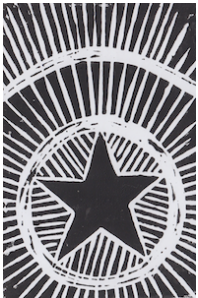


WGS 410/510 | CRN 15832/6

# Feminist Science Fiction: Le Guin, Tiptree, Butler

Autumn 2016 | University of Oregon | Edmond Y. Chang

WGS 410/510  
CRN 15832/6  
TuTh 4-5:20 PM  
GER 301  
Autumn 2016  
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

ACCORDING TO author and linguist Suzette Haden Elgin, "SF is the only genre of literature in which it's possible for a writer to explore the question of what this world would be like if you could get rid of [X], where [X] is filled in with any of the multitude of real world facts that constrain and oppress women." Extending Elgin's definition, our course will engage feminist speculative and science fiction as political and vernacular theory, as strategies for thinking critically about the past, present, and future in order to imagine "what this world would be like" under different conditions and configurations of gender, race, sexuality, ability, and other formations. In other words, how might we read, think, create, and build alternative worlds, alternative possibilities? We will focus on the literature and papers of Ursula K. Le Guin, James Tiptree, Jr., and Octavia Butler. To that end, this course will take advantage of the University of Oregon's Special Collections and University Archives feminist science fiction holdings, one of the world's most important collections of feminist science fiction.

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 the techniques and practices of reading and enjoying literature and other media. We will identify and develop different ways to read different kinds of texts and understand and develop 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 and close play for analysis. And lastly, we will read, play, 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 feminist speculative and science fiction.
- We will identify and articulate different ways to explore, close read, analyze, and critique literature and other texts.
- We will use of a range of research tools and resources, including the university's special collections and archives, and we will find and evaluate sources appropriate to our subject of study.
- We will consider questions and intersections of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, nation, culture, and power.
- We will use 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 discomforting 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

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

"Politicians should read science fiction, not westerns and detective stories."  
—Isaac Asimov



## Required Course Texts & Materials

- Le Guin, *The Word for World is Forest*.
- Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*.
- Tiptree, *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever*.
- Butler, *Bloodchild and Other Stories*.
- Imarisha & Brown, *Octavia's Brood*.
- Merrick, *The Secret Feminist Cabal*.
- Web access and an active University of Oregon email account.



## Course Requirements

Presentation	(10%)
Artifact Précis	(10%)
Project Proposal	(10%)
Final Project	(20%)
Project Poster	(10%)
Critical Review	(10%)
Class Participation	(30%)

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 Context & Question Presentation (10%)

You will be required to sign up for an oral presentation in small groups. For your presentation, you will read the texts assigned for a particular week, summarize the main arguments, generate a critical question or two, and get class discussion started for the day. A short single-spaced half-sheet or 1-page handout copied for the whole class is encouraged. Presentations are 8-10 minutes, may include media, and each presenter must have a speaking part.

### Artifact Précis (10%)

To jump start the brainstorming for your Final Project, you will take advantage of the University of Oregon's Special Collections and University Archives feminist science fiction holdings, particularly looking at the papers of Ursula K. Le Guin and James Tiptree, Jr. You will explore the archives, select one artifact of interest to you, and by midterm write a short précis that describes and connects the artifact to the course.

### 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%) & Project Poster (10%)

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 feminist science fiction. The first part of 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. The second part of the final project asks you to generate a research poster (36"x48") to present your project's claim, evidence, examples, and analytical goals in a clear, concise, well-designed format. The poster will be shared with the class and presented at UO Tiptree Symposium at the end of the quarter.

### 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

"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  
September 26, 2016  
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.

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.

### 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/72072>.

### 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 feminist science fiction and critical texts.
- Complete additional readings as assigned and read a feminist worldbuilding 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),



### 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.



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 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.

