2014

124-12 African Diaspora SciFi

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African Diaspora SciFi
Studies in Fiction
ENGL 124-12
Fall 2014

Days: TR
Time: 4:00pm – 5:15pm
Room: Lindner 103

Instructor: Micah Dean Hicks
Email: micahdeanhicks@gmail.com
Office: Hinkle 243
Office Hours: Thursday 2:00pm – 4:00pm and by appointment

Course Description
This course provides a survey of the short story genre, with a specific focus on Science Fiction from the African Diaspora. In addition to familiarizing you with a body of important work often overlooked by our larger culture, this course aims to exercise your skills at oral discussion, group collaboration, critical analysis, and written reflection.

Course Credit
Successful completion of this course will earn you three credit hours toward graduation. ENGL 124 fulfills the three-hour “Literature Elective” requirement within Xavier’s Core Curriculum. Please note, however, that this course cannot be applied toward the English major or minor requirements. For students who major or minor in English, now or in the future, this course will only count as a general elective toward graduation.

Required Texts
- Material on Blackboard

Optional Texts

Grading Scale
- A 92+
- A- 90-91
- B+ 88-89
- B 82-87
- B- 80-81
- C+ 78-79
- C 72-77
- C- 70-71
- D+ 68-69
- D 62-67
- D- 60-61
- F 59 & below

Evaluation
- Participation 10%
- Quizzes (4) 20%
- Midterm 20%
- Essays 30%
- Final 20%
PARTICIPATION
This is a student-centered, discussion-based class. You are required to read carefully, note interesting things, and speak your piece about them.

QUIZZES
Four times throughout the semester, you will have a quiz on the readings since the last quiz. These will mainly be 10-question content quizzes to make sure you’ve been reading closely.

MIDTERM & FINAL
The midterm will cover the first half of the course and the final will cover the second half.

Not only should you know the authors, story content, and essay arguments well, you should come to class prepared to write about the connections between them.

The format of the midterm and final will be short essay questions. I will give you four questions and have you write as much as you can on two of them. So make sure you know all the material well enough that you can answer any question you might get.

I will evaluate both exams on your knowledge of the content and the strength of the writing. See the rubric under “Essays” below for more info about how I will be evaluating your written work.

ESSAYS (1,000+ words each)
You will write two literary analysis essays. Choose 2-4 stories and analyze how they deal with a common issue or theme.

For example, you might discuss how your stories deal with gender, or the idea of the frontier, or the presence of other.

You should also try to bring mainstream SciFi into your discussion. Do the stories you selected deal with this issue very differently from how mainstream SciFi would? Use specific examples from stories and films to support your argument.

Finally, you should quickly connect your argument to one or more of the essays we will read for class. Think of your essay as joining a conversation.

I will evaluate your essays based on the strength of the writing. Good writing generally shows mastery of the following qualities:

Newness  Creativity; originality; necessity
Purpose   Single thread; narrow focus; clear story, question, or argument
Complexity  Contradiction; turn; complication contrast
If you feel that you can’t subscribe to one or more of these values—say you enjoy expansive, maximalist, baggy prose—talk to me about that.

Late Work
Late papers will be penalized 10%. Excessively late papers (more than one week) will not be accepted.

Plagiarism
Taking the words or ideas of another person and claiming them as your own is plagiarism. If you borrow words or ideas from another source, in print or on the internet, and do not acknowledge your use of that source, you are committing plagiarism. The penalties range from receiving a zero on the assignment, to failing the course, to being expelled from the university. If you have any uncertainties about
what constitutes plagiarism, or any questions about when and how to cite your sources, please consult me at any time. Do not compromise your personal integrity and jeopardize your entire academic career by cheating in this or any other course.

**Attendance**
You are allowed up to two absences without penalty, and this includes illnesses and other emergencies. Any more than two absences will cost you 3% of your grade per absence. If you are more than ten minutes late or leave more than ten minutes early, I will mark you absent. For every three times that you are late, I will mark you absent.

**Civility Statement**
Be mature, and don't say awful things. Some of the readings will include inflammatory language, and you will have to discuss it as an adult. You have a right to your opinion; however, inflammatory language founded in ignorance or hate is unacceptable.

Respect others' opinions, comments, and questions. This classroom functions on the premise of respect, and you will be asked to leave the classroom if you violate any part of this statement on civility.

