

ENG 1100 | Section 100

Speculative Worlds: Introduction to SF of Color

Autumn 2020 | Ohio University | Dr. Edmond Y. Chang

ENG 1100
Section 100
CN 12028
TuTh 12-1:20 PM
Synchronous
Online Course
Autumn 2020
Ohio University

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Th 12-1:20 PM
or by appointment
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"I was attracted to science fiction because it was so wide open. I was able to do anything and there were no walls to hem you in and there was no human condition that you were stopped from examining."
—Octavia Butler

"Science fiction is very well suited to asking philosophical questions; questions about the nature of reality, what it means to be human, how do we know the things that we think we know."
—Ted Chiang

THIS COURSE will introduce students to speculative and science fictions of color as political and vernacular theory, as strategies for thinking critically about the past, present, and future in order to imagine what this world (and others) would be like under different conditions and configurations of race, gender, sexuality, ability, nation, and other formations. Sheree Thomas, editor of the collection *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora*, said, "The science fiction and fantasy genres have always offered readers, bold, extraordinary ways by which to examine society. The results have often been visionary, with writers acting as unflinching voyeurs who deliver engaging, sometimes scathing critiques of our traditions, values, nightmares, and dreams." Similarly, Betsy Huang argues in *Contesting Genres in Contemporary Asian American Literature* that "science fiction affords Asian American writers a unique way to engage in subversive political and ideological critique not by contravening genre conventions, but by using them to rewrite the rules of the genre." We will explore and analyze the intersections of literature, genre, bodies, media, and technology with particular attention to authors of color and texts and perspectives from different parts of the world.

A REQUIREMENT for this class is a well-developed curiosity about the world, about the culture we live in, and about the cultural productions we imagine, produce, and consume. In other words, this class is about reading, critiquing, and analyzing our culture through different literatures and texts. We will engage different practices enjoying and analyzing literature and other media, as well as develop literary, feminist, and queer strategies, habits, and perspectives of reading, thinking, and writing. Foremost, we will read and research with pleasure and for pleasure. We will also close read for analysis. And lastly, we will read and deploy literature as theory, as dramatizing the concerns, wonders, struggles, and politics of lived life and experience.

SPECIFICALLY, our course goals include (the ENG 1100 outcomes are in bold):

- **You will be able to identify and discuss the salient features of intercultural texts and cultural artifacts.** We will develop and demonstrate a familiarity with a range of texts, terms, and theories, engaging with science fiction and speculative literature of color from different geographical areas, genres, and literary traditions.
- **You will be able to apply and compare analytic approaches to understanding the intersection of different cultures.** We will identify and articulate different ways to explore, close read, and analyze literary and media texts.
- **You will be able to evaluate the role that language and representation play in the mediation of cultural interaction and cultural conflict.** We will consider and reflect on questions and intersections of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, nation, culture, and power.
- **You will be able to identify and assess multiple points-of-view regarding cultural texts, experiences and phenomena.** We will use speculative literature as vernacular theory to think, talk, write about and to interrogate the world around us.

"If one is lucky, a solitary fantasy can totally transform one million realities."
—Maya Angelou

"Do work that matters. *Vale la pena.*"
—Gloria E. Anzaldúa



Required Course Texts & Materials

- Hopkinson, *Brown Girl in the Ring*
- Okorafor, *Binti*
- Nguyen, *She Kills Monsters*
- Lai, *The Tiger Flu*
- Butler, Duffy, Jennings, *Parable of the Sower: A Graphic Novel Adaptation*
- Short readings will be available via Blackboard
- Web access and an active Ohio University email account.



Course Requirements

Presentation & Roundtable	(20%)
Critical Reflections	(30%)
Creative Response	(10%)
Critical Review	(10%)
Class Participation	(30%)

WE WILL spend the semester asking and addressing difficult, challenging, and sometimes discomfoting ideas, questions, and topics, focusing on different identities, bodies, histories, desires, experiences, and even struggles and violences. Whether on the page, screen, on campus, or in the community, we will explore and engage multiple perspectives, levels of familiarity with the material, and heady and heartfelt responses. In other words, our class will be a safe, respectful, but not necessarily comfortable space. While pushing boundaries and comfort zones are essential to critical thinking, making connections, and intellectual and personal freedom, see me with concerns and queries, for reasonable accommodations, and for further resources on campus.