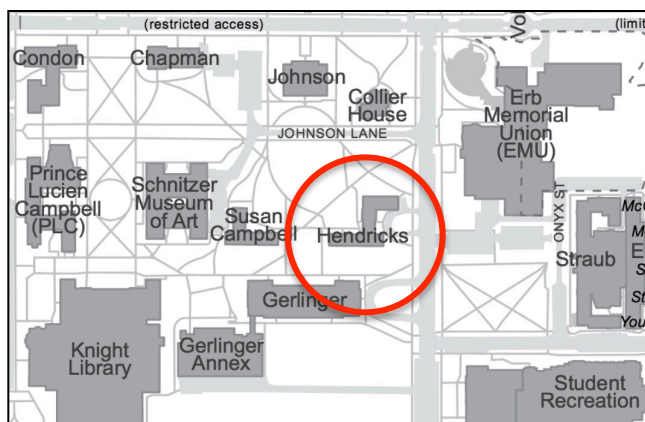
## Evaluation Rubric

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/>>.



## 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:  
MW 12-1:30 PM  
or by appointment  
E-mail:  
[echang@uoregon.edu](mailto:echang@uoregon.edu)  
AIM or Google Talk:  
EDagogy

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 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 ensuring that all students have access to a quality learning experience and the opportunity to pursue their academic goals in 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 community values of the institution. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, and so on. As your instructor, I have a mandatory reporting responsibility and am required by law to share with the University any

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

—Nisi Shawl



"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 don't pretend we have all the answers. But the questions are certainly worth thinking about."

—Arthur C. Clarke

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>>.

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 / Autumn 2016 / University of Oregon

Mon 9/26

First Day of Classes

#### September

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29	30	31	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	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8

#### Week 1: September 26-30

Introduction to the Course & Syllabus

Wolf, "Introduction" & "Worlds within Worlds," *Building Imaginary Worlds*

#### Week 2: October 3-7 \*\*\*

Le Guin, *The Word for World is Forest* (1976)

Merrick, "Preface" & "Introduction," *The Secret Feminist Cabal*

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

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

#### Week 3: October 10-14

Le Guin, *The Word for World is Forest* (cont.)

Haran and King, "Science Fiction Feminisms, Feminist Science Fictions & Feminist Sustainability," *Ada*, <http://adanewmedia.org/2013/11/issue3-kingharan/>

#### Week 4: October 17-21

Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969)

Merrick, "Birth of a Sub-Genre," *TSFC*

#### Week 5: October 24-28 \*\*\*

Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (cont.)

Merrick, "Cyborg Theorists," *TSFC*

#### Week 6: October 31-November 4

Swanwick, "Introduction," *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever*

Tiptree, "The Women Men Don't See" & "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" (1973)

Merrick, "Another Science 'Fiction,'" *TSFC*

#### Week 7: November 7-11

Tiptree, "Her Smoke Rose Up Forever" (1974) & "The Screwfly Solution" (1977)

Merrick, "Beyond Gender," *TSFC*

#### Week 8: November 14-18 \*\*\*

Butler, "Bloodchild" (1984) & "Speech Sounds" (1983)

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

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

#### Week 9: November 21-25

Butler, "Amnesty" (2003)

Butler, "Positive Obsession" (1989) & "Furor Scribendi" (1993)

#### Week 10: November 28-December 2

Imarisha, "Introduction," *Octavia's Brood*

Selections from *Octavia's Brood*

Haraway, "SF: Science Fiction, Speculative Fabulation, String Figures, So Far,"

*Ada*, <http://adanewmedia.org/2013/11/issue3-haraway/>

#### Week 11: December 5-9

Last Day of Instruction 12/2

Final Exams Begin 12/5

#### October

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
25	26	27	28	29	30	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	1	2	3	4	5

Artifact Precis Due

#### November

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	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	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10

11/24-11/25

Thanksgiving Recess

Project Poster Due

Critical Review Due  
Final Project Due

Project Proposal Due

12/2-12/3  
Tiptree Symposium

#### December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	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
1	2	3	4	5	6	7