Colony Space
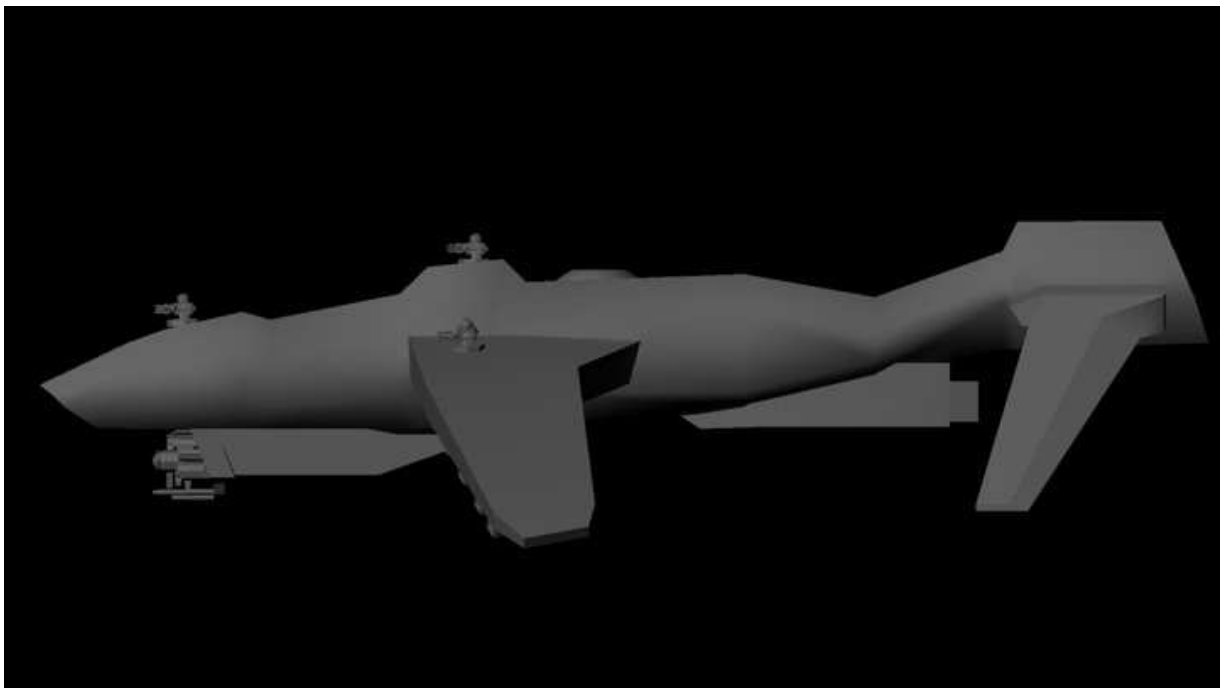
Campaign setting, with supplemental rules, for the *Those Dark Places* game system, by Jonathan Hicks

CORE SETTING and RULE BOOK

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Introduction

The current year, according to the oldest known still-in-use dating system, is 2704. Humanity, after nearly eliminating itself several times through war, disease, financial collapse, cultural malaise, environmental devastation, or all of these at once, has spread out to inhabit a volume of the galaxy approximately 10,000 light years across. In some ways humanity is more homogenous than ever before, due to several hundred years of intermixing, but in others it is more divided than ever. "Race" no longer exists as a viable concept, as the vast majority of humans have some degree of tan skin, brown eyes and curly hair, although exceptions are far from unknown. Aside from college professors, almost everyone speaks one language (with many dialects), known as **Censym**. Old national cultures and traditions have blended and dissolved. In the 28th century, nations are largely ideological constructs, often firmly believed in, with those whose who do not hold the same political/religious/social/economic ideology held suspect at best, despised at worst. However, all nations engage in trade and diplomacy and some degree of cultural exchange, out of necessity.

The region of space occupied, or at least explored, by humanity is known, for historical reasons, as **Colony Space**. Humans live on over 500 planets, moons and orbital stations within that volume, and number about 5 trillion. Four interstellar governments currently exist, as well as several independent star systems. The **Four Powers** are the **United Worlds**, known as UW, the **Co-Operative**, known as Co-Op, **The League of Grand Houses**, known as the League, and **The Hadaam**. The UW is a capitalist democracy which likens itself to the Old Earth United States in its propaganda. It is generally considered to be the most technologically, economically and militarily powerful nation, largely because of its armed forces, known as the **Star Navy**. The UW consists of a little more than 150 planets and many moons and stations. Within its territory is the park planet of **Old Earth**. Not far behind it in influence and power is the socialist, tightly organized but socially liberal Co-Op, which occupies about 100 worlds and moons. The Co-Op is defended by the Defense Co-op, known as **DefenCo**. DefenCo is a smaller but highly disciplined and resourceful fleet, having fought the assembled might of the Star Navy to a draw more than once. The League is a loose federation of large, ancient and fantastically wealthy aristocratic families, which arose hundreds of years ago on what was then the rough frontier of Colony Space. The six currently existing houses are **House Black, House Craydish, House Mott, House Nadr, House Wren**, and **House Makios**, each of which owns many star systems and coordinates its trade and defense with the other Houses through the House Council. The combined fleet of the League is known as the **Legion**. The Hadaam are a closed, secretive and poorly understood nation, the smallest of the major powers, but still holding sway on many worlds. The Hadaam are believed to be a tightly controlled theocracy, but no one save for the inner governments of the other three powers knows for sure, as trade and cultural

interaction is very limited. Its exact military strength and number of worlds is unknown. In addition to the Powers, there are dozens of single system governments, of widely varying power and wealth, known collectively as **The Independents**.

On most of the thousands of planets known by humanity to be within the habitable zones of their stars, life teems with as much variety as it did on Old Earth. However, in its hundreds of years of interstellar travel, humanity has never uncovered unambiguous evidence of a still living non-human sentient species. Two partial exceptions to this are known: several species in Colony Space, such as the small, bear-like **Sloyim** of **Yerba VI**, are roughly as intelligent as chimpanzees or dolphins, though non-technological and unable to communicate with humans. Also, several publically known **artifacts and ruins of indisputably alien origin** exist, carefully protected by the governments in whose territory they lie. At some point in the past, at least a few intelligent and possibly space-faring species did exist, but what happened to them and why is unknown.

Humans in the 28th century, aside from the racial homogenization described above, are much like humans in the 21st century. They are slightly taller, obesity is uncommon, and the average life expectancy for a woman in one of the well developed nations is about 110 years. Medical science is sufficiently advanced that all of the old ailments of mankind, such as cancer, venereal diseases, and heart disease, are curable or controllable, but new diseases, plagues and genetic dysfunctions have arisen, such as **Midnight Disease**, which causes months of increasingly worse hallucinations before sudden death, always at midnight. Most of the ancient religions of mankind, such as Christianity and Islam, still exist, but have been largely supplanted by new or hybrid religions inspired by the move into the vast, silent galaxy, principally **Destinism**, **Unitism**, and the mysterious faith of the Hadaam, known as **Hadaam-je**. The standard of living for most in most nations is reasonably high: unemployment for long periods is rare and extreme poverty very rare. The genders are considered totally equal, and any kind of discrimination is cause for enormous scandal and severe criminal penalty, in all nations save the Hadaam.

For the average person, interstellar space travel is rare and expensive but possible, whilst intersystem travel for work or vacation is not uncommon. The **Fold Drive**, as the name implies, "folds" starships through subatomic dimensions and into a new position in the larger dimensions, practically instantaneously covering many light years. **The Net** is a network of computer networks descended from the late 20th century "Internet". It is free and universally accessible by voice in any building, and in some places outside. Cybernetic and bionic enhancements are known but rare, due to the body's strong tendency to reject electronic implants. Time travel and psionics are as impossible in this time as in the 21st century. **Most people in the 28th century have jobs, families, responsibilities and bills**. Other the hand, Colony Space is large, dark, and dangerous, and offers plenty of chances for unusual occupations, lifestyles, and yes, adventure.

