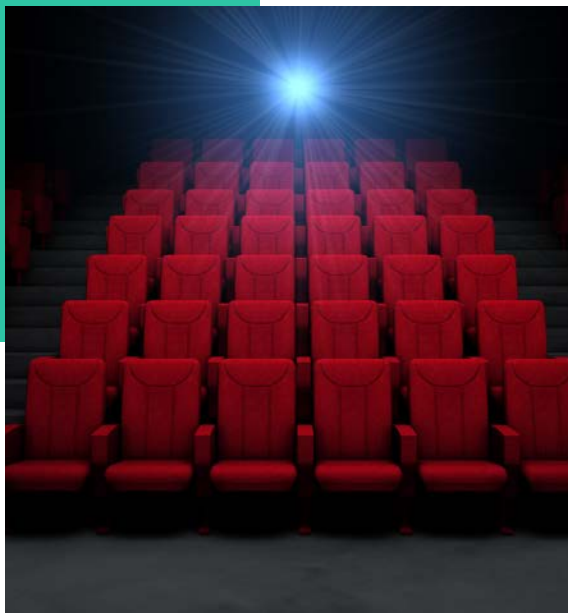
"I love Mona Chalabi's work, especially her podcast and her illustrations. What I love about both is that she conveys data, and often science, in clear and impactful ways, underscoring how they are relevant to our lives. Also she can often communicate political and social nuances too."

Series 15



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KAVLI  
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**“It is good to have an end to  
journey toward; but it is the journey  
that matters, in the end.”**

*— Ursula K. Le Guin,  
The Left Hand of Darkness*

