



National Taiwan University of Science and Technology

2021 Summer Program

DIV 300 The Future in Color

Course Outline

Course Code: DIV 300

Instructor: Robert Barsky

Home Institution: Vanderbilt University

Office Hours: TBA and by appointment

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Credit: 4

Course Description & Pre/co-requisites

Cultural Literacy and/or Cultural History

This is a literature course that investigates current speculative fiction, science fiction and fantasy by writers of color. Students will discuss the work and then craft their own stories which look at the social and political constructs of a universe that consciously includes diverse cultures and possibly alien species and engages a political, social, or scientific issue. The students will create a future world in text and graphics which considers architectural changes, ecological adaptations, political progressions, and population changes. Issues of race, culture, language, and definitions of humanity will be addressed.

Through this class students would become aware of a number of accomplished writers working in speculative fiction as they sharpen their critical thinking skills and broaden their ideas of culture and hone their own writing skills, learning through the creation of character studies and very short, short stories and extended short stories.

Class Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Have an understanding of the structure of a short story
- Understand what science fiction is and how science fact and how fact and fiction fuel our current worldviews and inventions



- Have an understanding of how today's cultural, ethnic, national issues will shape future world realities.
- Acquire an appreciation for diversity through developing expansive worldviews
- Implement skills in creative problem solving and applied them to critical social issues
- Develop through self-reflection and critical analysis, alternative perspectives on the historical roots of power, privilege and inequality along with an understanding of the lasting effects of oppression on marginalized groups.
- Foster an understanding of the material and social conditions of contemporary life in the United States as they intersect with the global community
- Be able to advance collective intellectual understanding--through the development of social and cultural participation skills, decision-making abilities, active listening, and speaking--and use the information to problems and issues related to social inequality, conflict, and intersectionality.
- Be able to understand historical and contemporary debates and values of the intersections of at least two of the following: power, oppression, ethnicity, race, gender, class, language and sexuality
- Learn to question traditional disciplinary boundaries and their underlying assumptions as well as the relationship of social/political institutions to literature, art, and cultural practices
- Gain an in-depth understanding of issues, traditions, and/or themes arising from the history, culture, and present condition of diverse communities, particularly the historically underrepresented, immigrant and forced migratory communities of the United States

Assignments and Requirements

Participate in class discussions! (25%)

Oral Presentation about one author (of your choice) (25%)

1. Presentation of author, interview or statements from authors on work or process, interviews, or reviews about author, biography.
2. (How) does story speak to current or historical events?
3. What are the power relationships?
4. Does the story speak to ideas of bigotry, discrimination, entitlement? How?

Final Project: Write a *Future World Story*, in several steps. The project will be worth 50% of your grade, and it will be composed of several parts.

1. WEEK 1: Create a character Study- what does the character look like, age, ethnicity, spiritual path or religion, or inner life. How does the character live/eat/work? What are the character's dreams or desires? Fear(s)? Relationship to culture/art? Language(s) used? This should be one to two pages long with NO plot development, just character description.
2. WEEK 2: Create graphic of a future world factory, work complex, city, farm, countryside, etc. which will be the primary or only location for your short story and present it to the class. Include in your presentation information on:

- Year (at least 10 years in future) **How has the climate and agriculture changed? What extinctions have taken place?**



- Primary political system(s) - (if any) If no political system how are societies organized, run? Where does power lie?
 - **Ethnic and species breakdown- This is critical. Don't omit from project or final short story.**
3. WEEK 3: Ways culture is manifested
- Primary economic system and alternative system(s) (if any)
 - Energy system(s)
 - Communication systems
 - Diet (Include any foods or food forms that exist that are an evolution or devolution of today's diets.)
 - Major issue of that year's society
 - Major languages
 - (Turn in answers to above questions and a copy of graphic to me unless it is large 3D model. In best projects the answers are a part of the graphic.)
4. WEEK 4: FINAL/ COMPLETED PROJECT-
- Create a 10-15 page short story in own/combined version/ or other future world as presented in class. *In your story how do you include the idea of ethnicity and culture? What is the specific form of government? Remember you can make one up- just name it and explain it. What question(s) are you asking in your story? What is/are your "what if(s)?" e.g. what if corporations really did take over the world? What if the planet (not aliens) went to war on humans? What would the world look like on the day that war ended?*

REQUIRED BOOKS (Listed in the reading order)

Bloodchild and Other Stories – by Octavia Butler

So Long Been Dreaming- edited by Nalo Hopkinson*

*All books are available as e-books. \

Recommended Reading

Lilith's Brood by Octavia Butler

Stories for Chip edited by Nisi Shawl and Bill Campbell

Parable of the Sowers by Octavia Butler

Nova or the Ballad of Beta 12 by Samuel Delaney

Walking in the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction edited by Grace L. Dillon

Grading Scale:

A+:4.3——95-100



A :4.0——87-94

A-:3.7——82-86

B+:3.3——78-81

B :3.0——75-77

B -:2.7——71-74

C+:2.3——68-70

C :2.0——65-67

C -:1.7——61-64

D :1.0——55-60

E :0.0——49-54

X :0.0——0

