



WGS 410/510
CRN 25946/7

Speculative & Science Fictions of Color

Winter 2017 | University of Oregon | Edmond Y. Chang

WGS 410/510
CRN 25946/7
TuTh 12-1:20 PM
GER 246
Winter 2017
University of
Oregon
Dr. Edmond Y.
Chang



"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

OUR COURSE will engage 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, 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 survey and explore the intersections of literature, genre, bodies, media, and technology with particular attention to African American, Asian American, and other writers.

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 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.

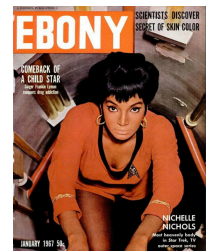
SPECIFICALLY, our course goals include:

- We will develop and demonstrate a familiarity with a range of texts, terms, and theories of the study of speculative and science fiction, particularly written by African American, Asian American, and other writers.
- We will identify and articulate different feminist and queer ways to explore, close read, analyze, and critique literature and other texts.
- We will consider questions and intersections of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, nation, culture, and power.
- We will use literature, art, and popular culture as vernacular theory to think, talk, write, and interrogate the world around us.

WE WILL spend the quarter 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

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

"Could the stories that parents tell children to lull them to sleep actually be true?"
—Ken Liu



Required Course Texts & Materials

- WGS 410/510 Course Reader (available via Campus Copy)
- Hopkins, *Of One Blood*
- Schuyler, *Black No More*.
- Butler, *Dawn*.
- Lai, *Salt Fish Girl*.
- Yang & Liew, *The Shadow Hero*.
- Web access and an active University of Oregon email account.



Course Requirements

Presentation	(20%)
Creative Responses	(10%)
Project Proposal	(10%)
Final Project	(20%)
Critical Review	(10%)
Class Participation	(30%)

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 WGS 410/510 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 (20%)

You will be required to sign up for an oral presentation 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 of color, you will create your own art via creative writing, drawing, and other media to repurpose and demonstrate the ideas, goals, and critiques of the literatures of the course. Over the course of the quarter, you will write poetry, a short-short story, and generate a drawing. These creative responses will be evaluated on completion and your critical, thoughtful engagement with the prompt.

Project Proposal (10%)

As part of your Final Project research and writing process, you must generate a 1-page research proposal in business memo format. You will also arrange for a conference with me to go over your proposal. Proposals will be graded for clarity, detail, completion, and manuscript format. Your proposal and conference must be completed at least 3 weeks prior to the end of the quarter.

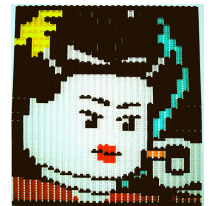
Final Project (20%)

At the end of the quarter, you will complete a final project integrating what you have read and explored with additional research, that draws on specific terms, concepts, or issues from the class, and that articulates the critical value of speculative and science fictions of color. The project asks you to make connections and to create an argument across different kinds of evidence. Your final project can be a traditional research paper, a media production (which includes a substantive analytical component), or a hybrid of the two.

Critical Review (10%)

You will be required to write a short, 500-600 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.

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



"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



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
WGS 410/510
January 3, 2017
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.

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, including bringing required materials to class and doing all of the assigned reading, 4) your **engagement** in presentations, group work, and events, and 5) your care and use of the class *Canvas*—henceforth called the “class blog”—bookmark the address, check and comment regularly, think of the blog as an extension of class: <https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/79393>.

Expectations for Graduate Work

In addition to completing the above readings and assignments, graduate students will be expected to complete the following additional work:

- Lead a longer, more theoretical, and extended presentation and discussion as a way to think about pedagogy and teaching speculative and science fictions of color and other critical texts.
- Complete additional readings as assigned and read a science fiction of color novel for the Critical Review assignment.
- The Final Project will be substantively longer and must be a research project suitable for presentation at a conference of your choosing.
- Meet individually or in small groups with the professor for 40 minutes each week in addition to scheduled class meetings.

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 9 class sessions (50% of class time or more) will result in a failing grade regardless of reason. There are no excused or unexcused absences.** 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



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.

is eaten by the computer. You may even want to take the precaution of e-mailing your paper to yourself as an attachment at least a couple of times during the drafting process and certainly BEFORE you exit the document for the last time and leave the computer. This way, even if you lose your flash drive or your paper gets mysteriously erased, you still have a copy in your e-mail files.

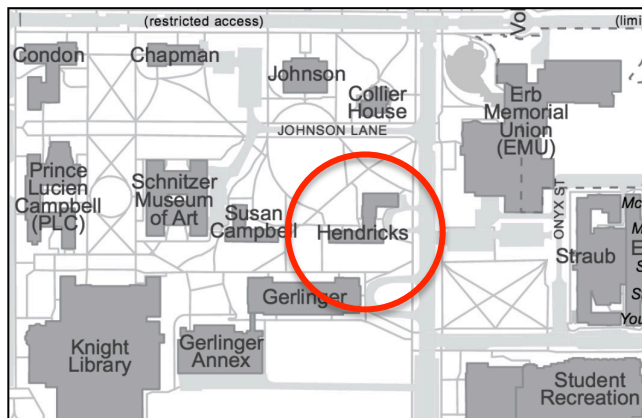
Evaluation Rubric

Over the course of the semester, 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) 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.

