

Feminist Futures: Contemporary S.F. by Women: GSS 303 / AMS 313/ ENG 283

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Office Hours: Thurs: 10:00-11:45 and by appointment.

Feminist Futures explores the way in which recent writers have transformed science fiction into speculative fiction – an innovative literary form capable of introducing and exploring new kinds of feminist, queer, and multi-cultural perspectives. These books confront the limitations imposed on women and imagine transformative possibilities for thinking about gender roles and relationships, the body, forms of power, and political and social structures.

Reading List:

Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*

Ann and Jeff Vandermeer, eds., *Sisters of the Revolution*

Justina Ireland, *Dread Nation*

Charlie Jane Anders, *All the Birds in the Sky*

Octavia Butler, *Bloodchild and other stories*

Ling Ma, *Severance*

Rivers Solomon, *An Unkindness of Ghosts*

Chitra Divakaruni, *The Palace of Illusions*

Alix E. Harrow, *The Ten Thousand Doors of January*

Naomi Alderman, *The Power*

Becky Chambers, *The Long Way to a Small Angry Planet*

Reading/Writing Assignments: An average of 200-250 pages of reading per week. Two short papers (approx. five pages or 1500 words), one longer essay (approx. 8-12 pages or 2750-3500 words), a short presentation on an author not covered in the syllabus. Regular attendance and informed participation is an important component of the course. Respect for the university's honor code is also essential; plagiarism will not be tolerated. The papers you write for this course will involve topics selected by you in consultation with me – with the option for significant revision and expansion of your short papers into your longer essay.

Requirements/Grading: Class/Precept Participation 25%; Oral Presentation(s) 10%; Paper(s) 35%; Term Paper(s) 30%

As a cross-listed course, Feminist Futures is committed to a multi-disciplinary approach that should leave students with a richer understanding and appreciation of:

1. the complexity of gender as a subject of inquiry;
2. the meaning and value of literary history and cultural studies;
3. the myriad ways in which literary texts work as aesthetic artefacts and cultural signifiers. The course aims to make each student into a better reader and writer;
4. the specific possibilities embedded in science fiction and speculative fiction.

Weekly schedule:

Feb. 1 Introduction and Overview: Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*.

Feb. 8 Selections from Ann and Jeff Vandermeer, eds., *Sisters of the Revolution*:

Eleanor Arnason, "The Grammarian's Five Daughters," 41-49;

James Tiptree, Jr., "The Screwfly Solution," 83-101;

Joanna Russ, "When It Changed," 195-202;

Susan Palwick, "Gestella," 215-234;

Catherynne M. Valente, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at Space/Time," 315-326;

Pat Murphy, "Love and Sex Among the Invertebrates," 185-194;

Eileen Gunn, "Stable Strategies for Middle Management," 249-260

Pamela Sargent, "Fears" 299-307

Feb. 15 Justina Ireland, *Dread Nation*

Feb. 22 Charlie Jane Anders, *All the Birds in the Sky*

First short paper due

Feb. 29 Octavia Butler, *Bloodchild and other stories*: read the following stories and Butler's background explanation of how she came to write them: "Bloodchild," "Speech Sounds," "The Evening and the Morning and the Night" and "The Book of Martha"

March 7 Ling Ma, *Severance*

Spring Break March 9-17

March 21 No meeting because of conference commitment. Make-up on May 2 of reading week

March 28 Rivers Solomon, *An Unkindness of Ghosts*

April 4 Chitra Divakaruni, *The Palace of Illusions*

Second short paper due

April 11 Alix E. Harrow, *The Ten Thousand Doors of January*

April 18 Naomi Alderman, *The Power*

April 25 Becky Chambers, *The Long Way to a Small Angry Planet*

May 2 Reading week: Student reports on outside texts

Long Paper due: Dean's Date: May 7, 2023