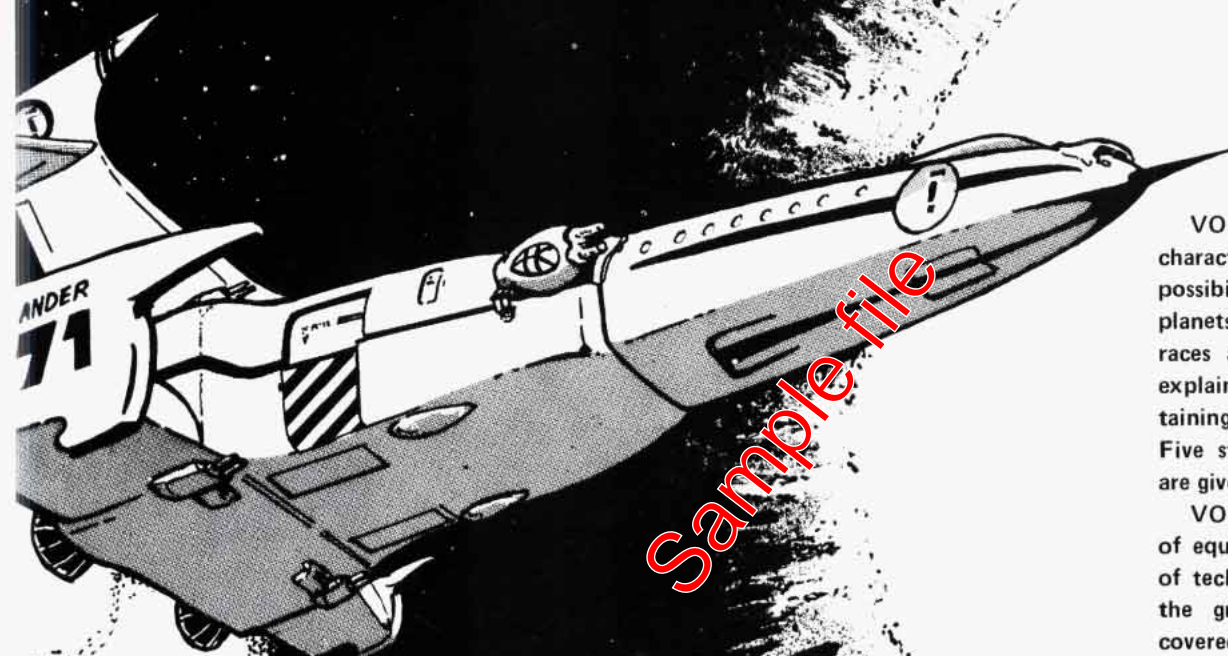


SPACE OPERA™

SPACE OPERA is a science fiction role playing game. Players control characters who may be star pilots, scientists, soldiers, merchants, explorers, space marines, or any one of a number of other professions. These characters have adventures in a galaxy designed by the StarMaster who referees the game. SPACE OPERA adventures may be interwoven over several game sessions to play out the lives of the characters involved in this fascinating game of action and interaction.



For you as a player, SPACE OPERA offers a selection of species for your character. From a basis of randomly determined characteristics (slanted to favor your character) you take him through his career up to the point when his adventures start. This development system results in a complete and rounded character with skills chosen in a nonrandom fashion to suit his or her needs.

For you as StarMaster, SPACE OPERA offers rules covering a wide variety of topics from which you may pick and choose those that will best suit the universe in which you wish to play. In this way you can simulate situations from virtually any part of science fiction literature. SPACE OPERA gives you a framework within which to set and develop the adventures which you conceive for the characters. The only limit is your imagination.

SPACE OPERA requires one person to act as StarMaster and is most enjoyable with 2 or more other players. The rules present a detailed, and in some areas intricate, simulation of a science fiction universe which is a blend of scientific fact, postulated future science and just plain imagination.

VOLUME 1 covers the generation of characters, their attributes, skills, career possibilities, and the effects of their planets of origin. Variations for alien races are presented. Psionic talents are explained. Details for running, maintaining and repairing a starship are given. Five starships, complete with deckplans are given.