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 quarter 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 Hendricks Hall (southeast of the EMU), Room 322. See <<http://map.uoregon.edu/>>.



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 WGS office in



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.



Contact Ed

Office:
322 Hendricks
Office Hours:
Tue 10-11:30 AM
Wed 10:30 AM-12 PM
or by appointment
E-mail:
echang@uoregon.edu
AIM or Google Talk:
EDagogy

315 Hendricks Hall. Furthermore, when time permits, I will supplement my office hours with virtual hours via AOL Instant Messenger or 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 for the first time, please identify yourself to me; also, be **patient** because my responses may not be immediate.

You can find additional writing and academic help at the Teaching and Learning Center on campus, a good resource for this class and other classes. The TLC is located in 68 Prince Lucien Campbell (PLC) Hall and offers a variety of services including help with reading, papers, brainstorming ideas, and research. See <<http://tlc.uoregon.edu/>> 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/courses/410/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 this course. It is always better to be safe than sorry. Please review the University of Oregon's Guidelines for Plagiarism at <<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/>>.

Accommodations

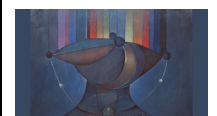
Please let me know **in the first week of class** if you require academic accommodations based on a disability registered with Accessible Education Services. The University of Oregon is an inclusive learning environment. For more information, contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or <<http://aec.uoregon.edu/>>.

Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct

The University of Oregon is committed to a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment. Any form of sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, and gender-based stalking and bullying is contrary to the values of the institution. 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 Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity: <<http://aaeo.uoregon.edu/sexual-harassment-assault>> or the Dean of Students' page on Student Conduct & Community Standards: <<https://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards.aspx>>.

"Some of my favorite places I have been in my life exist only in dreams."

—Nisi Shawl



"If you think a thing is impossible, you'll only make it impossible."

—Bruce Lee

"To me, the American Dream is being able to follow your own personal calling. To be able to do what you want to do is incredible freedom."

—Maya Lin

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

Chang / WGS 410 & 510 / Winter 2017 / University of Oregon

Mon 1/9

First Day of Classes

January						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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: January 9-13

Introduction to the Course & Syllabus

W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" (1903) & "The Comet" (1920)

Jack London, "The Unparalleled Invasion" (1910)

<http://london.sonoma.edu/writings/StrengthStrong/invasion.html>

Sheree R. Thomas, "Introduction: Looking for the Invisible"

Betsy Huang, "Reorientations: On Asian American Science Fiction"

Week 2: January 16-20

Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood* (1902)

Walter Mosley, "Black to the Future" & Ferguson, "Race," *Keywords*

Week 3: January 23-27

George Schuyler, *Black No More* (1931)

Alex Raymond, *Flash Gordon* (1934, excerpt)

Week 4: January 30-February 3

Star Trek, "Errand of Mercy" (1967)

The Green Hornet, "The Silent Gun" (1966)

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

& "Time Considered as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stones" (1968)

Delany, "Racism and Science Fiction"

Week 5: February 6-10

Octavia Butler, *Dawn* (1987)

Bailey, "The Power of Octavia Butler's Black Feminist and Womanist," *Ada*,

<http://adanewmedia.org/2013/11/issue3-baileybrown/>

Butler, "The Monophobic Response" & Halberstam, "Gender," *Keywords*

Week 6: February 13-17

S.P. Somtow, "The Thirteenth Utopia" (1979)

Derrick Bell, "The Space Traders" (1992)

Sherman Alexie, "Distances" (1993)

Week 7: February 20-24

Larissa Lai, *Salt Fish Girl* (2002)

Somerville, "Queer," *Keywords*

Week 8: February 27-March 3

Robot Stories (2003)

Ted Chiang, "Story of Your Life" (1998)

Vandana Singh, "Occasional Writer: An Interview with SF Author Ted Chiang"

Week 9: March 6-10

Nisi Shawl, "Maggies" (2004)

Alice Sola Kim, "Beautiful White Bodies" (2009)

<http://www.strangehorizons.com/2009/20091207/bodies-f.shtml>

Ken Liu, "The Paper Menagerie" (2012)

Junot Diaz, "Monstro" (2012)

Week 10: March 13-17

Gene Luen Yang & Sonny Liew, *The Shadow Hero* (2014)

Lothian, "Introduction: Science Fiction and the Feminist Present," *Ada*,

<http://adanewmedia.org/2013/11/issue3-lothian/>

Week 11: March 20-24

Last Day of Instruction 3/17

Final Exams Begin 3/20

1/16

MLK Holiday

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			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				

March						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			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 &
Short-Short Story
Due

Critical Review Due
Final Project Due