Timeline

20th century: Humans achieve a very limited space flight, visit orbit and moon, send out probes to solar planets and interstellar space.

21st century: Space travel dries up completely as **The Great Recession** stretches on for decades. All former powers become second world countries, China ascendant. But even China falls in the worldwide economic and environmental **Collapse** of the 2050s. Countries fracture and dissolve, billions die in hundreds of small wars, social unrests, famines, droughts, diseases, rising sea levels and wild storms. The **Black Century** commences, human life reduced to survival in most regions. World population dips below 3 billion.

22nd century: Humanity slowly recovers a stable political and economic system, and by 2153 is organized into mostly military totalitarian **Continental Governments**. Space travel is reestablished in 2170, with regime competition-driven founding of colonies on Luna and Mars by 2190. Humans begin to dream again; Continental Governments overthrown by 2202 and replaced by democracies. Worldwide political consolidation begins.

23rd century: Humanity slowly colonizes solar system with aid of the **Ion Drive**, inhabits **Earth** (unified planetary government founded in 2237), **Luna, Orbit, Mars, Asteroid Belt, Jovian Moons, Saturnian Moons**, **Uranian** and **Neptunian Moons**, **Oort Mining Colonies** by 2299. Solar system population stands at 7 billion.

24th century: An Earth tired of war allows the **Colonies** to achieve a bloodless independence in the **Solar Accords of 2317**. In 2338, **Fold Drive** invented. First trip to another star, Proxima Centauri , in 2340, safely returns. Worldwide riots demanding the rapid opening of space for colonization. Rush on to build more drives and larger ships. **First Wave** of **Colony Ships** leaves earth in 2352. Several waves follow.

25th century: **Interstellar Colonization Age**: Humanity spreads out from Earth and then out from other colonies. By 2491 is established on 147 planets, each effectively self-governing. Some begin to lose touch with each other and develop independently.

26th century: In 2500, the five largest colonies form into the **Alliance**, after being asked to absorb smaller, failing colonies, and later begin to actively take them over, "for their own good". In 2555 rapidly expanding Alliance becomes the **Galactic Alliance**. Unification was not willing for most worlds, and papered over very real differences and disagreements. The GA falls in **The War Between the Stars** in 2570, which lasts over a century, off and on.

27th century: By the 2680s, all active conflicts have ended and a new stability emerged, in the form of the Four Powers and many Independents. Galactic population passes 5 trillion.

Today: January 1st, 2704.

I. Guide to the Galaxy

United Worlds

<u>Government</u>

Central executive power in the United Worlds government rests in the **President**, elected for six year terms from and by the **Stellar Assembly**, the law and a policy making body of the UW. Each full member planet of the UW (as opposed to unincorporated colonies) sends a number of **Assembly Members** to the Assembly based on Gross Planetary Product. Thus, the more economically powerful (and usually more populous) worlds have the greatest influence on government policy. The executive office of the government, headed by the President, is assisted in carrying out and enforcing laws by the various Bureaus, such as the **Bureau of Defense**, the **Bureau of Economy**, **Bureau of Population**, etc. Most member planets of the UW have **Planetary Governors**, some have **Nation Councils** with a **Chief Counselor**. The political and military capital world of the UW is **New Dakota**.

<u>Economy</u>

The UW has a large, complex and wealthy capitalist economy, based on trade, material manufacturing and information processing. The UW government generally takes a minimally regulating and taxing role in the economy, and policies are frequently made according to what is believed would be best for business. To make up for this governmental hands -off approach, the huge **multi-stellar corporations**, like **SystemCore**, pride themselves on fair and socially responsible business practices, often competing with each other solely on which is better for the environment, society or culture. A handful of these multi-stellars provide most of the jobs, goods and services enjoyed by UW citizens. The UW currency, almost always carried on secure electronic cards called **tabs**, is known as the **Fiat**.

<u>Culture</u>

The culture of the UW is very diverse, consisting as it does of the native cultures of over 150 very different planets. Almost any kind of food, entertainment, social custom and art can be found among the member worlds. However, on most planets in the UW, virtual reality **Net films, shows, games, concerts, sporting events** and their stars are extremely popular. After work, most UW citizens plug into what's happening on the Net.

<u>Military</u>

The UW is defended by the **Star Navy**, a force of millions of sailors and marines and nearly 2000 starships divided into four Fleets. **Fleet Alpha** is based on and around New

Dakota and its solar system. **Fleets Beta, Delta** and **Gamma** are based in and defend the other three **Sectors** into which UW territory is divided. The largest battleships in the Star Navy, the symbols of UW power, are called **Dreadnaughts**, and resemble thick, midnight black whales, 600 meters in length. A notable example is the **SN** *Apocalypse*, the flagship of the **Admiral of the Navy**.

<u>Important Worlds</u>

Carinae System

Star: **Carinae**

Type	M8 V Red Dwarf
Radius	2.64×10^5 km (0.38 x sol)
Mass	5.07×10^{29} kg (0.25 x sol)
Temperature	2200 K
Luminosity	1.70×10^{25} W (0.04 x sol)

Planet: **New Dakota**
Orbital Radius**:** 2.81×10^7 km (0.19 AU)   Population: 12 billion
Major Cities: Unity City (capital), Arkanam, Wallenburg
Major Industries: Government, Finance, High Technology

Type	Large iron/silicate
Radius	7981.72 km (1.25 x earth)
Surface Area	8.01×10^8 km^2
Land Area	5.52×10^8 km^2 (3.71 x earth)
Mass	1.12×10^{25} kg (1.88 x earth)
Density	5.27 g/cm^3 (0.95 x earth)
Composition	35.4% iron, 32.2% oxygen, 20.6% silicon, 10.5% nickel, 1.3% other metals, trace other elements
Gravity	11.70 m/s^2 (1.20 x earth)
Escape Velocity	13.66 km/s

Period	19.16 hours
Axis Tilt	62.22 °

Water	32 %
Ice	11 %

Atmosphere Type	Standard breathable
Pressure	115.75 kPa (1.14 x earth)

Climate Type	Cool
Min Temp	269 K (-3 °C)
Avg Temp	294 K (21 °C)
Max Temp	331 K (58 °C)

Moons: **Arda, Alman, and Kellor**

System: **Carinae II-V**, all small rocky worlds, **Carinae II** seven AUs from ND

Special Notes: Capital of United Worlds, home of UW Government and Star Navy.

Other important worlds: **Dalben, Amrit, Risello**

Star system designed using donjon Star System Generator (http://donjon.bin.sh/scifi/system/)

The Co-Operative

Government and Economy

Co-Op is a centrally planned, government owned and operated economy, wherein the interstellar government is a large co-op built from the many planetary co-ops, which are in turn built from the local co-ops. The main planning committee for the whole nation is the **Co-Op Council**, which is lead by an official called the **Moderator**, but he or she has very little executive authority outside of leading the meetings of the Council. All decisions are made by debate and vote, with 60% of the vote needed for a proposal to pass (the consent of the Moderator is not needed). All agriculture and industry on Co-Op planets are owned and planned for by interstellar, planetary and local **Coordination Co-Ops**. Special functions, like defense, have special co-ops, such as **DefenCo**. Corporations and banks are illegal, all such functions being in the hands of a co-op. All land and means of production, and most property above the clothing, household furnishings level is communally owned. Co-op does not have currency in the normal sense, but when some system of abstracted transaction is needed, it is expressed in a unit called an **Okay.** The political and military capital world of Co-Op is **Jamesworld**.

Culture

Brother/Sisterhood, sharing, equality, fairness, cooperative labor and self-expression are principal values of Co-Op society, which is far more culturally homogenous among its many worlds than is the UW. Each person is expected to **do his or her job for the good of all,** but afterwards **recreation and art** are pursued to some degree by most. Net programs are not as popular as in the UW, replaced by **large outdoor plays and festivals**. **Recreational euphoric and psychotropic drug use** is legal and common. Most people are part of a **line or group marriage**, sexual mores are very relaxed, and children are often raised as much by **community "Aunts and Uncles"** as by their biological parents. Co-Op culture is characterized by a combination of discipline, shared responsibility and personal freedom.

