



ENG 3390
 Section 100
 CN 7653
 TuTh
 3:05-4:25 PM
 Ellis 003
 Autumn 2019
 Ohio University
 Dr. Edmond Y.
 Chang
change@ohio.edu



“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

“First sentences are doors to worlds.”
 —Ursula K. Le Guin

WHAT DOES IT mean to “study authors, works, genres, and topics in African American literature from 1930 to the present,” particularly considering time and place, history, identities, and literary canons? And even more difficult, how might we consider the fields, formations, and possibilities of “African American Literature” through science fiction or speculative fiction? Sheree Thomas, editor of the 2000 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.” This class, then, will explore the intersections of literature, genre, media, race, gender, sexuality, class, and technology. Texts may include W.E.B Du Bois, Pauline Hopkins, George Schuyler, Ralph Ellison, Samuel Delany, Octavia Butler, Toni Morrison, Derrick Bell, Jewelle Gomez, Nalo Hopkinson, Nisi Shawl, and Nnedi Okorafor.

A REQUIREMENT for this class is a well-developed curiosity and a willingness to explore and interrogate interdisciplinary lines of inquiry. Our class will be organized around a survey of texts engaging scholarship, media, and popular culture. This class will take up everyday culture as critical practice, explore what it means to close read and think critically, and how literature and popular culture can be deployed as theory, as dramatizing the concerns, wonders, struggles, and politics of lived life and experience. This class will spend the semester reading, thinking, watching, discussing, researching, playing, and writing about various narratives and how and what these texts argue, reveal, narrate, hide, perpetuate, and complicate the world we live in.

SPECIFICALLY, our course goals include:

- We will develop and demonstrate a familiarity with a range of texts, terms, and theories of the study of African American literature via a vis speculative and science fiction. We will engage different authors and texts to complicate notions of canon, genre, form, time, and place.
- We will identify and articulate different ways to explore, close read, analyze, and critique literature and other media.
- We will consider questions and intersections of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, nation, culture, and power.
- We will use science fiction and popular culture as vernacular theory to think, talk, write, and interrogate the world around us.

WE WILL spend the semester asking and addressing difficult, challenging, and sometimes discomfiting 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

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



Required Course Texts & Materials

- Hopkins, *Of One Blood*
- Schuyler, *Black No More*
- Morrison, *Beloved*
- Butler, *Dawn*
- Hopkinson, *Brown Girl in the Ring*
- Okorafor, *Who Fears Death*
- Butler, Duffy, Jennings, *Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation*
- Shorter readings will be available via Blackboard.
- Web access, an active Gmail account, and an active Ohio University email account.



Course Requirements

- Presentation (10%)
- Creative Responses (10%)
- Response Papers (20%)
- Research Proposal (10%)
- Final Project (20%)
- Class Participation (30%)

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 our 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 & Question Presentation (10%)

You will be a required to sign up for an oral presentation (in small groups) during the course of the quarter. For your presentation, you will read the texts assigned for a particular week, research a scholarly essay relevant to the texts and course, distribute the essay to the class the week prior, generate a critical question or two, and get the class discussion started for the day.

Creative Responses (10%)

Not only will you be reading speculative and science fictions, you will write your own to explore and demonstrate the ideas and goals of the course. Over the course of the semester, you will complete a drawing, write a short-short story, and write a critical review. These creative responses will be evaluated on completion and your critical, thoughtful engagement with the prompts.

Critical Response Papers (20%)

Over the course of the semester, you will complete a number short, critical, analytical response papers. These single-spaced, one-page writings serve as close readings of, analyses of, and articulations of the texts and connections you see, read, and talk about in class. These responses are more than just summaries or personal reactions and will be graded on clarity, focus, coherence, critique, and your ability to concisely formulate arguments. You will be required to generate a response paper approximately every other week for a **minimum of 5**, completing at least one per third of the course.

Research Proposal Memo & Bibliography (10%)

As part of your Final Project research and writing process, you must generate a 1-page research proposal in business memo format and a working bibliography. You will also arrange for a conference with me to go over your proposal. The proposal and bibliography will be graded for clarity, detail, completion, and manuscript format. Your proposal and conference must be completed at least 4 weeks prior to the end of the semester.

Final Project (20%)

At the end of the semester, you will complete a Final Project that integrates what you have read, explored, and written about in your Response Papers, that draws on specific terms, concepts, or issues from the class, and that articulates the critical value of African American science fiction. The project asks you to make connections and to create an argument across different kinds of evidence and added research. Your final project can be a traditional research paper, a media production (which includes a substantive analytical component), or a hybrid of the two.

