



## National Taiwan University of Science and Technology

### 2021 Winter Program

### DIV 300 The Future in Color

### Course Outline

**Course Code: DIV 300**

**Instructor: Brendan Prawdzik**

**Home Institution: The Pennsylvania State University**

**Office Hours: By appointment**

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**Credit: 4**

#### **Course Description:**

This is a literature course that investigates current speculative fiction, science fiction, 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 will become aware of accomplished writers working in speculative fiction as they sharpen their critical thinking skills, broaden their ideas of culture, and hone their own writing skills.

#### **Class Learning Outcomes**

*Students will:*

- Know the structure of a short story



- Understand what science fiction is and how science fact and fiction fuel our current worldviews and inventions
- Articulate how today's cultural, ethnic, national issues may shape future world realities
  - Acquire an appreciation for diversity through developing expansive worldviews
  - Implement skills in creative problem solving and apply them to social issues
  - Develop, through self-reflection and critical analysis, alternative perspectives on the historical roots of power, privilege, and inequality, as well as the lasting effects of oppression on marginalized groups
- Comprehend the material and social conditions of contemporary life in the United States as they intersect with the global community
- Be capable of advancing collective intellectual understanding through the development of social and cultural participation skills, decision-making abilities, active listening, and speaking
  - Demonstrate effects of how two of the following intersect: power, oppression, ethnicity, race, gender, class, language, 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

### Required Textbooks:

Octavia Butler, *Bloodchild and Other Stories*

Nalo Hopkinson, Ed., *So Long Been Dreaming*

- Book copies can be purchased online; each is available in eBook.
- Additional articles, stories, and Powerpoints will be available through the course website.

### Grading & Evaluation:

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

### Grade Breakdown

Forum posts:	15%
Exam:	20%
Micronarrative:	10%
Graphic:	10%
Rough draft work:	10%
Final Short Story:	35%

### **Future World Story Semester-long project**

- I. Create a character study: Appearance, age, ethnicity, spiritual path or religion, and inner life. How does the character live/eat/work? What are the character's dreams or desires? Fears? Relationship to culture/art? Language(s) used? 1 to 2 pages of character development, with *no* plot.
- II. Write a maximum 500-word micro short story using this character: you will receive extra credit if you integrate both your character and a classmate's character in the story.
- III. Create a graphic of a future world factory, work complex, city, farm, countryside, bio-dome, or other location; it will be the primary or only location for your short story. Present your future world setting to the class. Include in your presentation information on:
  - *When the story occurs* (at least 100 years in future).
  - *How has the climate and agriculture changed?*
  - *Have there been catastrophic wars or purges?*
  - *What extinctions have taken place?*
  - *Primary political system(s)*. How is the country governed? If there is no political system per se, then how is the society organized and run? How is power distributed and maintained?
  - *Ethnic and species breakdown*



- *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 current issues in this 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.)

- IV. Complete a 10 to 12-page short story about your future world. 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?

### Academic Integrity Policy

Students are expected to conform to the following class policies, regarding academic integrity. Any violations will result in an immediate failing grade for the course.

1. All tests, term papers, and oral and written assignments are to be exclusively the work of the student presenting the material for course credit.
2. Any paraphrase, quotation, or summary (that is, any use of words, ideas, or findings of other persons, writers, or researchers) requires explicit citation of the source, even if it is your own work that you have done previously or are doing for another (former or current) course.

### Course Schedule:

#### Week1

1 - Class overview and discussion.

2 – Read Octavia Butler, “The Evening and the Morning and the Night,” in *Bloodchild*. Complete study questions. Prepare lists of the following for class:

- List of species gone extinct since 1900: include at least 3 from the last 20 years; include 3 that are likely to go extinct in the next 20 years
- Three or more past political systems
- Two religions no longer in practice
- Five foods or food forms that did not exist 100 years ago (include year of introduction, if possible).



- Identify two human cultures, tribes, or ethnicities that no longer exist. Include how many years they were on planet and what caused their extinction.
- Identify 3 things that make human beings *distinctly human*; identify 3-5 attributes that humans share with another species
- Complete notes on building a character. Begin your character sketch

3 - Post a description of your fictive world's government system. Add what you think is a benefit and what is a negative of this system. Respond to two classmates' submissions by adding ideas on plus and/or minuses of that system.

Read Shirley Jackson, "The Lottery" (posted to course website). Complete study questions.

\*\*Note the governance system which you are responsible for explaining to the class in the Forum February 10:

Monarchy  
Oligarchy  
Fascism  
Democracy- non-Parliamentary  
Democracy- Parliamentary  
Socialist- Democracy  
Anarchy  
Meritocracy  
Minarchy  
Geniocracy  
Timocracy  
Noocracy  
Dictatorship  
Communism  
Socialism  
Republic  
Kritaarchy  
Gynocracy

4 - Turn in description of your fictional disease. Be prepared to present information about the invented disease to the class.

Read the two assigned articles on environmental racism: "Environmental Racism Overview" and "Climate Change and Racism." Submit three facts that you did not know based on this article. Consider how climate change might affect where you were born or where you now live. How might climate change and environmental racism effect a future world?

**Week2**



- 1 - Read "Speech Sounds" from *Bloodchild*. Complete study questions.
- 2 - Complete your character sketch. For instance, consider presenting a futuristic magazine interview, criminal rap sheet, news story that includes biographical info, etc. Give some indication of the character's culture, government, ethnicity, and social status. Has your character been impacted in physicality or environment by climate change? Post your character sketch to the forum.
- 3 - Read Tamai Kobayashi, "The Grassdreaming Tree" from *So Long Been Dreaming*. Complete study questions. Create and upload two visual language symbols, without saying what they mean. You are responsible for commenting on three of your classmate's symbols and saying what they mean to you. (For example: The symbol for radiation is a visual symbol; the walk/don't walk lights with figures are visual symbols. In the story the main character wears a visual symbol for her name.)
- 4 - Re-focus on the articles about Environmental Racism. Create a micro-story (250-500 words) with your character and, for extra credit, a classmate's character. Address how the characters are being impacted by, producing, or reforming some aspect of environmental racism. Read Wade Compton, "The Blue Road: A Fairy Tale" and complete study questions.

### Week3

1 - Present your future world concept and graphic to class. It can be a drawing, computer graphic, collage, or other medium.

Submit an outline for the final short story.

2 - Read Celu Amberstone, "Refugees," from *So Long Been Dreaming*. Complete study questions. Read the article about *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

3 - Be ready to discuss "Inventions that Could Change the World" and "Danger of Interactive Robots." Using the article about interactive robots as an example, come up with ideas about the dangers of the inventions in the "Inventions that Could Change the World" article. What could go wrong?

4 - Complete exam. Review assigned Powerpoints about literary style and the craft of writing.

### Week4

1 - Present story plot to class.

2 - Review "Writing a Strong Peer Critique." Send your short story draft to one classmate for feedback. Send it to me for written feedback.



3 - Continue to revise your work thoroughly. Meet with the professor.

4 - Turn in your final short story draft. No late stories accepted!