Military

The **Defense Co-Op**, or DefenCo, is the best example of the ability of Co-Opers to plan, organize and accomplish by group agreement. It consists of millions of sailors and marines and over 1000 starships, organized into six **Waves**, one for each **Sector** of Co-Op territory. The largest ships of Defenco are called **Defenders**, such as the **CO** *Sword of Justice*, and are roughly equivalent in size and power to SN Dreadnaughts.

Important Worlds

Cornflower System

Star: **Cornflower** (K0 V Orange Main Sequence)
Planet: **Jamesworld** (10695.51 km   (1.68 x earth))
Orbital Radius: 6.79 x 10^7 km   (0.45 AU)
Population: 14 billion
Government: Co-Op
Major Cities: Equality, Leeburg
Major Industries: Agriculture, Manufacturing, Tourism
Moons: Lunelle
System: two rock planets, two gas giants
Special Notes: Capital of Co-Op

Other important worlds: Hansen, Cordello, Sinai

The League of Grand Houses

<u>Government, Economy and Culture</u>

The League is an agreement between the very independent, very different **Grand Houses** that working together in the face of powers like the UW or Co-Op is the best method of preserving their ancient, highly tradition-bound, aristocratic, socially stratified way of life and ensuring that average citizens on League planets, known as **Peasants** if of the lowest class and **Burgers** if of the middle class, remain overawed by and loyal to the nobles. For hundreds of years, it has worked. Thus, League governance features a great deal more ceremony and pageantry, titles and ranks, than in the governments of the other interstellars. Each Grand House is lead by a **Grand Duke** or **Duchess**, and each one of these sits on the **House Council**, which is supported in the day-to-day coordination and administration of multi-house economic, military or social efforts by the **Civil Registry**. Each House independently owns and governs, according to its own lights, between 12 and 32 star systems. There is no single currency.

Each House is also known around Colony Space for some economic or cultural specialty, and the wealthy League has the reputation of being the source of all the finer things in life. **House Black** is known for **fine weapons and armor manufacture**. **House Craydish** is known for the production of both **military and luxury starships**. **House Mott** is known for supporting **music, poetry, and other arts**, and producing many notable artists of several kinds. **House Nadr** is known supporting **exploration and advanced scientific research**. **House Wren** is known for its **advanced medical arts**. **House Makios** is known for supporting the **finest universities** in Colony Space. Cultural life in each Grand House territory is largely oriented around its signature industry.

<u>Military</u>

Every House maintains its own fleet of starships. When these fleets are coordinated and combined, an awe-inspiring ritual known as **The Gathering**, this force of hundreds of thousands of spacers and marines and nearly 1000 starships is known as **The Legion**. The largest ships owned by the League are called **Warchariots**, such as the **LGH** *Black Lance* , and are roughly equivalent in size and power to SN Dreadnaughts.

Important Worlds

Hannish System

Star: **Hane** (K4 V Orange Main Sequence)
Planet: **Corvis** (10405.53 km   (1.63 x earth))
Orbital Radius**:** 9.46 x 10^7 km   (0.63 AU)
Population: 9 billion
Major Cities: Palla, Comrista
Major Industries: Weapons and armor manufacture, fine products
Moons: Forda
System: two rock planets, two gas giants
Special Notes: Home of House Black

Other important worlds: Morvan, Kalleos, Tribetta, Hoskis, Rellmet

The Hadaam

<u>Government</u>

The general public of the other nations of Colony Space knows very little for sure about the Hadaam. Their territory is farthest away from Old Earth, and they are known for being secretive, unfriendly, and, when pressed, aggressive. It is estimated that the Hadaam control about 40 star systems, and it is believed that their society is the poorest and most oppressed of the major powers, ruled by a totalitarian theocracy known for brutal punishments of crime and heresy. This may be propaganda, but if so, the Hadaam do not care enough to correct it. Most people have never seen a Haddam citizen in real life, only as stylized villains in Net films.

<u>Economy</u>

It is conjectured that the Hadaam have some kind of command economy, similar to the Co-Op, but much less concerned with economic justice.

<u>Culture</u>

The Hadaam do not allow travelers to visit their worlds, and do not willingly allow information about their culture to be collected. On the rare occasions when a Hadaamite has traveled outside of Hadaam, he or she has been seen to wear oil-colored robes and floppy hats, regardless of gender or weather or task. Their Censym has an accent other peoples find hard to understand. What is known about Hadaamite religion (see below) is a the result of espionage.

<u>Military</u>

Due to their having been involved in several skirmishes with the UW and Co-Op, some things *are* known, at least to governments, about the Hadaam military. It is relatively small, about 600 starships, which are mostly older and less technologically advanced than is the norm in the other interstellar militaries. Despite this, the Hadaam respond violently to any violations of their space, and are generally left alone, the only traffic being occasional, heavily guarded trade and diplomatic missions.

<u>Important Worlds</u>

Tallvrim System

Star: **Tallvrim** (G7 V Yellow Main Sequence)
Planet: **Bakr Monos** (9531.71 km   (1.50 x earth))
Orbital Radius**:** 1.36 x 10^8 km   (0.91 AU)
Population: 5 billion
Major Cities: Hajin
Major Industries: manufacturing
Moons: none
System: two gas giants
Special Notes: Capital of Hadaam

Other important worlds: Unknown

Independent Systems

The Independents are a diverse collection of star systems. Some are wealthy, some are poor. Some have (relatively) powerful militaries, some have practically none. Some wield political and cultural influence among the Four Powers, some are virtually unknown. The only thing all of them share is that the direct authority of their government ends at the edge of their star's Oort cloud. Examples of this diversity:

Ahemait System

Star**:** Ahemait (M2 V Red Dwarf)
Planet: **Mekilor** (radius: 5760.70 km (0.90 x earth))
Orbital Radius**:** 2.89 x 10^7 km   (0.19 AU)
Population: 9.5 billion
Government: Technocracy
Major Cities: Ailor, Reliat
Major Industries: Power systems, space craft, limited AI computers
Moons: Calat
System: Ahemait I (small rocky planet)
Special Notes: ruled by Council of Science, ruins of ancient alien city

Idera System

Star: Idera (A3 IV White Subgiant)
Planet: **Sewearth** (radius: 4530.57 km (0.71 x earth))
Orbital Radius: 1.27 x 10^9 km (8.48 AU)
Population: 4.7 billion
Government: Monarchy
Major Cities: Rand, Bessig
Major Industries: Tourism
Moons: Phaen, Calax
System: two rocky planets, closer to star
Special Notes: getaway/tax shelter for rich and famous of Colony Space

Orchan System

Star: Orchan (M5 V Red Dwarf)
Planet: **Gezor** (radius: 4487.65 km   (0.70 x earth))
Oribtal Radius: 1.87 x 10^7 km (0.13 AU)
Population: 3.4 billion
Goverment: Military dictorship
Major Cities: Fezl, Gomash
Major Industries: Manufacturing, weapons
Moons: Belz
System: 3 rocky worlds, 2 gas giants, asteroid belt
Special note: Hostile government seeks to start own interstellar nation, most powerful independent