“I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me.”
—Ralph Ellison



“With our short sight we affect to take a comprehensive view of eternity. Our horizon is the universe.”
—Paul Laurence Dunbar

“And once upon a time I wondered: Is writing epic fantasy not somehow a betrayal? Did I not somehow do a disservice to my own reality by paying so much attention to the power fantasies of disenchanted white men? But. Epic fantasy is not merely what Tolkien made it.”
—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 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 bringing required materials to class and doing all of the assigned reading 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*—henceforth called the “class blog”—bookmark the address, check and comment regularly, once or twice a week, and think of the blog as an extension of class: https://blackboard.ohio.edu/webapps/blackboard/execute/courseMain?course_id= 518752_1

Attendance

Attendance is required. If you are absent, you miss the explanation of an assignment, the discussion of a reading, the chance to participate, and overall, the class as a community of learning. Also, you are expected to be in class on time. Class will start immediately at the appointed time. In the first minutes of class I may make important announcements, establish the agenda for the day, begin immediately with an important lesson, or field questions. If you come in after we start class, even by only a few minutes, you are late and will be mark as such. Chronic or conspicuous attendance problems will negatively affect your overall participation grade for the class. **Moreover, absences for more than 14 class sessions (50% of class time or more) will result in a failing grade regardless of reason. All absences are your responsibility.** If you know you are going to or must miss class, please let me know (via email) as soon as possible and make any necessary arrangements. When you do miss class, always find another student to get class notes or see me during office hours in order to make up missed work in a timely manner. You are always responsible for all material covered during your absence.

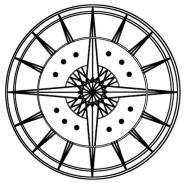
Assignment Format

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 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



Response Paper Formatting

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

2) Single-spaced block header with your name, date, course, my name.
For example:

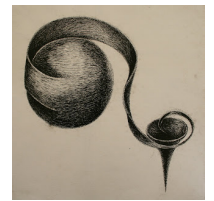
Student Name
ENG 3390
August 26, 2019
Dr. Chang

3) Response (week number and title (e.g. Week #2: Race in *The Great Gatsby*).

4) Response papers are single-spaced, standard indented paragraphing, no page numbers.

5) Standard Times Roman Font, 12 point only.

6) Correct MLA citation and bibliographic format.
Bibliography if necessary.



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.

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) associated 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.

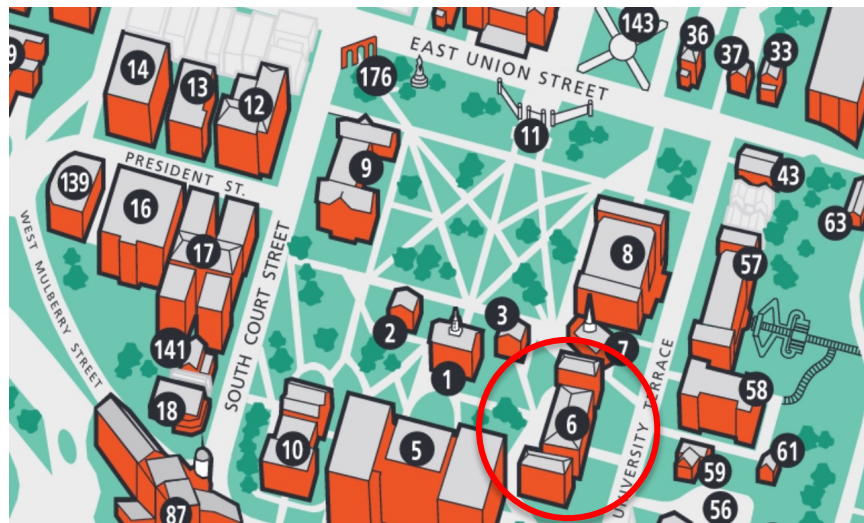


Contact Ed

Office:
331 Ellis Hall
Office Hours:
TuTh 1:30-2:30 PM
or by appointment
E-mail:
change@ohio.edu
Google Talk:
EDagogy

Finding Help

My office and office hours are listed in the left sidebar. I am available during that time and by appointment to help you. I encourage you to come see me early in the term even if it is just to talk about the class, about the assignments, or about school in general. I may ask you to meet with me when I think a conference would be useful. My office is located on the third floor of Ellis Hall (east of Alden Library), Room 331.