VOLUME 2 presents a wide selection of equipment and weapons for a variety of technological levels. Combat, both on the ground and between starships is covered. Detailed sections on starship design, world creation, interstellar travel and commerce, and planetary cultures fill out the book.

An assortment of master record forms and a selection of useful charts are included on separate sheets.



Fantasy Games Unlimited, Inc.



SPACE OPERA

Vol. 1

Sample file

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INTRODUCTION

It actually seems impossible to finally be writing the introduction for **Space Opera** as this project was first conceived three years ago when **Chivalry & Sorcery** was first released and has been in the works since 1978. Over two years in the works and involving a design team that stretched from the Eastern U.S. to Western Canada and finally to the heart of the outback of Australia, this is a truly international design group on a truly interstellar scale.

The original concept was to create a game that would not need the usually innumerable supplements to its rules but that would be a complete science fiction role playing game. Thus, we wanted a game that would allow players to role play all of the most popular roles for characters in the entire genre of science fiction literature. This called for a game to handle the future warrior and mercenary, the free-trader, the asteroid miner, the planetary explorer and first contact man, and the member of the diplomatic corps/spy service. We needed science and the possibility of scientist characters with medicine playing a major role.

As if this were not enough, the decision was made to base the game on the grand tradition of Space Opera, in the vein of E.E. Doc Smith and most recently Star Wars from George Lucas. This meant that we would also have to allow for the psionic powers so prevalent in the Lensman series and in Star Wars with 'the force.'

Space Opera is not an easy game. The individual systems are actually fairly simple and quite logical, but the sheer number of systems can be staggering. Players should realize that we have allowed for alien player-characters from races which could exist on planets habitable by the human race as these are the races with whom humans would have to deal. Naturally, players may decide to run their entire campaigns in a universe with only human characters, both player and NPC.

Similarly, players may decide to totally disregard the Psionic Talents section of these rules and concentrate on a more 'scientific' type of universe according to laws as they are currently understood. But the systems are there for those who choose to use them. It may be that a StarMaster decides to allow Psionic talents to only NPCs or he may realize that according to these rules, such talents are quite rare and will add a truly exciting element to the game.

The apparent complexity of some of the rules dealing with such factors as 'fatigue' and 'wind' is deceptive. These systems are included for the 'hard core' role player who demands such detail and accuracy in rules. For the average campaign these systems can be ignored at no detriment to the game as a whole. Thus, these rules are no more complex than the average role playing game, they are merely more complete and, hence, more massive.

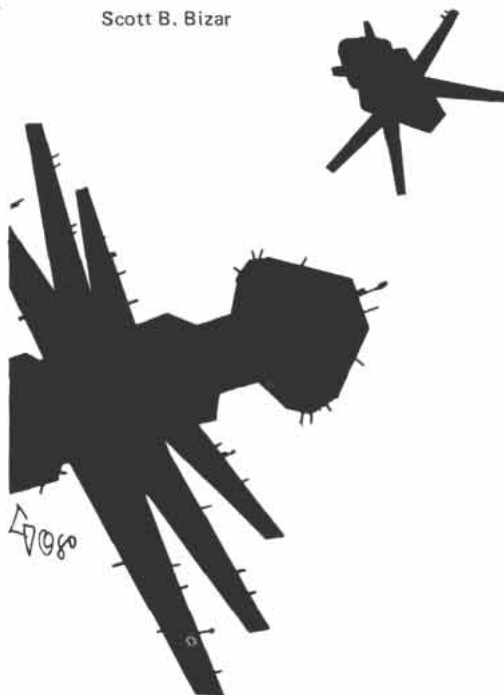
We feel that we have achieved the objectives we established those several years ago and can allow players to simulate the adventures from virtually any sub-genre within science fiction literature. We include combat rules and detailed StarShip rules (including StarShip combat) in the tradition of the Space Opera and cover virtually every type of skill and occupation that could be required or desired in the interstellar setting of the game. Adventures can take place on alien planets, in the asteroids, in space itself, or could involve the inter-relationship between powerful Interstellar Empires. The game is complete as it stands and will not need supplements to add to these rules for player character activity.