II. Life in Colony Space

<u>Religion in the 28th Century: Destinism, Unitism, and Hadaam-je</u>

Religion, faith and spirituality survived and even flourished in the long, dark centuries after humans left Old Earth in large numbers. However, the ancient faiths of the 21st century have, by the 28th, receded into the background, replaced by faiths that spoke more to the hearts and minds of people traveling between stars or scratching out a hard living on a hostile alien world. In the contemporary age the two predominant religions, each practiced by trillions of humans all across Colony Space, are **Destinism** and **Unitism**. Both faiths hold that the galaxy (some say the universe) has itself a soul or spirit, and how one understands this reality and adapts one's thought, speech and actions to this galactic soul determines one's happiness in this life and ultimate fate in the next. How they characterize this soul and the way should one live because of it differ markedly, however. Destinism holds that the **Galaxy Soul** is a friend, even a parent, to humans, loves them, and wants them to spread through, inhabit and control the galaxy, which willingly gives itself to humans. It is their destiny to fill the galaxy. Unitism holds that humans and the Galaxy soul are one and the same, differing only in how you conceive them, and it should be the goal of humans to realize this fact and live in harmony with the galaxy, without necessarily filling or possessing it. Destinism finds the Soul in outward things, Unitism in the inward person. Both faiths have literal and metaphorical interpretations, conservative, moderate and liberal interpretations, and many different types of churches that teach them. Destinism is more prevalent in the UW, Unitism in the Co-Op, but both have followers in both nations. Humans on League worlds practice both faiths, but are more likely to be followers of older religions like Christianity, Buddhism or Islam, sometimes in very different forms than they held in the 21st century. The dominant faith in Hadaam is unquestionably **Hadaam-je**. Indeed, that religion gives the nation its drive and unity. Hadaam-je does not believe that anything even metaphorically like a Galaxy Soul exits, and that instead humans and their (increasable) genetic perfection are the path to salvation or transcendence. And, of course, a sizable percentage of humans believe in no spiritual reality, or in themselves, or in not much at all.

<u>Censym</u>

Traced by contemporary scholars to an amalgam of English, Chinese and Arabic that emerged as a trade language in the early Colonial Era (@ 2400 AD), Censym is today spoken in all corners of Colony Space. For most, it is the only language they know. Literacy is universal across Colony Space. Censym would be, except for a few words, unintelligible to a speaker of any 21st century Earth language.

Multi-stellar Corporations

Although banned everywhere besides the UW, the handful of multi-stellar corporations that do exist possess power, wealth and influence that rivals the most powerful of the Independents. Each corporation is a conglomerate of many different companies in many different types of industry, organized and directed by a central **Board of Directors**, head by a **CEO**. Most of what you can buy, use and do in the UW is provided for you by a multi-stellar, and the Fiats with which you buy it come from your job with a company owned by a multi-stellar. These corporations also have the ear, whenever they wish it, of the President and Assemblymen. They are not, however, sinister powers, at least as long as growth and profit are on the rise, and the UW keeps expanding and creating new markets, and the trade balances with other nations are in the UW's favor. Each corporation has a main headquarters planet, and factories and offices on most planets in the nation. Each corporation also has its own trade fleet, its own security force, and, it is rumored, its own intelligence network. The four largest multi-stellars in 2704 are **SystemCore**, based on **Caltravia Minor**, **World Services**, based on **Inoch III**, **Unified Holdings**, based on **Walldensen**, and **Quantum Products**, based on **Geontis**.

The Net

The **Net** is a pervasive means of communication, commerce, entertainment and occasionally warfare present in different forms in all nations and independent systems. Each planet has a major server for the network, and the networks are connected between star systems by messages sent in the same manner as per Fold Drive. **It is free to all citizens** and **built into all buildings**, and even the pavement in most cities. To access the Net to send a message, perform a search for information, watch a holographic film or show, etc., one merely says "Net" into the air and waits for the tone to sound or a holographic butler avatar to appear, before stating one's request. One may access **a virtual reality space** within the Net for all of the above purposes by wearing a silver headband. One can then control the Net's functions by thought. The Net in most places is regulated by the government's law enforcement agencies. And, despite this, exploited by criminals.

Space Travel

While travel within a solar system takes days by **Advanced Ion Drive (AID)**, travel effectively faster than light between star systems happens almost instantaneously by means of a **Fold Drive**. In addition to the three spatial dimensions and the one of time, there exist up to 10 additional subatomic dimensions, folded up "beside" the main four. The Fold Drive is a means of "folding" or "twisting" a mass, usually a starship out beyond the gravity well of a planet or star, through these dimensions and into a new relation to the larger dimensions, effectively moving the ship across a number of light years per day determined by the power of the ship's engines, which accomplish this folding with

incredibly powerful and complex magnetic fields. All nations and independent systems in Colony Space possess this technology, with the most powerful engines in the possession the various militaries. There exist military, commercial and private starships, but the private ships are so expensive as to be only available to the very wealthy. The average person does not have occasion to travel between the stars very often, but when he or she does, he or she contracts the services of a **star liner company**, owned and operated by a multi-stellar corporation, transport co-op, or Grand House. An example of a civilian star liner is the **SC** ***Wayfaring Stranger***, owned by a SystemCore company called **Caltravia Star Lanes**.

Medical Science

In the developed nations and larger Independents, medical care is provided free or at a very low cost, even in the UW. All doctors, nurses, etc., work for multi-stellars, medical co-ops or Grand Houses. Clinics and hospitals are plentiful all over Colony Space, and can be used by appointment or walk-in. The majority of known physical diseases can be cured, limbs can be re-grown, most mental illness can be effectively treated, and addictions that are not desired are virtually unknown. Almost all drugs are legal and cheap in Co-Op, legal but heavily taxed in the UW, and illegal in the League and Hadaam space.

Many Machines on Ix

The advanced technological nations of the 28th century are fully capable of producing truly artificially intelligent computers, powerful robots, near perfect human-like androids, cybernetic limbs, etc. But all such advanced machines are banned or strictly regulated in all nations and most Independents. The reason is that once they were not, and quickly got out of hand. Many worlds during the colonial era experimented with intelligent, world-governing computers, life-like androids, cyborgs and such, but quickly found out that they could not control or relate to such beings. In some cases there were short wars between computers or androids and humans, and in other cases there were massive, brutal purges of intelligent computers or androids before there were even any problems.

To prevent such strife, it is illegal on most worlds to make or use a machine that approaches human intelligence, awareness or other capabilities, except in highly regulated circumstances. Limited AI computers are used on commercial and military starships, due to their complexity. Governments are also rumored to have massive computer minds thinking for them. Robots are used extensively in manufacturing, engineering, research and exploration, but they are made to appear obviously non-human and their intelligence and independence are strictly task-specific. The use of cybernetic limbs was made unnecessary by the development of vat grown natural replacement limbs that are just like the old ones. Rouge AIs are believed to inhabit the depths of the Net, but this has never been proven.

International Relations and War

Since 2682, there have been no large-scale battles or wars in Colony Space, but a bevy of skirmishes, retaliations, police actions, terrorist attacks, crime sprees and acts of piracy. Each of the Four Powers would like to expand its territory and spread its government, economy and culture, but each is also very wary of the destruction, death and loss of profits that comes with war. So a state of Cold War exists, with each trying to outrace the other to inhabit new systems, and small battles happening when who got there first is disputed. However, these conflicts are usually quickly resolved and knowledge of them repressed by the nations, as they all aim to present a positive public face, with the exception of the Hadaam, who could not care less. The UW and Co-Op, possessing opposite political and economic systems, are particular rivals, though they maintain a busy trade and frequent cultural exchange: products, art and news flow freely. The League is more reserved, but maintains a busy trade in fine products, information, and art. The Hadaam trade rarely and little, usually necessities, and try to keep a firm clamp down on information about themselves coming out or information about the rest of Colony Space coming in to Hadaamites.

Space piracy is uncommon because starships are so expensive, but around the fringes of each nation, and particularly in Independent space, it is a real problem, costing many lives, much treasure, and serious aggravation to national militaries and police forces. Pirates are known to come from all nations, but many seem to be Hadaamites who have escaped that society's oppression and now live by their wits along the spaceways.

