Futures Near and Far:
Contemporary Global Sci-Fi and Fantasy Literature
ENGL 257 / Section 001
Hodges Hall Rm. 307   MWF 1:30–2:20pm

Course Overview:

For years, science fiction and fantasy works have explored themes of futurity. What will the future look like? What new technology will it create? Will it bring doomsday or prosperity? This class delves into how contemporary SFF texts continue to interrogate questions of futurity through a global lens. As a class, we will study 21st century SFF works from across the globe and explore how representations of futurity reflect past and present concerns about topics related to gender, the environment, politics, colonialism, and human relationships. Together, we will critically examine these topics and consider how sci-fi and fantasy as genres contribute to larger, contemporary global conversations.

Required Texts:

*You are welcome to use either print or ebooks for the course; choose whichever option is most convenient for you.

➢ *The City Inside* by Samit Basu, 2022 (ISBN: 1250827485)
➢ *Binti* by Nnedi Okorafor, 2021 (ISBN: 978-0765385253)
➢ *Reclaim the Stars* by Zoraida Córdova, 2022 (ISBN: 1250790638)
➢ *Gingerbread* by Helen Oyeyemi, 2019 (ISBN: 1594634661)
➢ *Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection (**Vol.1**),* 2020 (IBSN: 978-1774503690)

Additional texts will be provided for you via our Google Classroom.

To every class session you should bring with you that day's reading along with materials for taking notes (i.e., a laptop or notebook).

Course Assignments:

Participation (50 pts)

Active and respectful participation in collaborative group work activities, in-class writing, class discussion, class notes, and peer response.

COURSE GOALS:

➢ Identify genre conventions and analyze their effects

➢ Locate texts in global and literary history

➢ Apply analysis, argumentative development, and critical thinking skills

➢ Connect a text to other literary or cultural texts

➢ Practice contextualizing and speaking about global works in conversation with others

Weekly Discussion Board Posts (100 pts.)

Throughout the semester (between weeks 2-14), you will be asked to complete 5 discussion board posts that are approximately 150 words each. You will also be responsible for responding to at least 5 posts composed by your classmates (at least 100 words each). You are always welcome to post and respond to more, but only one of each per week will count towards your grade.

Discussion Leading (25 pts)

In groups of two or three, you will be asked to lead class discussion for 10-12 minutes once during the semester. You may spend your time providing context/background about a text, talking about some themes of interest, connecting the text to current events, and/or drawing upon your fellow classmates' discussion board posts to begin generating conversation. Sign-ups for discussion leading will go around during the first week of class.

Midterm Exam (75 pts)

This will be a closed-book, essay-based exam given mid-semester to evaluate your understanding of class texts and topics. The questions on this exam will reflect class readings, discussions, and notes.

Comparative Response Paper (100pts)

An essay of approximately 700-1000 words in which you analyze an aspect of futurity through the comparison of two sci-fi or fantasy texts. At least one of the texts must come from the course material. This paper should focus on a single topic/issue and include an arguable thesis. I also expect to see specific quotations/examples drawn from the texts that support and help illustrate your main point. This paper can be turned in anytime between **October 20- December 6**. A rubric for the papers will be distributed.

Adaptation Project (100 pts)

Science Fiction and Fantasy are genres famous for their adaptations. This final project is an opportunity for you to pitch an adaptation of a pre-existing global sci-fi or fantasy work. In groups of four, you will be asked to design a visual representation of your adaptation and then pitch that adaptation to the class in approximately 7-10 minutes. A rubric for the project will be distributed later in the semester.

Total Class Points: 450

Grading Scale:

A	100-94%
A-	93-90%
B	89-84%
B-	83-80%
C	79-74%

C-	73-70%
D	69-64%
D-	63-60%
F	59% and below

OFFICE HOURS & E-MAIL

Office hours are an excellent opportunity to talk one-on-one about class topics and assignments, ask questions, and get feedback on your work. You can also use the email address on this syllabus to ask quick questions or notify me of any urgent matters that need attention. I will typically respond within 24 hours. I will not review papers via email. I ask that students wear a mask to my office hours. Those who do not wish to do so can attend office hours via Zoom.