Requirements & Grading

Your grade should not be the sole exigence or motivation for this class. It is the hope of the course that you walk away from class with something more. Find some pleasure and some edification and some knowledge from this class (or any class really) and success is usually not far behind. With that in mind, your grade will be a reflection of engagement, effort, close reading, critical thinking, writing, and participation.

Critical Essay & Questions Presentation and Roundtable (20%)

You will be a required to sign up in small groups for an oral presentation and roundtable during the course of the semester. For your presentation, you will read the literary text assigned for a particular week, summarize and articulate two or three main points from the week's scholarly or critical text (as assigned), generate a critical question connecting the theory to the literature, and contribute to in-class and online discussion for the week. Curations should have a group presentation plan, a substantive framing post, may include media, and each group member must contribute to the discussion and post.

Critical Reflections (30%)

Over the course of the semester, you will have approximately five opportunities to complete short, analytical reflections that ask you to respond to the literature, the theoretical texts, and to assess your own work and performance in class. These reflections will be due (tentatively) at the end of Week 3, 6, 9, 12, and Week 15. You must complete three of the five opportunities, one of which must be in the first half of the term and one in the second half. Critical reflections will be cumulative and based on the class readings, literature, other media, and in-class and Blackboard discussions.

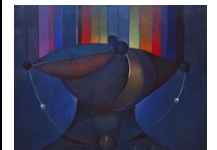
Creative Response (10%)

Not only will you be reading science fiction and speculative literature, you will generate a creative response to demonstrate the ideas, goals, and critiques of the literatures of the course. You will create your own SF as a short-short story, narrative poem, or drawing. The creative response will be evaluated on completion and your thoughtful engagement with the prompt.

Critical Review (10%)

At the end of the term, you will write a short, 500 word, single-spaced critical review of a text not covered by the course that you believe fits the critical, theoretical, and intellectual stakes of this class. You will locate a text, close read the text, and generate an academic critique and assessment of the text's value for study. In other words, what text might you include in a class like ours? You **must** have your text **approved** by the instructor. The critical review will be turned in and published on the course blog.

"I believe black characters in fiction are still revolutionary, given our long history of erasure."
—Tananarive Due



"There are plenty of images of women in science fiction. There are hardly any women."
—Joanna Russ

"So here is why I write what I do: We all have futures. We all have pasts. We all have stories. And we all, every single one of us, no matter who we are and no matter what's been taken from us or what poison we've internalized or how hard we've had to work to expel it--we all get to dream."
—N.K. Jemisin

Participation and Preparedness (30%)

Preparedness and participation forms a large component of your final grade. It is essential that you prepare for class, attend class, and participate. Missing class or participation may seriously compromise your ability to do well in this class. Moreover, negative participation will hurt your participation grade. Participation is determined by 1) your **respectful** presence in class and interactions with me and others, 2) your **willingness** to discuss, comment, and ask questions, 3) your **preparation** for class, which includes having the required materials and doing all of the assigned reading or work for class, 4) your **engagement** and **collaboration** in group work, presentations, office hours, and course events, and 5) your care and use of the class *Blackboard* or “Bb”—bookmark the address, check regularly, comment as required, and think of the blog as an extension of class:

https://blackboard.ohio.edu/webapps/blackboard/execute/courseMain?course_id=550231_1

Guidelines for Online Discussion

Students are expected to conduct themselves on the message board, via email and chat, and in the course in compliance with the Ohio University’s Student Code of Conduct. Consider Blackboard, email, chat, and any other communication as if you were in a face-to-face classroom: the rhetorical, cultural, and social context should dictate what you say, how you say it, and why you say it. In other words, do not do anything you would not do in person: be respectful, patient, professional, open, and generous even as we engage differences in beliefs, opinions, perspectives, and approaches. Please bring any communications you believe to be in violation of this class policy to my attention. Active interaction with me, your peers, and the class materials is essential to success in this online course, paying particular attention to the following:

- Students are expected to participate in all synchronous class sessions. You are also expected to participate in all graded or required online discussions threads. While there is more flexibility in online courses, this is **not** a self-paced course (minimum engagement with Blackboard is about 3-4 hours a week).
- Each week, complete the readings and view other instructional materials for each week (i.e. lectures, videos, assignment prompts) before participating on the discussion board.
- You are required to participate in Blackboard discussions 2-4 times over the course of each week (responding to required discussions, tasks, and other threads as directed). Outstanding participation includes additional contributions to lecture and assignment threads, blogging points, and even online office hours.
- Read your posts carefully before submitting them. Keep in mind tone, formality, audience, and language. Challenging the ideas held by others is an integral aspect of critical thinking and the academic process. Please word your responses carefully, and recognize that others are expected to respond and even challenge your ideas.
- In other words, no hate, no spam, no flame, no fluff.