Bodai-Jitsu

Bodai-Jitsu was one of the earliest martial arts to be developed on colony worlds, and also later in space combat, often done in the early days in zero gravity. Combining dozens of ancient martial arts and centuries of planetside and space combat, bodai-jitsu is a blindingly fast, brutally effective fighting style, existing in many sub-styles and taught in some civilian schools and all militaries. Emphasizing guard-entering ducks and dodges, fast, penetrating strikes and blocks with hands, elbows and knees, as well as liquid grappling and throwing techniques, bodai-jitsu is a powerful all-around combat and self-defense system. In zero g, it teaches the use of acrobatic flips off surrounding objects and walls and very fluid evasions and escapes, executing twists and turns which cannot be performed in gravity, although some experts in the style *can* use the same moves while under gravity. It is particularly highly developed by SN Special Forces, who practice a version employing handguns and rifles, and among the warriors of House Black, whose particular style is called *Baras-do* and practiced empty handed or with a long two-ended spike called a *kalamat*, which can be broken in two and used with a spike in each hand. High level masters of Baras-do devote their lives to their art, are practically unkillable, even with a gun, and are highly sought after as assassins and anti-assassin protection.

III. Important and Interesting Persons of Colony Space

Yassenfay Yorva
President, United Worlds
Unity City, New Dakota

Yassenfay Elowise Yorva never wanted to be anything other than an academic and a Professor of Sociology. Born and raised on the typical UW industrial world of **Geontis**, Yorva soon achieved just that. But the mild-mannered professor had one particular gift that soon thrust her into politics, thanks to a cousin who was an Assemblyperson from Geontis: she could easily explain complex and difficult ideas and make them seem like the best idea ever. First drafted by her cousin as a consultant and speech writer, Yorva was eventually talked into running herself and easily won, becoming at 38 Assemblyperson from Geontis. Through three terms, to no one's surprise but her own, Yorva distinguished herself by her calm manner, quiet-voiced yet powerful speeches, and nuanced knowledge of UW society, which showed in the wise and balanced legislation she crafted. At the age of 52, she is now 2 years into her first term as President and very popular among UW citizens, though she of course has numerous political enemies, who believe that the thoughtful, judicious President is not a fit leader for the vibrant, expansive UW. Yorva is tall and slender, with tan skin, blue eyes and straw colored hair. She resides in the **Presidential House** in **Unity City**. She is once divorced, single, with no children, and is a member of the **Golden Path Destinist Cathedral of Unity City**, attending when her duties and security detail allow.

Barden Kellman
Captain, SN *Apocalypse*
Alpha Sector

Captain Kellman is a lifelong Navy man descended from several generations of Navy men and women, born on New Dakota and raised, largely, in space. He was selected for SN Officer Academy at 18, became Second Lieutenant four years later, and distinguished himself on many kinds of starships in many different roles, rising quickly through the ranks before receiving his first captaincy at 32, of the gunboat **SN *Last Warning***. Other postings followed, on the frigates **SN *Hornet*** and **SN *Dark Lady***. Then, at age 46, in 2703, he was given the most prestigious captaincy in the Navy, the Fleet flagship, **SN *Apocalypse***, in recognition of his exemplary record and talented leadership, both in starship administration and in combat against pirates and Hadaam skirmishers. Kellman's job is now less exciting and more political, as he must frequently host High Command members on inspections of SN bases, Assemblypersons on fact finding missions and political tours, and sometimes the President herself. Kellman longs to be back patrolling the sectors, but is likely to be promoted even higher and further from field duty. His is universally liked by the sailors and marines under him, who consider it a privilege to be under his command and regard him almost as an invincible god. Kellman is tall, lean and muscular, with dark tan skin and brown eyes. He is an accomplished tactical and strategic commander, pilot, navigator, marksman and bodai-jitsu master, who is, unfortunately, losing his hair. He has never married, has no kids, but does have a long-time girlfriend in Unity City. He is also very close to his mother, and unreligious.

Samkay Malothrace
CEO, SystemCore
System City, Caltravia Minor

A small, olive-complected man with a large, egg-shaped head, thinning hair and large, black eyes, Samkay Malothrace got to where he is, CEO of the most powerful of the powerful multi-stellars, by keeping one thing in mind: profit. Both his own, and his corporation's. Now one of the wealthiest men in Colony Space, on a par with the Grand Dukes of the League, Malothrace was born to low-level plant managers on the out-of-the-way planet **Blosil IX** in the Gamma Sector. A sickly, weak child, Malothrace yearned to be someone else. He excelled in school and developed an interest in his parent's multi-national, **SystemCore**. As soon as he could, he left Blosil and enrolled in SystemCore's vast and complex educational system on **Caltravia Minor.** He excelled even more in this viciously competitive environment, his innovative and sometimes brutal business strategies causing him to get noticed by SC officials early, and be assured of a job upon graduation. As a low level manager, Malothrace looked out for his own interests with a singular passion, but was nothing if not strictly ethical, which he saw as a business strategy, not a personal moral feeling. Throwing himself into work, deals and advancement, Malothrace had no time for friends, lovers, or even enemies, as any potential rivals were soon left in the dust. In a relatively short time, Malothrace found himself on SystemCore's Board of Directors, a dizzying height for a poor boy from Blosil. But he was no longer poor: his personal net worth approached 1 trillion Fiats. When the ageing CEO retired, Malothrace was the obvious choice. He is now 56, and directs SystemCore from his towering office on Caltravia Minor, too busy to notice his crushing loneliness.

Kale Jodoni
Mercenary
Somewhere in Gamma Sector

Kale Jodoni hates her job. Which isn't saying much, as Jodoni hates just about everyone, everything, and everyplace. This hatred is not the result of a bad childhood or some injustice done to her: her childhood was comfortable and free of major trama, and she has been very successful in her chosen profession. For Jodoni hatred is a philosophy, a way of life, a relation to the universe that works for her. She has found that when she hates things they tend to go away, and Jodoni dearly loves her solitude. Not that she goes around indiscriminately hurting people and blowing things up. No, she has a job that gives her a good reason to hurt people and blow things up. Jodoni is a freelance warmaker, a "security expert" on paper, a mercenary and protector in fact. She hires herself out to individuals, groups, corporations and governments that need either protection or to get around someone else's protection. Jodoni does not take just any paying job, she does not commit cold blooded murder or assassination, and does not harm children in any circumstance. Pretty much anything else, she's down for. With her large and highly illegal collection of weapons, and armored, FD-capable shuttle, Jodoni is wanted by several different police forces and militaries, but owed favors by as many more. Tall, statuesque and powerfully built, Jodoni has long features, pale skin, a small red mouth, piercing blue eyes and rust-colored hair. Jodoni takes many loves in many star ports, but forms no relationships.

Hephraim Beqwell Black
Grand Duke, House Black
Emrell Manor, Corvis

Being born into an ancient, powerful and almost unimaginably wealthy family, or clan of many interrelated families, to be exact, has its perks: the best education, the finest lifestyle, the galaxy at your fingertips. But all young Hephraim, born into the leadership sept of Family Beqwell, wanted was to be a priest in the **Buddhisto-Catholic Church**, which holds that Christ *has* returned, many times on many different planets, and gotten the same reception, roughly speaking, as he did on **Old Earth**. But He keeps returning, trying with bodhisattva-like stubborn compassion to save an unwilling human race. This idea enthralled Beqwell Black as a young man, and he tried repeatedly to become a priest, or better yet a monk on some isolated monastery moon. But his elders had other ideas, and thwarted his every effort to enter the church. Eventually Beqwell become a warrior and later a commander in the House and Legion militaries, and resigned himself to House and League governance, discovering a talent if not a passion for it. He is a learned, patient and fair man, dedicated to the furtherance of the fortunes of the League and their system of government. He also privately practices Buddhisto-Catholicism, and supports with his substantial funds that tiny Church. Other family members, who are mostly unreligious, do not like this, but can do nothing about it, as Beqwell is firmly in power and has a wide base of support in the House and among House peasants and burgers. And they can't argue that it dents the family treasury much. Beqwell is still trim and fit at 60, with graying blond hair and deep brown eyes, and of moderate height. He is happily married to Forsythia Beqwell Black, and has 17 children. His personal cruiser is the **HB** *Bodhicitta.*