Classroom Policies:

Attendance & Engagement

Attendance and grades are highly correlated. Attendance is of utmost importance to the success of this class and to your development as a critical reader and writer. Much of the learning in ENGL 257 happens via in-class activities, in-class writing assignments, class discussion, and group interaction that cannot be easily made up or replicated outside of class. Class time will be highly interactive — requiring frequent participation, discussion, teamwork, in-class writing, and responding to writing.

That being said, I know that we are all human and that unexpected circumstances arise. Because of this, **I allow 3 unexcused absences from the class** (the equivalent of one week of class). No questions asked. No email necessary. Use your absences wisely! Plan ahead and when possible, inform the instructor of impending absences to stay caught up. Make arrangements to copy any missed notes from your classmates (not your instructor), and check Google Classroom regularly.

The fourth unexcused absence will result in a lowering of your final grade for the course by **one tier** (for example, from a B to a B-) and so on and so forth. Exceptions will be made for genuine extenuating circumstances such as testing positive for Covid-19.

COVID related absences fall under the University attendance policy found here: https://www.wvu.edu/covid. As detailed in the policy, a student who becomes sick or is required to quarantine during the semester should notify the instructor. The student should then work with the instructor to develop a plan to complete the course learning outcomes while he or she is absent.

Students who miss more than three weeks of class may be assigned a failing grade for the course.

While it is understandable that we are all tardy at one point or another in our lives, do not make it a habit. This is very disruptive not only to me but also your peers. **3 Tardies = 1 Absence.**

Please note these important factors related to your engagement:

- Your responsibility to engage with the class work begins when you register for the course.
- Missing activities, exercises, and project deadlines will be reflected in the corresponding component of your grade for the course.
- If you are struggling with an assignment, if you are unexpectedly ill, or if you have some other personal emergency, contact me immediately so that we can work together to create a plan going forward.
- Falling more than two weeks behind the posted schedule of work without a documented special arrangement may result in failing the course.
- Special arrangements require a formal, written request (prior to an assignment deadline when applicable) that includes an explanation of the circumstances, documentation (if relevant), and a detailed plan for completing any late or missed work.
- Submitting a formal request for a special arrangement does not automatically guarantee that I'll be able to grant your request.
- Students should not be using their cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices for reasons other than classwork during class.

Extended Absences

It is much better for you as a writer and as a student to take the course during a semester when your schedule allows you to be fully engaged, present, and able to do your best work. If you know in advance that you will need to miss more than three consecutive class meetings, you should take the course in another term. If you are a military service person with possible drill events or deployments, or if you have other commitments that are likely to disrupt your full engagement with this course for an extended period (1 week of class meetings or more), please speak to me about a plan for successfully completing all required coursework.

Google Classroom:

All classwork will be conducted through Google Classroom so make sure that you have email notifications turned on in your settings. Google Classroom is where I will post all announcements, homework, assignments, and readings. It is also where you will find class notes and complete discussion board posts. To join Google Classroom: sign into your MIX account (and out of other Gmail accounts). Go to classroom.google.com. Click the "Join Class" + at the top of the page and enter code **zsunfsh**.

Academic Integrity:

You are responsible for the integrity of your work. This means that all your work must be your own and must be created specifically for this course. Review [the WVU Policy on Student Academic Standards](#) and consider taking [this tutorial](#) on plagiarism avoidance. Remember that plagiarism can be direct (e.g., not documenting a quoted source) or indirect (paraphrasing ideas, thoughts, etc. without due credit). In either case, neglecting to acknowledge sources for outside material is a serious offense and may result in failure for the assignment and possibly the course. Please see me if you are not sure about how to use or acknowledge certain materials.