Assignment Format

All papers must be typed or produced on a word processor. All documents should be saved in Microsoft Word format (or if necessary Rich Text Format). All papers must follow the manuscript format outlined by the assignment. Unless instructed otherwise, **all papers must use MLA citation and documentation conventions**. All papers must be neatly printed (in black), stapled in the top, left-hand corner if necessary, and should not be three-hole



MLA Paper Formatting

1) 1” margins top, bottom, left, and right on each page.

2) Single-spaced block header on the first page only with your name, date, course, my name:

Student Name
ENG 1100
August 24, 2020
Dr. Chang

3) Appropriate title.

4) Print single-sided. Papers are double-spaced with paper page numbers in the upper right hand corner; no extra space between paragraphs.

5) Standard Times Roman Font, 12 point only.

6) Correct MLA citation and bibliographic format. A paper turned in without a bibliography automatically fails and will be returned with no comments.



Late Assignments

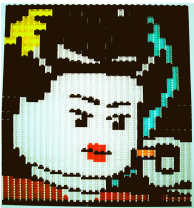
All assignments must be done completely and turned in on time. Late assignments will be penalized half a grade for every day that they are late. So, if your essay is late by one day and you received a B- for your work, then your final grade would be a C+. Moreover, I will not comment on late work. However, you still need to complete late work or you will receive a zero. If you miss class on the due date of a paper, you must notify me and make arrangements to get the paper to me as soon as possible. **Unless previously arranged, I DO NOT accept assignments via email.** Remember that a paper has not been officially handed in until it is in my hands. Never turning anything in late is always the best policy.

punched. Papers that do not follow these format guidelines will not be accepted. They will be returned unread to you. Papers will be regarded as late until they are resubmitted in the proper format. **Always make a backup copy of every paper you turn in**, lest you be one of the unhappy people whose paper is eaten by the computer. You may even want to take the precaution of e-mailing your paper to yourself as an attachment during the drafting process and certainly before you exit the document and leave the computer. Or you may want to invest in cloud-based file storage like OneDrive (which all OU students have already have access) or DropBox.

Evaluation Rubric

Over the course of the quarter, your assignments will receive feedback and comments that will identify what you are doing well and what still needs improvement. Your grades assess your fulfillment of the assignment, the quality of work, detail, analysis, and argumentation, overall effort, and finally, style, polish, and risk taking. Consider the following evaluation rubric as signposts or a kind of legend to your progress and evaluation:

- **Outstanding (A/A+)**: Offers a very highly proficient, even memorable demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), including some appropriate risk-taking and/or creativity.
- **Strong (B+/A-)**: Offers a proficient demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), which could be further enhanced with revision, additional support, and creativity.
- **Good (B-/B)**: Effectively demonstrates the trait(s) associate with the course or assignment goal(s), but less proficiently; could use revision to demonstrate more skillful and nuanced command of trait(s).
- **Acceptable (C/C+)**: Minimally meets the basic course or assignment requirement, but the demonstrated trait(s) are not fully realized or well-controlled and would benefit from significant revision.
- **Inadequate (D/D+)**: Does not meet the course or assignment requirement; the trait(s) are not adequately demonstrated and require substantial revision on multiple levels.



Contact
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Google Talk:
EDagogy

Online Instruction and Finding Help

My role in the course, as with any course, is to frame the goals and intellectual conversations of the class, to scaffold readings, assignments, and other tasks, to mentor and moderate projects and discussions, and to assess and grade your work. Given the online nature of the class, I will do my best to engage each and every one of you and the class as a whole in the following ways:

- Synchronous class discussions, which will be recorded and available for viewing and review.
- Short videos or "lecturettes," which first let you see a real "live" person who is professing as professor to the class, and second, are meant to be explanatory, clarifying, and hopefully, interesting.
- Curating blogging points, assignment Q&A, and other discussions, which will complement and supplement your posts and responses.
- Providing regular check-ins via email, blog posts, and online conferences. I will be available electronically by email, Blackboard, and virtual office hours. Email and Bb are the best means of contacting me. I will do my best to answer your emails and blog posts, usually **within twenty-four hours**.
- Holding synchronous virtual office hours once a week via video or text chat; virtual office hours are posted in the sidebar. Please note that group chat is public to the entire class and allows for group discussions. If you would like to converse with me individually, you can use Google

chat (nickname: EDagogy). If you are not able to attend virtual office hours, email me your availability to set up an appointment, and I will do my best to accommodate your schedule. Otherwise, if you see that I am logged in to chat, during reasonable hours, you are more than welcome to discuss the class or ask questions. Please, when you initiate a chat conversation for the first time, please identify yourself to me; also, be **patient** because my responses may not be immediate.

You can also find additional writing and academic help at the Student Writing Center (SWC) on campus, a good resource for this class and other classes. The SWC is located in the Academic Advancement Center (AAC) on the second floor of Alden Library and offers a variety of services including help with reading, papers, brainstorming ideas, and research. See <https://www.ohio.edu/uc/aac> to make an appointment and for more information. Further resources, both on- and off-campus can be found on the Links page of the course website: <http://www.edmondchang.com/courses/1100/links.html>.

Academic Integrity

All students are required to uphold the highest academic standards. Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing—as long as you cite them. Many students do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes plagiarism, so feel free to ask questions at any time. For our class, plagiarism includes:

- a student failing to cite sources of ideas
- a student failing to cite sources of paraphrased material
- a student failing to site sources of specific language and/or passages
- a student submitting someone else's work as his or her own
- a student submitting his or her own work produced for another class

If you have any doubt about how to cite or acknowledge another's writing, please talk to me. Any plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in failure of an assignment or of this course. It is always better to be safe than sorry. Please review the Ohio University's Academic Misconduct page at <https://www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/academic/students.cfm>.

Accommodations

Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should see me or contact me **in the first week of class** to discuss their specific needs and provide written documentation from Student Accessibility Services. If you are not yet registered as a student with a disability, please contact Student Accessibility Services at 740-593-2620 or visit the SAS office in 348 Baker University Center. The SAS website is: <https://www.ohio.edu/uc/sas/index.cfm>.

Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct

Ohio University and this course are committed to a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment. Title IX makes clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, and so on. As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter and am required by law to share with the University any information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on campus. For more information about policies and resources or confidential reporting options, see the Office of University Equity and Civil Rights Compliance: <https://www.ohio.edu/equity-civil->

"When I read great literature, great drama, speeches, or sermons, I feel that the human mind has not achieved anything greater than the ability to share feelings and thoughts through language."

—James Earl Jones



"My imagination makes me human and makes me a fool; it gives me all the world and exiles me from it."

—Ursula K. Le Guin



"I am like a falling star who has finally found her place next to another in a lovely constellation, where we will sparkle in the heavens forever."

—Amy Tan

[rights/](#)> or the Division of Student Affairs page on Student Conduct & Community Standards:

<<https://www.ohio.edu/communitystandards/process/sexualassault.cfm>>.

syl-la-bus: *n* 1: a summary outline of a discourse, treatise, or course of study or of examination requirements 2: subject to change

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First Day of Classes

Week 1: August 24-28: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Course & Syllabus

Du Bois, "The Comet" (1920)

Kincaid, "Through Time and Space: A Brief History of Science Fiction"

Baccolini, "The Persistence of Hope in Dystopian Science Fiction"

Bryson, "After Decades of Dwarfs and Elves, Writers of Color Redefine

Fantasy," <https://www.csmonitor.com/Books/2018/0521/After-decades-of-dwarfs-and-elves-writers-of-color-redefine-fantasy>

Week 2: August 31-September 4: GENDER

Hossain, "Sultana's Dream" (1920)

Lewton, "Feminist Visions of Science and Utopia in Rokeya Sakhawat

Hossain's *Sultana's Dream*," <https://www.ladyscience.com/features/feminist-visions-science-fiction-utopia-rokeya-hossain>

Khan, "Muslim Women are Building New Worlds in Science Fiction,"

https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/muslim-women-are-building-new-worlds-in-science-fiction-and-changing-the-confines-of-the-genre/2020/07/17/ddea6a6e-c7aa-11ea-a99f-3bbdfb1af38_story.html

Halberstam, "Gender," *Keywords*

Week 3: September 7-11: GENDER+

Gorodischer, "The Violet Embryos" (1973, *Cosmos Latinos*)

al-Maria, "The Righteous Guide of Arabsat" (2017, *The Djinn*)

Bell & Molina-Gavilán, "Introduction," *Cosmos Latinos*

Murad & Shurin, "Introduction," *The Djinn Falls in Love*

Week 4: September 14-18: RACE

Hopkinson, *Brown Girl in the Ring* (1998)

Moynagh, "Speculative Pasts and Afro-Futures"

Gray, "Race" & Ferguson, "Race," *Keywords*

Week 5: September 21-25: RACE

Hopkinson, *Brown Girl in the Ring* (cont.)