Gorum
Selected of the Hadaam
Hajin, Bakr Monos

Gorum (for he has no other name) was selected to be leader of all Hadaam in the same way all Hadaamite leaders are selected: he was the sole survivor of a brutal series of physical and psychological trials inflicted upon innocent orphans. Cruelty was not the motive: the Hadaam devoutly believe that the most genetically fit should rule, in matters temporal and spiritual, and therefore the youth who was tough enough to survive was the one meant by **Natural Selection** to rule. Now 82, Gorum was that youth, and has ever since ruled the affairs of the worlds of Hadaam in strict and fanatical accordance to Hadaam-je and the *je-sau* **law** it proscribes. Not so much evil as perfectly amoral, Gorum makes decisions by asking himself which is the route most likely to winnow out the fit from the unfit, both among the Hadaam and in the rest of Colony Space. Clearly, the Hadaam are the most fit, as they have survived among the underdeveloped, impoverished worlds on the outermost rim of Colony Space. It only remains for them to seize what they have been **Selected** for. Still vigorous and wily, Gorum aims to be around when it happens, and lead the new **Empire of the Fit**. He is very tall, almost skeletally thin, with long fingers, black eyes, no hair and a sharply hooked nose. He is entitled to mate with any female he chooses, but lost all interest in sex 30 years ago, having more than made his contribution to the pool.

Jerol Garcy
Moderator, Co-Op Council
Equality, Jamesworld

By far the youngest "leader" of any interstellar government, Garcy dislikes his role as Moderator, but is stuck with it for the next two years, having been selected at random from the members of the Council. What Garcy loves is organizing: farm work, games, art, romantic entanglements, you name it, Jerol Garcy has planned it and brought it to fruition, multiple times. That's how he rose to become a member of the Council at 32, young even by Co-Op standards. A native of **Haskersee Collective Farm** on Jamesworld, Garcy has a pretty good idea of who his biomom is (the round nose it unmistakable) but no real idea who his father is, and this is just fine with him. He grew up, as almost all Co-Opers do, being raised by dozens of older men and women, learning early to do farm tasks as well as take up an art form, in his case playing a stringed instrument called a *belleska*. A hard worker and a talented player, Garcy had to give up both when his lot came up to join **DefenCo**. Not physically suited for combat, he was given an job in the logistics corps, and there his talent for organization gained him much respect from his brothers and sisters. Taking on more and more responsibilities, Garcy found himself on the Council, and the rest, as they say, is history. Of moderate height and mildly overweight, Garcy has fair skin, curly brown hair, that famous round, slightly piggish nose, and bright, jovial sky blues eyes. The feature most beloved by his many lovers of both sexes, however, is his curly light brown beard. Garcy is a convinced Unitist, and rarely misses a concert, sing along, or orgy, expect when called upon, to his distaste, to be the "Head" of Co-Op to foreign leaders.

Aelleou Aellai
Net film star
Bollytown, Amrit

At the ripe old age of 24, Aellai is a veteran, multiply awarded film **VR Net film** star nearing the end of her career. Star of such blockbuster films as *The Colonial's Woman*, *Jasbeth and Jogar*, and *Tales from a Distant Star*, Aellai has done everything in the business, and is recognized even outside of UW space, where she is venerated as one of the greatest beauties of all time. Indeed, actual cases of men and women passing out from seeing her radiant face have been documented. Tall, lithe, and perfectly proportioned, with a giant mane of golden hair, Aellai's appeal seems to cross all cultural definitions of beauty. The woman underneath the incredible physical form is introverted and loves to read … and doesn't know if that violates a stereotype or fulfils one. Born and raised on the rich and glamorous world of **Amrit**, where most Net films are made, Aellai's story is *not* rags to riches, an unknown talent discovered in a diner. Her father was diplomat, her mother an actress, so charisma and being seen were in her blood and destiny. Looking toward her future, Aellai dreams of marrying someone not a Net hunk and starting a family on some remote Gamma sector planet, like her character Renla in *The Border*. That will not, of course, happen, and in the meantime Aellai is considering offers for her next blockbuster, pondering which of three Net hunks to be seen with next week, and reading literary novels and poetry. And trying to write her own.

Quantum
Hacker
Somewhere in the Net

The cliché is true in her case: never seen in public and rarely seen in private without her **silver VR Net headband**, Quantum lives on the Net. Her physical form is non-descript, her Net form a packet of silver light. Her real name is unknown, even to her few friends, all fellow Netizens. Where she was born, who her parents where, how she came to be what she is today are all likewise unknown. What is very widely known are several legendary hacks she has perpetrated, such as convincing the AI of the **SN *Apocalypse*** that it needed to delete the firing programs for all of its guns and disarm all of its missiles. For this and similar political statements, Quantum is famous, infamous or wanted dead or alive, depending on where you go in Colony Space. Quantum, laying on her long couch and drifting undetectably in the Net, is unfazed by those who would delete *her* and continues her quest to know what she should not know and do what she should not do. On some of her long trips deep into the superstructure of the ancient network of networks, she faintly senses minds at work, minds superhuman in power, pulling strings on the human world. Quantum wants to find these minds and stop them... or join them.

Camus Dobrei
Commander, SN Intelligence Service ("SNIS")
Whereabouts classified

Camus Leeam Dobrei is the real name, top-secret of course, of one of SNIS's most effective field agents, and if there is one man who knows where all the bodies are buried in Colony Space, it is Dobrei. Most people, even most "adventurers" and military personnel, see only a fraction of Colony Space, but Camus Dobrei has seen, lived in, and analyzed most of it. He has been farm worker on Jamesworld, a cultist on Bakr Monos, a star liner pilot in Delta Sector, a warlord on Gezor, a man reading a holopaper on your maglev home from work, a disciple of House Black's greatest *Baras-do* masters, a Net soap opera star... or maybe he has just impersonated all the above. Who he really is, where really is from is unknown, even to himself. He knew, once, for he remembers a large, blue and green planet, a home among rolling hills, riding a beast called a *galumpha*... and then it is gone, overlain with another personality and another person's life. He knows his last job, his current job, and where the next one will come from, and these are the great solidities of his life. He is a man of many skills, as is required in his profession, of broad if not deep learning. Dobrei prefers to prevent or escape fights, to avoid attracting attention, but has on occasion fought his way out of a pack of highly trained commandos who were set on his trail after his cover was blown, armed only with his hands, elbows and knees. Similarly, his appearance is not one to draw attention: in the rare times when he is not in disguise, he is of average height, has a bland face neither handsome nor unattractive, and average weight, hair, eye and skin color. An average man in every way but his mind, which is quick and brilliant, if empty of any purpose save the current and next jobs. He knows where the bodies are, but then promptly forgets, assigned to dig up new bodies. *Is* "Camus Dobrei" his real name? He thinks so. Like everything else in his world, it is a matter of who asks, and how.

IV. Roleplaying in Colony Space

Using Colony Space in Your *Those Dark Places* Games

Those Dark Places, a sci-fi horror roleplaying game designed by Jonathon Hicks, is both the inspiration and the backbone of *Colony Space* as a roleplaying game. That said, CS is not necessarily a sci-fi horror setting. It certainly can be: gene-stealing cultists from Hadaam, for example, are certainly horrific. But CS can be used for almost any sort of sci-fi campaign you can think of: action, adventure, war, investigation, exploration, intellectual/philosophical, etc. This *Core Setting and Rule Book* and the source books *Star Navy* and *Tech* (many others to follow) are designed to be both detailed and have a distinct character, as well as leave plenty up to the GM to design. In what follows are a few refinements and/or additions to the basic rules, as well as character guidelines, equipment rules, and Game Mastering ideas. The setting, incidentally, is dedicated to Mr. Hicks, Frank Herbert, Robert Anson Heinlein, Philip K. Dick and Gene Roddenberry.

