

## Fall 2018: GS 490-01 Future Sex/Love: Science Fiction and Gender

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Class Hours: TR 11-12:15 (Student Center 205)	Office Hours: TR 10-11
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### Course Description

Science fiction allows us to imagine worlds, beings, relationships, and technologies that do not exist, some impossible, others just an invention or social struggle away. Its social commentaries range from bitter satires that extrapolate current social ills to utopian futures that imagine alternate ways of being. From Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* to Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and N.K. Jemisin's *The Fifth Season*, women writers have used speculative fiction to explore their real and potential lives; sexuality and reproductive issues; genders and sexualities; as well as alternate families and social structures. This class will engage with fiction and media of possible futures, focusing on gender and sexuality within the context of race, class, nationality, and/or disability. Whether as extrapolations of the present or refutations of the status quo, these works allow us to discuss our reality as distorted (and clarified) through the prism of futurist imagination.

### Course Materials

James Tiptree Jr., *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever* (2004)

Octavia Butler, *Lilith's Brood: Dawn, Adulthood Rites, and Imago* (1987-89)

Walidah Imarisha and adrienne maree brown (eds.), *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements* (2015)

Nnedi Okorafor, *Binti* (2016)

Karin Tidbeck, *Amatka* (2016)

Material on Sakai

### Class Attendance Policy

You need to attend every meeting of the class: the work in this course moves too quickly to accommodate students who need to make up material covered in class. Punctuality is paramount. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class; repeated excessive lateness will count as absences. Repeated absences without documentation will affect your final grade in the course.

### Expectations

This class requires a lot of reading of often unfamiliar prose. Please schedule sufficient time. Readings come from the books above or are available online, so you can read ahead if you anticipate other commitments or require more time to read. You are expected to print out the readings that are on the syllabus for that given day and read them carefully (underline, look up words you don't understand, articulate questions you may have). Response essays on Sakai are due BEFORE CLASS.

### Requirements

The breakdown of the grade is as follows:

* Attendance and Class Participation	20%
* Response Essays (8 @ 5% each)	40%
* Midterm Project (Book Presentation)	20%
* Final Project (Creative Response)	20%

**Book Presentation Options**

Ursula K. LeGuin, *The Dispossessed* (1974)  
Marge Piercy, *Women on the Edge of Time* (1976)  
Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (1980)  
Joan Slonczewski, *A Door into Ocean* (1986)  
Nicola Griffith, *Ammonite* (1993)  
Mary Doria Russell, *The Sparrow* (1997)  
Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Justice* (2014)  
N.K. Jemisin, *The Fifth Season* (2015)  
Emma Newman, *Planetfall* (2016)  
Madeline Ashby, *Company Town* (2016)  
Virginia Bergin, *Who Runs the World?* (2017)  
Rivers Solomon, *An Unkindness of Ghosts* (2017)

## TENTATIVE SYLLABUS:

### I. MONSTROUS PROGENY

- T 8/21** Introduction; Ursula Le Guin, National Book award Acceptance Speech (2014)  
**R 8/23** Samuel Delany, *About 5,750 Words* (1978); Ursula Le Guin, *Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons* (1974), *The Question I Get Asked Most Often* (2004); Selections from Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)  
**T 8/28** Octavia Butler, *Bloodchild* (1984); \*Tananarive Due, *The Only Lasting Truth* (2015)  
**R 8/30** Octavia Butler, *Dawn* (1987)  
**T 9/5** ctd.  
**R 9/7** *Children of Men* (film, 2006); Alexis Lothian, *The Future Stops Here* (2018)

### II. BODIES, GENDERS, AND IDENTITIES

- T 9/11** C. L. Moore, *No Woman Born* (1944); Kate Wilhelm, *Baby, You Were Great* (1964); Nisi Shawl, *Deep End* (2014)  
**R 9/13** James Tiptree Jr., *The Women Men Don't See* (1973); Nalo Hopkinson, *Message in a Bottle* (2004)  
**T 9/18** James Tiptree Jr., *The Girl Who was Plugged In* (1973); Pat Murphy, *Rachel in Love* (1987)  
**R 9/20** *Fury Road* (2016, film)

### III. FUTURITIES, COMMUNITIES, AND CHANGE

- T 9/25** James Tiptree Jr., *Houston, Houston, Do You Read* (1976); Joanna Russ, *When It Changed* (1972)  
**R 9/27** \*Vagabond, *Kafka's Last Laugh* (2015); \*Bao Phi, *Revolution Shuffle* (2015)  
**T 10/2** Ursula K. LeGuin, *The Matter of Seggri* (1994); Vandana Singh, *The Woman who Thought She Was a Planet* (2014); Carrie Vaughn, *Amaryllis* (2010)  
**R 10/4** Janelle Monáe, *Dirty Computer* (2018, emotion picture)  
**T 10/9** Book Presentations  
**R 10/11** Fall Break

### IV. SELF, ALIENS, AND OTHERS

- T 10/16** Joan Slonczewski, *Tuberculosis bacteria join UN* (2000); N.K. Jemisin, *Valedictorian* (2014)  
**R 10/18** James Tiptree Jr., *We Who Stole the Dream* (1978); \*Imarisha, *Black Angel* (2015)  
**T 10/23** andré carrington Introduction, *Space Race Woman: Lieutenant Uhura Beyond the Bridge* (2016); Rheanna, *Lunch and Other Obscenities* (2009)  
**R 10/25** FSNNA (No Class)  
**T 10/30** Nnedi Okorafor, *Sci-fi Stories that Imagine a Future Africa* (2017); *Binti* (2016)  
**R 11/1** *Black Panther* (2018, film and album)

### V. ETHICS, LANGUAGE, AND BEING

- T 11/6** Peter Watts, *The Things* (2011); James Tiptree Jr., *The Screwfly Solution* (1977)  
**R 11/8** NSWA (No Class)  
**T 11/13** Aliette de Bodard, *The Waiting Stars* (2013); \*Alix Garcia, *In Spite of Darkness* (2015)  
**R 11/15** Alexis Lothian, *How to Remix the Future* (2018); Selected fanvids  
**T 11/20** Thanksgiving Break  
**R 11/22** Thanksgiving Break  
**T 11/27** \*Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *Evidence* (2015); Karen Joy Fowler, *Face Value* (2011)  
**R 11/29** Karin Tidbeck, *Amatka* (2016)  
**T 12/4** *Arrival* (2017, film)  
**R 12/6** Last Day of Classes