This is not to say that further materials for **Space Opera** will not be forthcoming from FGU. We plan to release (and already are in the process of typesetting) a book called **Ground & Air Equipment** which will add sections and stats to cover heavy weaponry, ground vehicles, and aircraft for the various military organizations of each race in our universe. These types of equipment will not come into play in the usual role play situation but will be of interest to those interested in pursuing military careers in Government or Contracted (mercenary) service. They will also prove useful for full miniatures campaigns of possible Interstellar Wars of this era.

Additionally, there will be a series of scenario packs to help StarMasters begin their own campaigns as we have had numerous requests for these types of products over the last several years and they can only help the harried StarMaster who also works or studies full time. Such scenarios are not additional rules as all the rules needed to create such situations are included already in **Space Opera**, but they are seen as scenarios.

Finally, we have been most fortunate in procuring copies of several of the Interstellar Survey Service's **Sector Star Atlases** which are standard issue to all spacecraft entering given sectors of the galaxy. Though the information contained in the atlases exists in computer memory banks on StarShips, launches and other escape craft which lack such computer facilities are required to be equipped with such information in book or video chips for the minicomp. These atlases are not required for the play of **Space Opera** as a complete system is included for the generation of star systems and planets, including even the governmental, societal, and technological status of any race inhabiting the planet. Nonetheless, such atlases will prove most helpful to StarMasters in the preparation of adventures and in the running of ongoing campaigns.

Scott B. Bizar



1.0 SPACE OPERA

Space Opera is a science fiction role-playing game that accepts the possibility that mankind and other races will develop the technology enabling them to reach the stars and to colonize worlds far distant from their home planets. The very title of the game suggests the type of adventures that should await the players—rip-roaring, excitement-filled journeys across the void in the great tradition of Doc Smith's **Lensman** series and the many other popular 'space opera' stories of SF.

Space Opera is a game which places some emphasis on science. That is, science serves as a general guide to many aspects of the game mechanics and should do so in game play as well. Science has the virtue of remaining consistent in all situations. We felt as designers that any phenomenon, being, or device should be capable of explanation in terms of what we do know about science. Thus players and referees will be able to apply their own knowledge to solve the many problems and situations that will inevitably arise which no set of rules could cover due to space limitations. As long as scientific reasoning can be applied, a problem can be reasoned through with a minimum of arbitrary and whimsical decision making on the part of the referee.

However, while modern science is definitely a guide, one must also postulate future science. Indeed, in science fiction this is a necessary activity. The main restriction on such kinds of speculation is that the 'scientific' explanations be reasonable and consistent in terms of what we know now. Future science occupies a position in a science fiction game not dissimilar from that of magic in a fantasy role-playing game. By our standards and from our perspective, future science is magic! But it is a magic governed by consistent laws. FTL drive systems, contragravity, force field battlescreens, portable energy weapons with the firepower of a platoon of heavy tanks, medical procedures that can result in the preservation of a slain man so that he has the possibility of being 'rebuilt' and 'revivified', and a host of other such developments are 'magical' from the standpoint of late 20th century science. But that never means that such matters are 'impossible,' merely unexplainable or impossible to do at this moment in time.

For example, Einsteinian physics does not allow for faster-than-light travel. But science fiction gaming requires FTL, so we have postulated the existence of an alternate tachyon universe or Hyper Space in which everything moves faster than light, relative to our 'normal' or N-Space. The speed of light represents the boundary between the two universes, and a ship that crosses the line will cease to exist as far as the other universe is concerned. Thus we sidestep the whole problem of FTL travel in N-Space and follow at the same time a major tradition in science fiction literature.

