

Extrapolating Race & Science in African American and Chicanx/Latinx SF LIT4930, sect. 023D, Summer A 2018

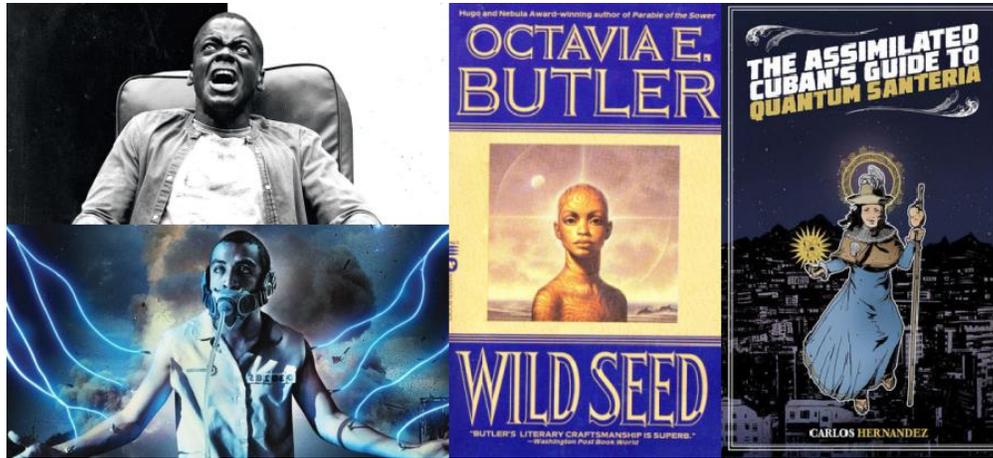
Instructor Name: Karina A. Vado

Course Meeting Times & Location: MTWRF Period 5 (2:00-3:15 p.m.), PUGH 120

Office Hours and Location: Wednesdays, 3:30-5:30 p.m., Location, TBD

Course Website: <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>

Instructor Email: kvado1224@ufl.edu



Course Description

This course takes as its focus the literary and popular culture productions of African American, Chicanx, and Latinx science fiction (SF) artists and writers and their confrontations with the genre's fraught colonial, gendered, and racialized medico-scientific origins. More specifically, this course critically addresses literary scholar Roger Luckhurst's contention that "the strangest silence in SF scholarship has surely been the marginal interface between SF critics and those in Science and Technology Studies and History of Science." By engaging the (pseudo) scientific narratives of nineteenth and early twentieth century white masculinist figures (such as Charles Darwin and Samuel G. Morton), we will consider how Black and Chicanx/Latinx SF artists and writers—past and present—appropriate the idioms of science and technology to radically contest and disrupt biological determinist understandings of disability, gender, race and sexuality. At the same time, we will weigh in on the degree to which Black and Chicanx/Latinx SF texts fashion alternative, non-normative, and/or emancipatory representations of "(dis)abled," "gendered," "raced," and "sexed" bodies.

Throughout the course of the semester, we will attempt to answer the following questions: What do science and SF, to borrow from black feminist SF writer Octavia E. Butler, have to offer people of color and other historically marginalized communities? How (and with what intention) do SF artists and writers of color complicate our understanding of the "science" in science fiction? How do they challenge (or buy into) its positivist and progressivist standpoint? Lastly, what stake(s) do SF artists and writers of color have in writing themselves into increasingly biotechnological futures?

Required texts:

Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood: Or, The Hidden Self* (1902)

George Schuyler, *Black No More* (1931)

Samuel "Chip" Delany, *Nova* (1968)
Octavia E. Butler, *Wild Seed* (1980)
Jordan Peele, *Get Out* (2017, available for rent via Amazon)
Ernest Hogan, *High Aztech* (1992)
Alex Rivera, *Sleep Dealer* (2008, available for rent via Amazon)
Carlos Hernandez, *The Assimilated Cuban's Guide to Quantum Santeria* (2016)

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.

2. Attendance and Punctuality Policies:

- You may miss three class sessions over the course of the semester without negatively impacting your final grade. ***Special note:** Accumulating more than four absences results in automatic failure of the course.
- You are expected to arrive to class on time. Every two tardies will count as one unexcused absence. Moreover, you must come speak to me after class so that I know you came in late.
- You must handle gathering any notes, handouts, or assignments that you miss due to an absence. I only grant excused absences for documented serious medical issues, university-approved reasons (i.e. varsity athletics, etc.) and religious holidays. If you will be missing class for university-approved events or religious holidays, you must notify me at least 48 hours in advance. Moreover, if you're missing class due to illness or university-approved reasons, you must submit formal documentation for your absence(s) within a week of your absence.