Artificial Intelligence

Forms of writing assistance that utilize artificial intelligence (AI) to proofread a student's own written work (such as spellcheck or Grammarly) are acceptable. However, tools that rely on generative AI (such as GPT-3, ChatGPT, and Bard) that actually "write" (or generate) text from a prompt are not to be used to generate drafts or written work for any assignment in this course. I want to hear *your* thoughts and ideas! If students are unsure which AI tools are acceptable, they should consult the instructor prior to using them.

Respect/Community

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. In order to foster a supportive community there is a no tolerance policy for any remarks that are not a part of a productive conversation. This requires that everyone is given a space in the classroom for their thoughts and opinions—however, this space must be open to hearing other ideas, viewpoints, and things that you may not particularly agree with. It is fine to constructively converse about these differences, however, what **will not be tolerated** are any kind of attacks, remarks, insults, etc., especially pertaining to class, race, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, veteran status, or national origin. Ideally, we can all learn from one another and to do this we must approach this class with a positive attitude towards our peers and an open mind.

Accommodations

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (304-293-6700), which is part of [West Virginia University's Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#).

Student Resources:

The Eberly Writing Studio

The Eberly Writing Studio is a resource that can support you in all aspects of the writing process. It is located in G02 Colson Hall, and you can sign up for one-on-one consultations in person or online.

Mental Health

Mental health concerns or stressful events can adversely affect your academic performance and social relationships. WVU's Carruth Center for Psychological and Psychiatric Services (CCPPS) offers a broad range of confidential mental health services to assist you in addressing these and other concerns that you may be experiencing. If you are in need of crisis services, call the CCPPS main number 24/7: (304) 293-4431.

Well WVU

The Students' Center for Health provides resources to help manage stress, improve relationships, make healthy lifestyle choices, and face new challenges and transitions.

Student Advocacy Center

The goal of the Center is to assist students with non-academic questions and concerns and to make the proper referrals when necessary. Questions are answered daily about many concerns that students may have. The Advocacy Center is designed to simplify procedures and to help students cut through red tape by finding answers to questions and helping to familiarize our students with campus policies and procedures. We specialize in problem solving and helping our students be better informed about making the decisions they need to make, whether these decisions involve classes or any other aspect of university life.

The Student HelpLine number is 304-293-5555

LGBTQ+ Center

The LGBTQ Center offers inclusive programming and outreach initiatives for WVU students, faculty, staff, and broader community members. We collaborate with and support the university's larger social justice efforts by providing inclusive, academic, and curricular development training on all WVU campuses, by advocating for members of our community, and by building coalitions. We also work throughout the state to improve understanding of LGBTQIA+ issues. Students are encouraged to use the LGBTQ+ Center lounge for studying, meeting friends, working on class projects, watching documentaries, and more. We also offer additional meeting spaces and snacks. Find more information at: https://lgbtq.wvu.edu/home

Course Schedule:

The schedule of work below is subject to minor changes based on our progress.