Week 6: September 28-October 2: RACE

Okorafor, *Binti* (2015)

Okorafor, "Writers of Colour"

Okorafor, "Organic Fantasy"

Chideya, "Hugo Nominee Nnedi Okorafor,"

<https://www.npr.org/2016/08/20/490771640/hugo-nominee-nnedi-okorafor-breaks-down-her-sci-fi-writing>

Week 7: October 5-9: SEXUALITY & QUEERNESS

Samuel Delany, "Aye, and Gommorah..." (1967)

Carneiro, "Brain Transplant" (1978, *Cosmos Latinos*)

Gaiman, "Somewhere in America" (2001, *The Djinn*)

Delany, "Racism and Science Fiction"

Somerville, "Queer," *Keywords*

Week 8: October 12-16: BODIES & DISABILITY

Nguyen, *She Kills Monsters* (2012)

Adams, Reiss, Serlin, "Disability," *Keywords*

Sign Up for
Presentations

Critical Reflection I
Due

Critical Reflection II
Due

11/26-11/27
Thanksgiving Recess

Week 9: October 19-23: BODIES & QUEERNESS

Octavia Butler, "Bloodchild" (1984)
Encinosa, "Like the Roses Had to Die" (2001, *Cosmos Latinos*)
Humann, "Genre and Justice in Octavia Butler's *Bloodchild*"
Cherniavsky, "Body," *Keywords*

Critical Reflection III
Due

Week 10: October 26-30: WORLDS & ENVIRONMENTS

Sanders, "When This World Is All on Fire" (2001, *Walking*)
Hao Jingfang, "Invisible Planets" (2013, *Invisible Planets*)
S.P. Somtow, "The Thirteenth Utopia" (1979)
Dillon, "Imagining Indigenous Futurisms"
Liu Cixin, "The Worst of All Possible Universes and the Best of All Possible Earths"

Creative Response
Due

Week 11: November 2-6: WORLDS & ENVIRONMENTS

Xia Jia, "A Hundred Ghosts Parade Tonight" (2012, *Invisible Planets*)
Moreno-Garcia, "In the House of the Hummingbirds" (2012)
<https://lovecraftzine.com/magazine/issues/2012-2/issue-19-november-2012/in-the-house-of-the-hummingbirds-by-silvia-moreno-garcia/>
Jemisin, "The City Born Great" <https://www.tor.com/2016/09/28/the-city-born-great/>
Bereola, "A True Utopia: An Interview With N. K. Jemisin,"
<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/12/03/a-true-utopia-an-interview-with-n-k-jemisin/>

Week 12: November 9-13: WORLDS, QUEERNESS, & BODIES

Lai, *The Tiger Flu* (2018)
Kang, "Conversation: Larissa Lai,"
<https://medium.com/@sinethetamag/conversation-larissa-lai-73e0a19d7196>

Critical Reflection IV
Due

Week 13: November 16-20: WORLDS, QUEERNESS, & BODIES

Lai, *The Tiger Flu* (cont.)
Cheng, "Surviving Utopia: Finding Hope in Larissa Lai's Piercing Novel *The Tiger Flu*," <https://www.autostraddle.com/surviving-utopia-finding-hope-in-larissa-lais-the-tiger-flu-439136/>

Week 14: November 23-27: WORLDS, ENVIRONMENTS, & RACE

Butler, Duffy, Jennings, *Parable of the Sower: A Graphic Novel Adaptation* (2020)
Butler, "Positive Obsession" & "The Monophobic Response"
Sanders, "Interview with Octavia Butler,"
<https://inmotionmagazine.com/ac04/obutler.html>

Week 15: November 30-December 4: SF OF COLOR

The Wandering Earth (2019, film)

Critical Reflection IV
Due

Week 16: Finals Week

Critical Review Due