3. Paper Format & Submission: All written assignments should follow MLA conventions, and are to be submitted in .doc or .docx format via Canvas. My favorite online resource for all things MLA is the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL).

4. Writing Resources: The Writing Center is located in Tigert 302 and is available to all UF students. You can schedule one-on-one appointments online by visiting: <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/for-students/schedule-an-appointment/>. Another excellent (and free!) source I encourage you to use for your writing assignments is Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips site: <https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl>

5. Late Papers/Assignments: All assignments are due on the assigned time/due date. However, if an emergency situation arises that impedes or affects your ability to complete and submit your work on time, please communicate this to me as early as possible (preferably before the due date). ***Important note:** Please keep in mind that I'll be making a 10% deduction to your overall assignment grade for each day that it is late. That being said, a late assignment must be submitted no later than two days from when the assignment was originally due. Failure to meet the late submission deadline will result in an automatic zero for the assignment.

6. Paper Maintenance Responsibilities: Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.

7. Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism: Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>. If I find that any of your written assignments are plagiarized, you will receive an automatic zero for the given assignment. If you plagiarize on more than one occasion, you will automatically fail the course.

8. Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.

9. For information on UF Grading policies, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

10. **Course Evaluations:** Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>

11. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>

12. Classroom Behavior and Technology Policies:

- Meaningful, constructive, and “difficult” dialogue is encouraged in this course and requires a degree of mutual respect, willingness to listen, and acceptance of differing points of view. Because discussion in this course will oft-times center on and explore issues of personal and social identity (i.e. race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality) respect for individual and alternative ideological stances and viewpoints will be maintained **at all times** in this class. One’s words and use of language should thus be reasonable and within acceptable bounds of civility and decorum. Failure to maintain a respectful, safe, and welcoming classroom environment will result in immediate dismissal from class. This will then result in one unexcused absence.
- With the exception of laptops and tablets used for notetaking purposes, all cell phones, Smartphones, and other electronic devices that generate or record sound and/or images/pictures must be turned off during class. If I discover that you’re using notetaking devices for other purposes not related to our class/coursework, you will be asked to leave class for the day. This will thus result in one unexcused absence.

13. **Participation:** Because this is a fast-paced upper-level English course, I expect you to not only have read all the assigned readings for each class period, but also be prepared to discuss them in depth, and at length. To this end, you must bring two discussion questions, and your critical responses to said questions, to each class session based on the reading for that day. As strong critical responses are based on direct textual evidence, you must reference two to three examples from the text (with page numbers).

For the sake of efficiency and orderliness, **you must write and submit your Q&A on a 5×8 index card**. You will then turn these in at the beginning of each class period as I will use these to take attendance. Through random selection, I will pick two Q&A cards. If selected, it is your responsibility to lead and moderate class discussion based on your Q&A card for fifteen minutes. *****Please note: You are only responsible for leading discussion two times throughout the semester.*****

***About discussion questions:** A discussion question calls for critical and interpretive analysis and thus cannot be simply answered with a matter-of-fact response. For instance, after reading Octavia Butler’s

Wild Seed, you may pose the following question: "What is the symbolic meaning or significance of Anyanwu's shapeshifting abilities?"

14. UF's Policy on Harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty:

<http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>

Grade/Assignment Breakdown

Assignment	Percentage	Due Date
Participation (including attendance, pop quizzes, writing conferences, and other in-class activities)	25% of final grade (250 points)	N/A
Discussion Leading (Two)	10% of final grade (50 points each, 100-point total)	N/A
Formal Paper (One, Four to five pages)	25% of final grade (250 points)	Sunday, May 27 th
Speculative Visioning Project Proposal (Two-page maximum)	10% of final grade (100 points)	Monday, June 4 th
Speculative Visioning Project, (Four-page artist statement & creative component)	30% of final grade (150-points each, 300-point total)	Thursday, June 21 st

Assignment Details

Formal paper: This paper asks that you engage one of the main primary texts we have explored in class as well as some of the major issues and themes we have discussed throughout the course of the semester. Your paper should offer a well-defined, original, and reflective argument about the text(s) (articulated in a strong thesis statement) and should also be informed by at least 4 outside academic/peer-reviewed sources.