Turn off your cell phones and laptops before you enter the classroom. If you forget to turn off the phone and it rings or beeps, do not answer it: turn it off.
Weekly Schedule

Abbreviations:
- AF: Afrofuturism
- DM: Dark Matter
- RB: Dark Matter: Reading the Bones
- Bb: Blackboard

WEEK 1
Tuesday, Aug. 26
Syllabus and intro to course

Thursday, Aug. 28
- Morrison, “Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation” (Bb)
- Du Bois, “The Comet” (DM 5-18)

WEEK 2
Tuesday, Sep. 2
- Womack, “Evolution of a Space Cadet” (AF 3-24)
- Due, “Like Daughter” (DM 91-102)
- Ross, “Tasting Songs” (DM 69-85)

Thursday, Sep. 4
- Miller, “Yet Do I Wonder” (DM 408-414)
- Hope, “The Becoming” (DM 152-157)
- Baraka, “Rhythm Travel” (DM 113-115)
- Barnes, “The Woman in the Wall” (DM 235-259)

WEEK 3
Tuesday, Sept. 9
- Womack, “A Human Fairy Tale Named Black” (AF 25-38)
- Shawl, “At the Huts of Ajala” (DM 226-234)
- Patterson, “Hussy Strut” (DM 372-382)

Thursday, Sept. 11
- Saunders, “Why Blacks Should Read (and Write) Science Fiction” (DM 398-404)
- Saunders, “Gimmile’s Songs” (DM 210-225)
- Fleming, “The Astral Visitor Delta Blues” (DM 319-325)

WEEK 4
Tuesday, Sept. 16
- Womack, “Project Imagination” (39-49)
- Shockley, “Separation Anxiety” (DM 51-68)
- Salaam, “Buddy Bolden” (DM 116-123)

Thursday, Sept. 18
- Quiz 1
- Harrison, “A Galaxy Far, Far Off Racial Mark?” (Bb)
- Bell, “The Space Traders” (DM 326-355)
- Jeffers, “Sister Lilith” (DM 1-4)


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<th>Week</th>
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<th>Reading 1</th>
<th>Reading 2</th>
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<td>Thursday, Oct. 16</td>
<td>Due: Essay 1</td>
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WEEK 9
Tuesday, Oct. 21
• Womack, “A Clock for Time Travelers” (AF 151-161)
• Sherrard, “The Quality of Sand” (RB: 7-23)
• Hopkinson, “The Glass Bottle Trick” (RB: 47-60)

Thursday, Oct. 23
• Berlatsky, “Star Wars and the 4 Ways Science Fiction Handles Race” (Bb)
• Saunders, “Yahimba’s Choice” (RB: 24-46)
• bracy, “ibo landing” (RB: 1-6)

WEEK 10
Tuesday, Oct. 28
• Womack, “The Surreal Life” (AF 163-174)
• Salaam, “Desire” (RB: 61-77)
• Findlay, “Recovery from a Fall” (RB: 78-88)

Thursday, Oct. 30
• Kearney, “Anansi Meets Peter Parker at the Taco Bell on Lexington” (RB: 89-90)
• Okorafor-Mbachu, “The Magical Negro” (RB: 91-94)
• Du Bois, “Jesus Christ in Texas” (RB: 95-104)

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WEEK 11
Tuesday, Nov. 4
• Womack, “Agent Change” (AF 175-185)
• Brokenbrough, “’Cause Harlem Needs Heroes” (RB: 111-125)
• Noles, “Whipping Boy” (RB: 126-149)

Thursday, Nov. 6
• Brown, “Guardians of the Galaxy, We Need to Talk” (Bb)
• Dumas, “Will the Circle Be Unbroken?” (RB: 105-110)
• Zoboi, “Old Flesh Song” (RB: 150-161)

WEEK 12
Tuesday, Nov. 11
• Womack, “Future World” (AF 187-193);
• Mosley, “Whispers in the Dark” (RB: 162-182)
• Due, “Aftermoon” (RB: 183-196)

Thursday, Nov. 13
• Quiz 3
• Johnson, “Sweet Dreams” (RB: 243-248)
• Coleman, “Buying Primo Time” (RB: 249-255)
WEEK 13
Tuesday, Nov. 18
- Salaam, “Trance” (RB: 314-348)
- Robinson, “BLACKout” (RB: 232-242)

Thursday, Nov. 20
- Demby, “Who Gets to Be a Superhero?” (Bb)
- Jess, “Voodoo Vincent and the Astrostoriograms” (RB: 197-213)
- Cooley, “The Binary” (RB: 214-231)

WEEK 14
Tuesday, Nov. 25
- Due: Essay 2

Thursday, Nov. 27
- NO CLASS

WEEK 15
Tuesday, Dec. 2
- Le Guin, “A Whitewashed Earthsea” (Bb)
- Delaney, “Corona” (RB: 256-275)
- Shawl, “Maggies” (RB: 276-293)

Thursday, Dec. 4
- Berlatsky, “Bro-gy Wan Kenobi: The boggling gender dynamics of ‘Star Wars’” (Bb)
- Faust, “In the Belly of the Crocodile” (Bb)
- Onwualu, “The Homecoming” (Bb)

WEEK 16
Tuesday, Dec. 9
- Barnett, “It’s time for science fiction to face up to discrimination” (Bb)
- Hairston, “Griots of the Galaxy” (Bb)
- Thomas, “The Grassdreaming Tree” (Bb)

Thursday, Dec. 11
- Quiz 4
- Farabee, “Beyond ‘Game of Thrones’: Exploring diversity in speculative fiction” (Bb)
- McDonnell, “Lingua Franca” (Bb)
- Adisa, “The Living Roots”

FINALS WEEK
Tuesday, Dec. 16
- Final Exam 4:00pm – 5:50pm