

E370W, *Gender and Speculative Fiction* (79760)

Professor Gretchen Murphy

Zoom Office Hours: Mondays 10-11AM and by appointment

Teaching Assistant:

Zoom Office Hours: Fridays 11-12 and by appointment

How can picturing an alternate world with different norms and realities help us to look anew at our own? This online asynchronous course will explore ways that writers have used speculative fiction (including science fiction, utopia, and dystopia) as a tool to explore our beliefs and practices around gender, race, sexuality, humanity, ethics, disability, and the environment, using cognitive estrangement and speculation to help us see otherwise.

Required Texts: Purchase as ebook or paperback, your preference.

Margaret Atwood, [*The Handmaid's Tale*](#). Random House, ISBN 9780 3854 90818

Octavia Butler, [*Dawn*](#). Hachette, ISBN 9780446603775; or Open Road Media Sci-Fi & Fantasy ASIN B008HALOEQ

All other readings will be available online through Canvas

Course requirements

Annotations in Hypothes.is. One or two times a week, you will be asked to engage in class discussion by commenting on an online reading using the Canvas annotation app Hypothes.is. Each time, you must make three substantive comments and reply to one other student's annotation, which means you will have to return to the document at least two or three separate times. (Once to comment, and again to reply, and finally to read all the comments made by classmates.) There will be 9 annotations, and your lowest two scores will be dropped. Your top seven contributions will be assessed and scored as 15% of the course grade.

Group discussions. Once a week between Tuesday evening and Thursday evening, you will be asked to participate in a group discussion of a reading over Zoom. Your group will have 5-7 students, and you will schedule the session yourselves, finding a mutually agreeable time for all members during the window of 8PM Tuesday and midnight Thursday. (During a couple of these sessions, the instructor and course TA will participate as well.). You must record the session using Zoom and then save the link in a Google Drive and submit the link to the TA. Your individual preparation and participation will be assessed and scored as 15% of the course grade.

Quizzes. Once a week, you will take a Canvas quiz on course reading. Questions will be factual and primarily aimed at ensuring that you keep up with the reading. **The first quiz, on 6/9, will be ungraded and will ask you questions about the syllabus and course policies.** Quizzes count as 15% of the course grade.

Discussion Posts. Once a week on Fridays, you will be given an opportunity to post a 750-word response to a prompt on our discussion board. These will respond to writing prompts given for each week. You must produce two of these over the course of the semester, but you may write more than two posts and have only your top two scores counted. Discussion posts count as 20% of the course grade (10% each)

Multimedia Project/Presentations. In the final two weeks of the semester, students will submit a presentation that is 10-15 minutes in length. (Your presentation date will be assigned individually based on your topic.) Your online presentation can take the form of a podcast, lecture slides with audio, or an edited video. You may choose from a list of suggested topics that will be provided, or you can invent your own, but you must declare your topic before 6/12. The goal of these presentations is to widen or deepen our scope of knowledge, so presentations could contextualize our reading in social and political issues related to gender, race, sexuality, disability, ecology, etc., make connections between course texts and other cultural texts including popular culture, or deepen our familiarity with course authors and their other major works. 15% of course grade

Peer review of final presentations. You will be asked to view and offer additive comments for five of the student presentations. 5% of course grade

Final essay exam. At the end of the semester, you will be given a 48-hour window to complete an exam. The exam will ask you to define some key terms in short answer form and write a 1000-word essay that draws evidence from at least three of the texts we read this semester. 15% of course grade.

Course structure

Each week (on Friday by noon), the following week's module will be released on Canvas. The module will contain at least one lecture, reading assignments and links to most readings, discussion/interpretation questions for the reading and group discussion, one quiz, one or two annotations, and one discussion topic question. Certain elements of the module must be completed by certain day/times, which will be listed in the module assignments, but you may complete them earlier in the week if you like. The only firmly scheduled weekly assignment that you must coordinate with others is the 35 minute group discussion on Zoom, which you must schedule with your group members and record/submit between Tuesday 8PM and Thursday midnight.