	Date	In-Class	Homework
Week 1	W – 8/16	Introduce Course and Syllabus	Create a short Padlet bio
	F – 8/18	Introduction to Sci-Fi and Fantasy Genres	Watch *Submarine* Read "Lebanon is drowning in its own waste"
Week 2 <mark>*Aug. 22 is the last day to add/drop classes without a "W"</mark>	M – 8/21	Mounia Akl's *Submarine*	Read "A Brief Introduction to Chinese Science Fiction and Fandom," and "A History of Future Illnesses"
	W – 8/23	Chinese Science Fiction	Read "Moonlight" and "Tongtong's Summer"
	F – 8/25	Chinese Science Fiction	Read: "What Makes Chinese Science Fiction Chinese?" and "Taking Care of God"
Week 3	M – 8/28	Chinese Science Fiction	Read *The City Inside*, ch. 1-2
	W – 8/30	*The City Inside*	Read *The City Inside*, ch. 3-4
	F – 9/1	*In The City Inside*	Read *The City Inside*, ch. 5-6
Week 4	M – 9/4	**NO CLASS – LABOR DAY**	
	W – 9/6	*The City Inside*	Read *The City Inside,* ch. 7-8
	F – 9/8	*The City Inside*	Read *The City Inside*, ch. 9-10
Week 5	M – 9/11	*The City Inside*	Read "Evolution of a Space Cadet"
	W – 9/13	Introduction to Afrofuturism	Read: TBD
	F – 9/15	*Kizazi Moto*	Read *Binti*, Foreward – pg. 42
Week 6	M – 9/18	*Binti*	Read *Binti*, pg. 43-75 and excerpt from *Broken Places and Outer Spaces*
	W – 9/20	*Binti*	Read *Binti*, pg. 76-end and excerpt from "Math and Magic"
	F – 9/22	*Binti*	
Week 7	M – 9/25	*Neptune Frost*	
	W – 9/27	*Neptune Frost*	
	F – 9/29	*Neptune Frost*	
Week 8 <mark>Midterm grades due Oct. 4</mark>	M – 10/ 2	Midterm Review	
	W – 10/ 4	MIDTERM	
	F – 10/ 6	**NO CLASS – ENJOY FALL BREAK!**	Read "What Is Magical Realism? How to Bridge the Ordinary and the Extraordinary"

Week 9	M – 10/9	Introduction to Final Project and Comparative Response Paper and Intro to Magical Realism	Read *Reclaim the Stars*, "Flecha," and "The Tin Man"
	W – 10/11	*Reclaim the Stars*	Read *Reclaim the Stars*, "This Is Our Manifesto" and "Eterno"
	F – 10/13	*Reclaim the Stars*	Read *Reclaim the Stars*, "White Water, Blue Ocean," "Leyenda," and "Color-Coded"
Week 10	M – 10/16	*Reclaim the Stars*	Read *Reclaim the Stars*, "Rogue Enchantments," and "Tame the Wicked Night"
	W – 10/18	*Reclaim the Stars*	Read "Introduction to Fairy Tales in a Global Context"
	F – 10/20	Intro to Fairy Tales	Read *Gingerbread*, ch. 1-2
Week 11	M – 10/23	*Gingerbread*	Read *Gingerbread*, ch. 3-5
	W – 10/25	*Gingerbread*	Read *Gingerbread*, ch. 6-8
	F – 10/27	*Gingerbread*	Read *Gingerbread*, ch. 9-10
Week 12	M -10/ 30	*Gingerbread*	Read *Gingerbread*, ch. 11-13
	W – 11/1	*Gingerbread*	Read *Gingerbread*, ch.14-18
	F – 11/3	*Gingerbread*	Read *Moonshot*, Introduction – UE-Pucase: Water Master and Native Futurisms Article
Week 13	M – 11/6	Indigenous Science Fiction and Fantasy; *Moonshot*	Read *Moonshot*, The Observing – Home
	W – 11/8	*Moonshot*	Read *Moonshot*, Tlicho Náowo - Moonshot
	F – 11/10	*Moonshot*	
Week 14 ==*Nov. 17: Last day to withdraw==	M – 11/13	*Your Name*	
	W – 11/15	*Your Name*	
	F – 11/17	*Your Name*	
November 18-26: NO CLASS -FALL RECESS			
Week 15	M – 11/27	In Class Workday	
	W – 11/29	In Class Workday/ Project Check-In/ Group Q & A	Finish working on your Adaptation Projects
	F – 12/1	Adaptation Presentations	
Week 16	M – 12/4	Adaptation Presentations	==Wednesday is the last day to turn in your Comparative Response Paper!==
	W – 12/6	Adaptation Presentations and Final Wrap-Up	

December 11-15: FINALS WEEK