We felt that the pokey sub-light speeds which Newtonian physics seem to impose on travel in N-Space would prove restricting to players. The same is true of Newtonian laws of motion which require vector analysis of course changes, and limit accelerations to a few Terran G at best. Thus we postulated as a spin off of the FTL drive a sub-light N-Space Maneuver Drive which generates an anomaly field around a vessel and places it out of 'phase' with the N-Space continuum. The result is a spacecraft capable of accelerations measured in tens of thousands of G, a ship capable of starting, stopping or turning on the proverbial 'dime.' Whether or not such a drive system will ever be developed in fact is not the issue. What is important is that the drive system is explained in 'pseudo-scientific' terms and that the effects are consistently applied throughout the rules.

Future science must be consistent. If the effect can be produced anywhere, it can be produced everywhere in which the same conditions prevail.

Space Opera is therefore a blend of hard science, scientific speculation, and plain fantasizing about 'WHAT IF?'

The main thrust of the game is to generate adventures which will carry the player characters to the stars. StarShips are capable of great speeds and great ranges, so the Universe is as large as the referee or StarMaster desires, with dozens or hundreds of worlds awaiting discovery and exploration. The main thrust of the game is toward

refereed play under the guidance of the StarMaster, who organizes and runs individual scenarios or comprehensive gaming campaigns.

1.1 REQUIRED MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT

The complete **Space Opera** game must include more than the rules. While a large number of items will prove useful or will add color to the game, the following list gives the basic materials and equipment.

Necessary Materials & Equipment

Space Opera rules.

Character Profile Records: A master copy of the basic Profile is provided with **Space Opera**. Players and StarMasters are given the right of 'fair use' and may photo-duplicate the Profile so long as it is not offered for sale.

StarShip Records: A master copy of the StarShip Record sheet is provided with **Space Opera**. Players and StarMasters are given the right of fair use and may photo-duplicate the Record so long as it is not offered for sale.

Planetary Records: A master copy of the Planetary Record sheet is provided with **Space Opera**. Players and StarMasters are given the right of fair use and may photo-duplicate the Record so long as it is not offered for sale.

Dice: Players will need a number of six sided dice, with multiple colors being useful. A set of 20-sided dice for percentage, 1-20, and 1-10 rolls is required as well. These can be obtained from any hobby store or mail order house selling role-playing games and war games.

Paper: Players will need graph paper, note paper, and notebooks (preferably loose-leaf) for record-keeping, maps and computations.

Writing Instruments: Players will need pencils, pens, erasers, colored markers, etc.

Rulers and Tapes: When conducting combat actions using miniatures or counters, 100 cm rulers and longer metric tapes will be most useful. Players can substitute 12-inch rulers and English unit tapes if they prefer as conversions to both systems are provided.

Optional Materials and Equipment

Hex Paper: Players will find hexagonal grid paper useful for mapping planetary surfaces. It is not essential, however, as wide-ruled graph paper or even blank paper and a ruler can be used just as easily (and at far less expense.) Hex paper is available from many simulation publishers and also from some hobby stores and mail order houses.

Miniature Figures: A great deal of 'color' and the feeling of realism is provided by the use of well-painted miniature persons, beasts, aliens, and StarShips. A vast number of figures are now on the market for SF play, and these can be augmented by some fantasy figures as well for certain alien types. We recommend the **Space Marines** figures from MacCrae Miniatures, available from Fantasy Games Unlimited, as the figures designed to suit the types of characters met in **Space Opera** and in **Space Marines**, the battle game companion to **Space Opera**. Write to FGU for a catalogue and price listing sheet.

Electronic Calculator: While not 'essential', an electronic calculator will greatly reduce the time and effort required to make computations, and use of such devices is strongly recommended.

1.2 UNITS OF MEASUREMENT

All units of measurement are in SI or the metric system. The following conversions are provided to ease the lot of those players unfamiliar with SI.

Length & Distance

1 kilometer (km)	0.621 miles
1 meter (m)	1.094 yards
1 meter (m)	3.281 feet
1 centimeter (cm)	0.394 inches
1 millimeter (mm)	0.0394 inches