Supplemental Rules

New Stat Generation Rules

Instead of assigning rolled scores down the list of stats, roll (as per the rules) four numbers, and then assign them to your stats according to your character concept. If you want to play a mercenary, for example, put your highest numbers in Strength and Agility. You can still move one point from one stat to another.

New Skill Rules

Number of skills at character creation:

The number of skills you can select is equal to your Intelligence score divided by three and rounded up, plus three. Thus, a character with Int 10 has seven skills.

Untrained use of a skill:

What if you want to fire a gun/ pilot a starship, but have no training (do not have the skill in your list)? In this case all difficulty modifiers go up one or two levels, at the GM's discretion. If firing in this situation would have been Average, it is now hard, because you don't know what you are doing. Flying a ship untrained would likely be Difficult if not Impossible.

Improving skills at character creation:

You got a set six points for all groups, but cannot put more than two points into any one skill.

New Skills for the Colony Space Character

Agility:

Bodai-Jitsu

Skill in the martial art. Aids striking, evading, and moving, granting a +1 to Initiative rolls, another 2 meters to all types of Movement per round (without penalty on actions while moving at "jogging" speed), and a +1 to the DV of melee attacks per 2 levels of Bodai-Jitsu above 12 (starting obviously at level 14). An opponent's attacks on a Bodai-jitsu using character take a -1 per every 2 levels of the character's skill above 12. Bodai-jitsu users do *not* lose their next attacks when they *successfully* parry a blow. A Bodai-Jitsu user may, after a successful melee attack, throw an opponent a number of meters equal to their movement score and cause 1/2 Str damage, or place an opponent in any one of a large number of painful holds or locks, rending that opponent unable to move or attack until they succeed at either a Str or Agil action roll with a -3 modifier to their stat.

A master of Bodai-jitsu is a very dangerous individual, but nothing compared to masters of the sub-style *Baras-do*. A character *may not* learn *Baras-do* at character creation, a teacher must be sought out , and paid. A character who does learn *Baras-do* increases by 2 all modifiers mentioned above (+3 or -3 per 2 levels specifically gained in *Baras-do*, etc).

Stealth

The ability to move and perform actions while not being detected. Skill in silent movement and concealment. The skill of criminals, special forces commandos and assassins. Successful skills rolls mean the PC's action was not noticed by any human senses, but may still have been detected by electronic ones.

Zero G Movement

Most people are disoriented or even nauseous in zero gravity. Characters with experience in this skill suffer no ill physical or psychological effects from zero g, and, with a successful roll, no penalties on any actions, and an extra meter of movement.

Thievery

The ability to pick locks, both physical and electronic, and take things without being noticed, either from a building or a pocket. May require special tools.

Piloting

The ability to fly and land aircraft and basic spacecraft, like shuttles. Without GM consent, does not cover fighter combat, which must be gained as a separate skill (though a character with Piloting *could* simply fly a fighter).

Intelligence:

Business/Economics

Knowledge of how to make a business plan, market and sell products or services, and do bookkeeping for a business. Also covers a basic knowledge of economic systems, banking and finance.

Religion

An understanding of the beliefs and practices of religions both contemporary and ancient. On a successful role, may pass a true believer of a given faith.

Agriculture

Knowledge of how to plant, tend and harvest crops and raise livestock (with basic veterinary skill) . Also knowledge of how to run and repair agricultural equipment, and a basic understanding of farm/ranch management and agribusiness.

Colony Space Cultures

A familiarity with the many and diverse cultures and societies of Colony Space, their traditions, taboos, mores and history. On a successful role may gain knowledge about a culture or not look like a fool in culture-specific situation.

Colony Space Geography

A knowledge of the many star systems, planets, governments, organizations and institutions of Colony Space, knowing where something might be found or where one has unexpectedly found one's self.

Ion Drive Engineering

How to maintain, use and repair Ion Drive engines.

Fold Drive Engineering

How to maintain and repair Fold Drive engines, and something of their physics and mathematics (just enough to get the machines to work), but not enough to program a nav computer.

Net Research

A special knowledge of what is where on the Net, and a skill at using search engines to find information.

Journalism

Skill at interviewing willing people and writing clear news stories.

Investigation

Skill at finding people who don't want to be found, finding physical clues to what has happened in a location, ie, a crime scene, etc. Some ability in Forensics.

Law

Knowledge of what the laws are and criminal and civil trail procedure, especially the law of one's native society (-1 on rolls for other societies). Maybe be able to try cases and sway a jury or judge.

History

Knowledge of what happened in the past. Basically the Culture and Geography skills above, but starting 50 years ago.

Literature

Knowledge of the fiction, poetry and drama or a particular culture, and some skill at creative writing.

Forgery

The ability to make or detect fake but convincing paper or electronic documents. Does not work for Fiat tabs or similar systems, as they are too defended to fake without specific skills.

Acting/Disguise

The ability to convincingly be someone else, either for entertainment or deception.

Some ability in dancing and singing.

Musicianship

The ability to read music and play musical instruments, including the human voice.

Science (specify type)

Knowledge of and ability to perform research in a specified branch of hard science, such as physics, biology, chemistry, etc.

Politics

Knowledge of political philosophy, government and campaigning. Skill at oration and diplomacy. May also be used with Personality.

Hacking

The ability to gain access to protected databases or systems and cause them to do what one wants. Also skill in protecting one's own systems from hacking.

Colonial Engineering

Knowledge of all the techniques required to found a human settlement on a new planet and administer a community still in the "colony" stage.

Starship Engineering

A knowledge of how to maintain and repair all systems on a spacecraft or starship other than engines, weapons and AI computers. Covers Life Support, Hangers, etc.

Starship Weapons Engineering

A knowledge of how to maintain, repair and fire starship weapons. Covers gunnery with rapid-fire cannons, beam weapons and energy bolt weapons when they are part of a starship.

AI Engineering

How to program Limited Artificially Intelligent Computers (LAICs), which is often as much psychology as computer programming.

Psychology

A knowledge of human cognition, motivation and mental illnesses.

Personality:

Seduce

The ability to use one's sex appeal to get them to like you and be agreeable, as they want to sleep with you. May be used to get information or access to someone's rooms.

Interrogate

The ability to interview and draw information out of an unwilling person.

Intimidate

The ability to scare some away or into doing what you want to avoid physical harm.

Character Archetypes

As previously noted, most people in the 28th century are like most people in the 21st: they have jobs or are looking for jobs, they have families and responsibilities, and are pretty much stuck to one place, avoiding danger and fights whenever possible. They cannot travel the galaxy and cannot fly starships, hack into computers or own and fire guns. To make an interesting and exciting roleplaying game, however, PC's must be free of 9 to 5 jobs and responsibilities for family members, and must be able to travel, fire guns and do things of great risk and questionable legality. They must be free agents and special operatives. Colony Space is a big place, with both settled, mundane areas akin to middle class sub-divisions, and risky frontiers where law and defense must be taken into one's own hands. There are both soul-crushing factory or office jobs, and dangerous, self-regulated professions or opportunities. Some of these are outlined below, with suggested stats and skills. These are not "character classes" that must be chosen, as in other rpgs, but guidelines on how to make a character who will fit well into the CS universe and have the freedom and abilities necessary to have interesting adventures.

Mercenary

Often ex-military and employed by governments, organizations, corporations and individuals needing extra muscle for offense or defense, these career soldiers are required to be licensed and registered in most places, but are allowed to carry weapons and fight in self-defense or certain conditions of conflict. Not assassins, but very powerful body guards or special agents.

Suggested Stats: Str 14, Agi 13, Int 12, Pers 12

Suggested Skills: Jumping, Melee, Bodai-Jitsu, Throwing, Drive Surface Vehicles, Piloting, Fire Hand Weapons, Zero G Movement, Brawling, Intimidate, Demolition, First Aid, Climbing, Swimming, Stamina, Leadership

Bounty Hunter

Bounty hunters track and apprehend those wanted by law enforcement or other organizations. A hunter of men, often ex-law enforcement. Works on a bounty-by-bounty basis, requires license in most places.