I am also available electronically by email and the course blog. Email and the blog are the best means of contacting me. I will do my best to answer your emails and blog posts, usually **within twenty-four hours**. If there is an emergency and you need to reach me, please contact the main English office in 201 Ellis Hall. Furthermore, when time permits, I will supplement my office hours with virtual hours via Google Talk (**nickname: EDagogy**); if I am logged in, during reasonable hours, you are more than welcome to discuss the class or ask questions. Please, when you initiate an IM conversation, **use a greeting**, please identify yourself to me, and be **patient** because my responses may not be immediate.

You can find additional writing and academic help at the Student Writing Center (SWC) on campus, a good resource for this class and other classes. The



Learning (With) Technology

Unless you have an official accommodation, the use of technology in our classroom is a privilege, not a right. Mobile devices like phones, media players, and cameras should be off and put away. Computers and tablets should be used for note-taking, in-class work, and readings only. Print is generally preferred for course texts and readings, but full-size e-versions are acceptable provided the student is able to readily highlight, annotate, and index. Finally, be conscientious and respectful in the use of the course website and social media and post no material from class to the internet or non-class sites without explicit permission from the instructor and the class. Keep in mind these three rules:

- 1) Use the Right Tool for the situation and the task—keep it simple and elegant,
- 2) Practice Best Practices—it must improve or enhance your learning,
- 3) Be a Good Neighbor—it cannot distract or detract from others' learning.

Inappropriate use and abuse of technology in class will result in the taking away of technology privileges for the offending student and/or class as a whole.

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/3390/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 cite 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/student-affairs/community-standards>

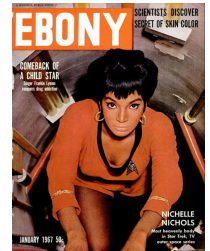
Accommodations

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>

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-rights/> or the Office of Community Standards and Student Responsibility: <https://www.ohio.edu/student-affairs/community-standards>

“The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.”
—Ida B. Wells



“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

“But there are certain very practical things American Negro writers can do. And must do. There's a song that says, the time ain't long. That song is right. Something has got to change in America—and change soon. We must help that change to come.”
—Langston Hughes

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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8/26
First Day of Classes

AUGUST

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Fri 10/4
Reading Day

OCTOBER

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Project Proposal and
Conferences Due

Mon 11/11
Veteran's Day

DECEMBER

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Week 1: August 26-30:

Introduction to the Course
Warren, "Does African-American Literature Exist?"
Thomas, "Introduction: Looking for the Invisible"
Chesnutt, "The Goophered Grapevine" (1887)
Du Bois, "Forethought," "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" (1903) & "The Comet" (1920)

Week 2: September 2-6:

Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood* (1902)
Halberstam, "Gender," *Keywords*

Week 3: September 9-13:

George Schuyler, *Black No More* (1931)
Ferguson, "Race," *Keywords*

Week 4: September 16-20:

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1952, excerpts)
Langston Hughes, selected poems

Week 5: September 23-27:

Samuel Delany, "Aye, and Gommorah..." (1967) & "Driftglass" (1967)
& "Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones" (1968)
Somerville, "Queer," *Keywords*

Week 6: September 30-October 4:

Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987)

Week 7: October 7-11:

Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (cont.)

Week 8: October 14-18:

Octavia Butler, *Dawn* (1987)
Adams, Reiss, Serlin, "Disability," *Keywords*

Week 9: October 21-25:

Octavia Butler, *Dawn* (cont.)
Derrick Bell, "The Space Traders" (1992)

Week 10: October 28-November 1:

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

Week 11: November 4-8:

Nalo Hopkinson, *Brown Girl in the Ring* (cont.)
Nisi Shawl, "Maggies" (2004)

Week 12: November 11-15: *Mon 11/11 Veterans Day*

Okorafor, *Who Fears Death* (2010)
Okorafor, "Writers of Colour"

Week 13: November 18-22:

Okorafor, *Who Fears Death* (cont.)
Okorafor, "Organic Fantasy"

Week 14: November 25-29:

Black Panther (2018, film)

Week 15: December 2-6:

Butler, Duffy, & Jennings, *Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation* (2017)

Week 16: December 9-13: Finals Week

Week 1 or 2 CR is
recommended.

Mon 9/2 Labor Day

SEPTEMBER

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Week 5 or 6 CR is
recommended.

Week 10 or 11 CR is
recommended.

NOVEMBER

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

11/27-12/1
Thanksgiving Recess

Final Project Due
Critical Review Due