Speculative Visioning Project: Inspired by the premise behind speculative fiction writers and prison abolitionists Walidah Imarisha and adrienne maree brown's edited collection, *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements* that all social justice organizing is speculative fiction, this assignment asks that you:

- A) Critically consider a pressing social issue (i.e. climate change, food and water security, gender inequality/sexism, health disparities, immigration reform, income inequality/poverty, racial inequality/white supremacy, war, etc.)
- B) Use and/or build on the various social justice visioning strategies offered by multi-ethnic SF artists and writers to offer new approaches/new vistas/critically utopian-esque solutions to a social issue of your choice.

I'd then like you to consider the following questions as you're planning/working on your creative projects:

- What type of world do you want to live in?
- Why do we need this alternative version of our world?
- How do we get to this alternative version of our world?
- How do we make these alternatively liberatory vistas of the future sustainable ones?

With these questions in mind, the first part of the assignment is a creative one; you will “show” me (be it through poetry, flash fiction, photography, music, art, a manifesto, etc.) what your version of a world without sexism, for instance, looks like. The second part of the assignment, a 4-page artist statement, asks that you identify the sociopolitical problem/impetus behind your project, why you chose to tackle a particular social problem/issue, what in-class primary texts inspired your visioning strategies/alternative vistas of the future, and how you see the SF/social justice connection working in your project. By engaging in a project that is equal parts visionary and critical, you are—as scholars and civic agents—simultaneously (and significantly) offering, as black feminist scholar bell hooks puts it, a “language of critique” and a “language of possibility.”

Grading Criteria

Generally, the grading guidelines for your papers are based on analytical content (70% of your assignment grade), organization (10% of your assignment grade), style/expression and grammar/mechanics (20% of your assignment grade).

An “A-level” Paper-

- Follows and meets all the requirements in the assignment guidelines
- Thesis (or argument) is clearly articulated, *original*, and well-supported; the argument is analytical rather than descriptive. ****Important note: An “A” paper has publication potential; it goes beyond analyses and ideas discussed in class.***
- Subsequent paragraphs build on and support the paper’s central thesis or argument
- Examples and evidence from the texts back up (but do not subsume) your critical analysis
- Writing is clear and dynamic with varied sentence length and structure
- Free of most grammatical and spelling errors
- MLA formatting uniformly (and correctly) followed throughout
- Should have a distinct and strong conclusion that does not simply rehash the paper’s original thesis

A “B-level” Paper-

- Follows and meets most of the requirements in the assignment guidelines
- Has a good thesis, but the wording might be less clear and/or fluid or weaker in its argumentation
- Still builds up and supports the paper’s main argument but does not create compelling nor strong connections between the ideas presented in each paragraph
- Does not analyze textual evidence as critically or as in depth as the “A” paper
- Puts forth a solid argument but may have unclear language, spelling, or grammatical errors and superficial or vague analysis in a few places
- MLA formatting is uniformly (and correctly) followed throughout
- Conclusion is strong

A “C-level” Paper-

- Follows and meets some of the requirements in the assignment guidelines
- Does not clearly articulate or fully develop thesis; it is more descriptive rather than analytical
- Does not wholly engage with or defend the paper’s key argument throughout
- The writing is largely incoherent and disorganized but may have instances of proper analysis and clear argumentation
- Does not incorporate sufficient textual evidence to support the main argument and claims
- MLA formatting is not uniformly (nor correctly) followed throughout
- Lacks a clear conclusion

A “D-level” Paper and below-

- Does not meet any of the requirements in the assignment guidelines
- Lacks a clearly articulated and well-developed thesis
- Does not engage with or defend the paper’s key argument throughout
- Does not successfully incorporate any textual evidence to support the main argument and claims
- Shows blatant disregard of proper grammar and punctuation
- The writing is vague and has several errors in analysis and argumentation
- Does not follow MLA formatting guidelines
- Lacks a conclusion

Grading Scale

A, 4.0, 93-100 (930-1000)	C, 2.0, 73-76 (730-769)
A-, 3.67, 90-92 (900-929)	C-, 1.67, 70-72 (700-729)
B+, 3.33, 87-89 (870-899)	D+, 1.33, 67-69 (670-699)
B, 3.0, 83-86 (830-869)	D, 1.0, 63-66 (630-669)
B-, 2.67, 80-82 (800-829)	D-, 0.67, 60-62 (600-629)
C+, 2.33, 77-79 (770-799)	E, 0.00, 0-59 (0-599)

Course Schedule

**Please note: The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to the course schedule and the assigned readings as needed.*

**All assignments and readings are due on the date listed.*

**Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available through Canvas.*

UNIT ONE— “Gendering,” “Racing,” and “Sexing” Science**Week 1—**

May 14: First day of class—Introduction

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2018/04/race-genetics-science-africa/>