Suggested Stats: Str 12, Agi 12, Int 13, Pers 14

Suggested Skills: Melee, Bodai-Jitsu, Drive Surface Vehicles, Piloting, Fire Hand Weapon, Brawling, Interrogate, Stealth, Investigation, Psychology, Law, Forgery, Net Research, CS Cultures, Streetwise, Thievery

Hacker

Like a mercenary, but in the Net and computer world. Capable of breaking into and controlling mechanical, electronic or computer systems. Hired by anything or one with a need for the above, often governments and corporations, sometimes to fight off other hackers. Not licensed or even admitted to exist by those using them.

Suggested Stats: Str 10, Agi 12, Int 14, Pers 13

Suggested Skills: Hacking, Fire Hand Weapon, Investigation, Law, Net Research, Forgery, Science (computers), AI Engineering, Streetwise, Electronics

Technician/Engineer/Scientist/Academic

Always with a particular specialty and usually employed by a corporation, government or university, these experts may be sent on special operations teams.

Suggested Stats: Str 10, Agi 10, Int 15, Pers 12

Suggested Skills: Net Research, Science (must chose one type), AI Engineering, Electronics, Colonial Engineering, Starship Engineering, Psychology, Politics, History, Ion Drive Engineering, Fold Drive Engineering, Colony Space Cultures, Colony Space Geography, Agriculture, Religion, Business/Economics, Literature, Musicianship

Diplomat

Government official charged with negotiating with other governments or non-governmental organizations/persons/ groups and representing government interests. Excellent for talking one's way out of a scrap.

Suggested Stats: Str 10, Agi 10, Int 13, Pers 15

Suggested Skills: Net Research, Psychology, Politics, History, Law, Colony Space Cultures, Colony Space Geography, Religion, Business/Economics, Literature, Journalism, Leadership, Charisma, Bargain, Con

Spy

   Agent for finding secrets or protecting your government's or corporation's secrets. Identity often secret, permitted to use deadly force when necessary or even commit assassinations.

Suggested Stats: Str 13, Agi 13, Int 13, Pers 13

Suggested Skills: Acting/Disguise, Melee, Bodai-Jitsu, Drive Surface Vehicles, Fire Hand Weapons, Thievery, Demolition, Interrogate, Stealth, Investigation, Psychology, Law, Forgery, Net Research, CS Cultures, Streetwise, Hacking, Business/Economics, Seduce, Charisma, Con

Example Character

Gimony Harrow

5'11, 160 lbs., tan skin, straight brown hair and brown eyes

Str <u>11</u> Agi <u>12</u> Int <u>13</u> Pers <u>13</u>   HP <u>11</u>

Skills

Melee <u>12</u>   Drive Surface Vehicles <u>12</u> Fire Hand Weapons <u>14</u> Brawling <u>11</u> Stealth <u>12</u> Investigation <u>15</u> Law <u>13</u> Streetwise <u>15</u>

   Born in the poorer, rougher sections of Arkanam, New Dakota, Harrow was orphaned at a young age and raised in government shelters and on the streets by her own wits. When she was old enough she joined the City Police, but after only a few years found its rigid rules stifling, and decided to use her skills to become a bounty hunter. Still based in Arkanam, Harrow now travels all over ND, and occasionally other worlds, looking for escaped or fleeing criminals and bringing them to justice. Harrow is quiet, gruff and business like, having few friends or lovers, and living alone in small apartment adjacent to her office. A crack shot with a pistol and a skilled investigator, Harrow is usually on a quarry's tail.

Equipment: projectile pistol, nightstick, hover car, work clothes, armored vest, comphone, flashlight, binoculars, personal computer, arm and leg restraints

New Vehicle, Starship and Equipment Stats

Things function a little differently in the CS universe. See the Star Navy and TECH source books.

Game Mastering in Colony Space

Game Mastering in Colony Space is much the same as Game Mastering in any TDP game or indeed any roleplaying game. The GM plays the 99.9999... % of the people in the Colony Space universe, the places, the things. He or she is Fate, Chance and the Universe. He or she is the character's senses as well as what they sense. He or she administers the rules, tries to challenge but not overwhelm the characters, and make the game fun. The players play their characters, obviously, sensing and reacting to the universe created by the GM, all in a group narration format, punctuated by die rolls.

What a CS GM really needs is ideas for plots, so here are just a few of the infinite things that can happen in long, dark light years of Colony Space:

Cultists! (suitable for beginning to intermediate characters)

All followers of Hadaam-je believe, or at least pay lip service to the belief that the genetically strongest/most fit should/will inevitably rule all others. Only a few take this belief so far as to kidnap and murder those non-Hadaam perceived as having strong genes useful to the Hadaam, and stealing those genes for genetic experimentation, disposing of the unworthy genes (i.e, the rest of the person). Members of the Cult of Genet, extremist fanatics even by Hadaam standards, have been secretly operating in the UW for years, conduct mysterious, unsolved murders, mutilations and kidnappings. The PCs are drafted by law enforcement for their special skills, in order to solve this string of crimes, hunt down and stop these dangerous cultists before they kill again. But there is a danger in demonstrating too much strength to the Hadaam...

Corporate Espionage! (suitable for beginning to intermediate characters)

The business world can be rough... well, *all* of the time, especially when you are hired by World Services, a struggling multi-stellar constantly losing business and innovative ideas to SystemCore, to pose as SystemCore employees and/or break into SC facilities to steal their secrets. And get out alive, which is the tricky part...

Into the Harsh Planet! (suitable for intermediate characters)

The UW must expand to stay viable, and new worlds are being discovered all the time. Before they can be colonized they must be explored and their dangers tamed. That is where the PCs come in, drafted as special consultants/operatives to assist an SN

Exploration team explore and chart Hosk IV, a large world of very harsh environments and very large, ill-tempered beasties....

League Intrigue! (suitable for intermediate characters)

Grand Duke Beqwell Black of House Black as recently discovered that even his trusted, long-term advisers are part of a plot to assassinate and replace him as Grand Duke. Feeling unable to simply liquidate them all or to trust anyone around him, he decides that only outsiders can be trusted with his protection, and enlists the services of the PCs. They must travel or Corvis and join the entourage of the Grand Duke, secretly serving as his body guards and undertaking missions from him, all while trying to survive the vicious intrigue of the Grand Houses, not to mention the odd *Baras-do* master assassin...

Masters of Men! (suitable for advanced characters)

The day started out normal for the PCs, before a seriously injured man reaches them and collapses on the spot. After reviving him, the PCs hear a fantastic story of massive AI minds inhabiting the inner recesses of the Net, secretly manipulating the interstellar governments to their own benefit. The man mentions proof, before a freak, nearly impossible electrical discharge from the building's Net arcs out and kills him instantly. Surely a coincidence, right? Right? The PCs must investigate this proof and discover whether this Minds really exist, and if so what they plan...

Alien Invasion! (suitable for advanced characters)

The Kul'krak are a sentient, space-faring, roughly humanoid crab-like aliens with an Empire far from Colony Space. The Kul'krak have been from time to time monitoring human activity, but have not yet done anything about it as Humans were far away, not perceived as a threat, and the Empire has had plenty of internal problems demanding its attention. But as Humans claim more and planets that might have one day been part of the Empire, PCs may encounter a Kul'krak Warclaw (battleship) looking to take the measure of these soft-shelled Hoo-yums.

They are only roughly speaking "humanoid crabs" The have two main body segments, connected by an upward-curving thorax. The bottom segment, shaped leg a crab's body, is larger, has a very hard shell (containing most vital organs) and have four powerful movement legs, two on each side. From this rises the lightly shell thorax, with four legs near its top, two powerful lower, large-clawed ripper legs, and too long, slender, many fingered manipulator legs above them. Rising off the thorax and legs is the upper body section, also like a crab body but smaller, with a crab like face and mouth.

Choose your adventure.

Colony Space