			6/4 Lecture	6/5 Reading: From Alderman, <i>The Power</i> (2016). Lecture Due: Annotation 1 (<i>The Power</i>) Discussion post 0 (ungraded)
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6/8 Reading: Gilman, Herland (1915) ch. 1-5. Lecture.	6/9 Reading: <i>Herland</i> ch. 6-10. Due: Quiz (on syllabus, ungraded); Annotation 2 (<i>Herland</i> ch. 6). Podcast	6/10 <i>Herland</i> ch. 11-12. Due: Annotation 3 <i>Herland</i> ch. 11), Group zoom discussion	6/11 Reading: Tiptree, <i>Houston</i> , <i>Houston</i> , <i>Do You Read?</i>	6/12 Reading: None. Due: Discussion post 1
6/15 Reading: Piercy, <i>Woman on the Edge of Time</i> ch 3+5. Lecture	6/16 Reading: Russ, “When It Changed” Due: Quiz (on course reading)	6/17 Reading: Russ, “No One’s Home” Due: Annotation 4 (story), Group discussion	6/18 Reading: Neil Badmington, “Posthumanism”, and excerpt from Donna Haraway “The Cyborg Manifesto” Lecture	6/19 Reading: Ursula Le Guin, “Nine Lives.” Due: Discussion post 2
6/22 Reading: Octavia Butler, <i>Dawn</i> (1987) Part I and II Lecture	6/23 Reading: <i>Dawn</i> , part III Due: Quiz (on course reading), Annotation 5 (<i>Dawn</i> excerpt)	6/24 Reading: <i>Dawn</i> , part IV (to end) Due: Group discussion	6/25 Reading: None Due: Annotation 6 (essay on <i>Dawn</i>)	6/26 Reading: Chiang “Liking What You See: A Documentary” (2002) Due: Discussion post 3
6/29 Atwood, <i>Handmaid’s Tale</i> Lecture	6/30 Atwood, <i>Handmaid’s Tale</i> Due: Quiz	7/1 Atwood, <i>Handmaid’s Tale</i> Due: Group discussion	7/2 Annotation 7 (essay on <i>Handmaid’s Tale</i>) Presentation due dates begin.	7/3 Reading: None. Due: Discussion post 4 Presentation due dates continue
7/6 Reading: Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” (1973) Lecture All presentations due by this date. Due: Annotation 8	7/7 Reading: Jemison, “The Ones Who Stayed” (2018) Due: Quiz Presentation peer review	7/8 Reading: Jemison, “Valedictorian” (2012) Due: Group discussion Presentation peer review	7/9 Final exam questions distributed today by 9AM and due Saturday, July 11, 11:59PM Peer review of final presentations due	

Other Class Policies

- Online quizzes: Quizzes are intended to ensure that you are keeping up with the reading and prepared for group discussion. Quizzes are multiple choice and contain 10 or fewer questions. You will be given 15 minutes to complete the quiz, and once you begin taking the quiz, you must complete it within 15 minutes. You may consult texts during the quiz, but you should not need to, because the questions are factual and ask things that a reasonably careful reader of the story should know and recall. You must take the quiz by the deadline (Tuesday 9PM). This policy is intended to ensure that you are prepared for your group discussion that week.
- Because only your top two discussion posts count for the final grade, and because discussion occurs within a set time frame, discussion posts are not accepted late. Therefore, you should avoid waiting until the last two weeks of the semester to post your two required responses.
- Because only you can drop two annotation scores, and because discussion occurs within a set time frame, annotations are not accepted late.
- Discussion posts and annotations should be your own ideas and your own writing – please cite or link to any sources that you consult beyond the course reading. Paraphrasing someone else's ideas or writing without attribution is plagiarism, a serious academic offence that will result in a failing grade for that assignment.

University Policies

The university is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment consistent with university policy and federal and state law. Please let me know if you experience any barriers to learning so I can work with you to ensure you have equal opportunity to participate fully in this course. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Please refer to SSD's website for contact and more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with SSD, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and needs in this course.

Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and / or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

Harassment Reporting Requirements. [Senate Bill 212 \(SB 212\)](#), which goes into effect as of January 1, 2020, is a Texas State Law that requires all employees (both faculty and staff) at a public or private post-secondary institution to promptly report any knowledge of any incidents of sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking "committed by or against a person who was a student enrolled at or an employee of the institution at the time of the incident". Please note that both the instructor and the TA for this class are mandatory reporters and MUST share with the Title IX office any information about sexual harassment/assault shared with us by a student whether in-person or as part of a journal or other class assignment. Note that a report to the Title IX office does not obligate a victim to take any action, but this type of information cannot be kept strictly confidential except when shared with designated confidential employees. A confidential employee is someone a student can go to and talk about a Title IX matter without triggering that employee to have to report the situation to have it automatically investigated. A list of confidential employees is available on the [Title IX website](#).