May 15: Immanuel Kant, **“On the Different Races of Man”* (1776)

Samuel G. Morton, M.D., **Crania Americana* (1839) Preface and pgs. 62-95

May 16: Samuel Cartwright, M.D., **"Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race"* (1851)

Charles Darwin, *Excerpt from *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871)

May 17: Martin Delany, *Excerpt from *Principia of Ethnology: The Origin of Races and Color, With an Archaeological Compendium of Ethiopian and Egyptian Civilization* (1880), Chapters 5-9 and 18

Francis Galton, *Excerpt from *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development* (1883), Pgs. 1-5, 13-22, 39-46, and 198-220

UNIT TWO—Speculative Blackness

May 18: Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood* (Chps. 1-7)

Week 2—

May 21: Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood* (Chps. 8-16)

Mandy A. Reid, **"Utopia is in the Blood: The Bodily Utopias of Martin R. Delany and Pauline Hopkins"*

May 22: Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood* (Chp. 17-end)

May 23: George Schuyler, *Black No More* (Chps. 1-5)

W.E.B. Du Bois, **"The Conservation of the Races"* (1897)

May 24: George Schuyler, *Black No More* (Chapters 6-10)

Hee-Jung Serenity Joo, **"Miscegenation, Assimilation, and Consumption: Racial Passing in George Schuyler's Black No More and Eric Liu's The Accidental Asian"*

May 25: George Schuyler, *Black No More* (Chapter 11-end)

May 27: *Formal Paper due by 11:59 p.m. via Canvas

Week 3—

May 28: NO CLASS—Memorial Day

May 29: Samuel Delany, *Nova* (Pgs. 1-100)

May 30: Samuel Delany, *Nova* (Pgs. 101-164)

May 31: Samuel Delany, *Nova* (Pgs. 165-200)

June 1: Samuel Delany, *Nova* (Pg. 201-end)

Week 4—

June 4: Octavia E. Butler, *Wild Seed* (Chps. 1-5)

***Speculative Visioning Project Proposal due by 11:59 p.m. via Canvas**

June 5: Octavia E. Butler, *Wild Seed* (Chps. 6-8)

June 6: Octavia E. Butler, *Wild Seed* (Chps. 9-11)

Maria Aline Ferreira, *"Symbiotic Bodies and Evolutionary Tropes in the Work of Octavia Butler"

June 7: Octavia E. Butler, *Wild Seed* (Chp. 12-end)

June 8: Jordan Peele, *Get Out*

UNIT 3—alter-Native SF: Chicanx- and Latinxfuturism

Week 5—

June 11: Jose Vasconcelos, *Excerpt from *La Raza Cósmica/The Cosmic Race* (1923)

Ernest Hogan, *High Aztech* (Preface and Part 1: Thesis)

June 12: Ernest Hogan, *High Aztech* (Part 2: Antithesis, Chps. 4-7)

Catherine Josefina Merla-Watson, "The Altermundos of Latin@futurism":
<https://www.alluvium-journal.org/2017/03/15/the-altermundos-of-latinfuturism/>

June 13: Ernest Hogan, *High Aztech* (Part 2: Antithesis, Chp. 8, Part 3: Synthesis, Chp. 9)

June 14: Ernest Hogan, *High Aztech* (Part 3: Synthesis, Chp. 10-end)

Lysa M. Rivera: "Mestizaje and Heterotopia in Ernest Hogan's *High Aztech*"

June 15: Alex Rivera, *Sleep Dealer*

Week 6—

June 18: Carlos Hernandez, "The Aphotic Ghost," "Homeostasis," and "Entanglements" in *The Assimilated Cuban's Guide to Quantum Santeria*

June 19: Carlos Hernandez, "The Macrobe Conservation Project" and "American Moat" in *The Assimilated Cuban's Guide to Quantum Santeria*

June 20: Carlos Hernandez, "Fantaisie-Impromptu No. 4 in C#min, Op. 66," and "The Assimilated Cuban's Guide to Quantum Santeria"

June 21: NO CLASS—Polish and submit your Speculative Visioning Project by 11:59 p.m.!

June 22: *Speculative Visioning Project Presentations

Residente, “Intro ADN/DNA”:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_UiR6B9LI4

Residente, “Somos Anormales” (We’re Abnormal):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4KqFK_F2w

Miguel Vilar, “Genographic Project DNA Results Reveal Details of Puerto Rican History” in *National Geographic*: <https://blog.nationalgeographic.org/2014/07/25/genographic-project-dna-results-reveal-details-of-puerto-rican-history/>