

**Literature and Performance of the African Diaspora**  
**Prof. Young    Email: hbhanayoung@gmail.com**  
**T/Thurs: 2.00-3.30pm**  
**Office Hours: T/Thurs 1.00-2.00pm and by appt**

**Course Description:**

A girl punished for her crimes with a sloth attached to back, vampires who look like little girls, and crack cocaine as a character with a wicked sense of humor: this class will use satirical and slightly off-kilter texts and performances to examine real-life dark forces that plague contemporary black societies across the world. Moving from Southern Africa to black England to African America, this class explores not just the meaning of race, gender and sexuality, but also how those categories of identity can be reimagined given the omnipresent threat that black lives face. We will pay close attention to both issues of context (historical, socio-economic and anthropological) as well as to questions of structure and genre. Specifically we will think through notions of Afrofuturism, addiction, ecological disaster capitalism, thinking through how the ways black people make and embody art inform the content. The class will also include a large number of contemporary cultural texts such as music videos, popular dance trends and music.

**Required Texts:**

1. *Fledgling* by Octavia Butler
2. *An Unkindness of Ghosts* by Rivers Solomon
3. *Delicious Foods: A Novel* by James Hannaham
4. *Zoo City* by Lauren Beukes
5. *The Girl with All the Gifts (Film)*
6. *Pumzi* directed by Wanuri Kahiu (*Film*)
7. *The Fits* directed by Anna Rose Holmer (*Film*)
8. <http://wangechimutu.com/> (website of artist and visit to Blanton Museum)
9. Performances by Nelisiwe Xaba, Nora Chipaumire, Wura Natasha-Ogunji and Faka

**Requirements:**

1. Attendance and participation are crucial. More than two unexcused absences will be penalized. I will be asking for volunteers to look up information throughout the semester and this can boost your participation grade. If you keep up with the reading, you should do well in this class. However even if you haven't read, be sure to come to class. Every student will have at least one question or point prepared for discussion each class. (10%)
2. Every student must sign up for one **performance** based on the reading. Further information will be given during class about what this entails. (15%)
3. Students will be given three short assignments and/or quizzes. One of these assignments is to visit the Blanton Museum Film and Video Gallery to see Wangechi Mutu's "The End of Eating Everything" that runs from September 15 to November 25, 2018. You must also see the accompanying exhibit "Making Africa: A Continent of Contemporary

- Design” on view from Oct 14 to end of semester. For your final paper, you can write on the video and exhibit after you get approval from me. (20%)
4. 4 page minimum paper due **Oct 18th by one in my office**. I will be handing out topics later in the semester but students are welcome to come up with their own topics, provided I approve them during office hours. Students with late papers will be penalized. (20%)
  5. 5-7 page final comparative paper, due on **Dec 13<sup>th</sup> by noon in my office**. Topics will be distributed later in the semester. There will be no final exam for this class. I do not grade late final papers. (35%)

Thursday August 30: Introductions and Syllabus

Tuesday September 4: Dynamics of power—dominance and submission  
Butler uses the thorny issue of child sexuality to talk about racialized adult sexuality and its assumed equal power relations. Theorize how dominance and submission are not fixed positions. (Exam question)

*Fledgling*, pp. 1-61

Thursday September 6:

*Fledgling*, pp. 62-183

Tuesday September 11

*Fledgling*, pp. 184-246

Thursday September 13: Issues of Consent and Addiction

*Fledgling*, pp. 246-316

Tuesday September 18:

*Fledgling*, end

Thursday September 20:

Film: *The Girl with all the Gifts*

Tuesday September 25:

**Assignment One:** Quiz

Film: *The Girl with all the Gifts*

Thursday September 27: New World slavery/ Queering the Future

*An Unkindness of Ghosts*, pp. 1-60

Tuesday October 2:

*An Unkindness of Ghosts*, pp. 61-132

Thursday October 4: Caste and Class

*An Unkindness of Ghosts*, pp. 133-178

Tuesday October 9:

*An Unkindness of Ghosts*, pp. 179-222

Thursday October 11:

*An Unkindness of Ghosts*, pp. 223-282  
Watch performances by FAKA and others

Tuesday October 16:  
*An Unkindness of Ghosts*, pp. 283-349  
Thursday October 18:

**MIDTERM Essays Due**

Tuesday October 23: The Handyman without Hands  
*Delicious Foods*, pp. 1-90

Thursday October 25:  
*Delicious Foods*, pp. 91-140

Tuesday October 30: Addiction and Farm Work  
*Delicious Foods*, pp. 141-233  
Thursday November 1:  
*Delicious Foods*, pp. 234-269

Tuesday November 6: Ecologies  
*Delicious Foods*, pp. 270 to end  
Thursday November 8:  
*Delicious Foods* in conjunction with *Pumzi*

Tuesday November 13: Southern Africa dystopias  
*Zoo City*, pp. 1-71  
Thursday November 15:  
*Zoo City*, pp. 72-142

November 20-22: Thanksgiving  
*Zoo City*, pp. 143-208

Tuesday November 27: Being Animalled  
*Zoo City*, pp. 209-245  
Thursday November 29:  
*Zoo City*, pp. 246-306

Tuesday December 4:  
Film: *The Fits*

Thursday December 6:  
Workshop essays

Thursday December 13: **FINAL PAPERS DUE**