

## **2170B: Afrofuturism**

**The University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada  
Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies  
Fall/Winter 2023-2024**

The department would like to recognize that we are located on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples.

### **Course description:**

Coined in 1994 by Mark Dery, the term Afrofuturism refers to a Black aesthetic centred around imagining futures for Black people. Students will encounter Black writers, musicians, artists, and filmmakers, such as, but not limited to, Nnedi Okorafor, Sun Ra, Janelle Monae, Jordan Peele, Lina Iris Viktor and Atauliê whose work envisages Black futures.

### **Information (see OWL):**

Instructor: Katrina Younes

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### **Course Objectives:**

- Develop and hone your understanding of Black literary, artistic, and other history.
- Develop an understanding of the concept of Afrofuturism as well as its implications in its uses in Black creative and other expressions.
- Understand and analyze the intersection of Afrofuturism with gender, class, sexuality identity and spirituality.
- Understand and analyze the intersection of Afrofuturism with societal, political, and cultural issues.
- Critically analyze multiple mediums such as, podcasts, films/documentaries, novellas/novels, visual arts, music, and other performances.
- Organize and create an informative and analytical Afrofuturism project that hones research skills, creative skills, and other academic skills (organization, analytical and argumentative skills)

### **Assignments: (creative options available)**

Attendance and Participation: 15%

Presentation: 20%

Afrofuturism Project: 30%

Final Exam: 35%

### January 11<sup>th</sup> Course introduction

- Assignments overview
- Presentation sign-up [you can present in groups of two, but you will receive the same grade]
- [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IIgF0M7iYhUYy3xt8m80rV5Wahf17WuoNoHfXJT\\_fPo/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IIgF0M7iYhUYy3xt8m80rV5Wahf17WuoNoHfXJT_fPo/edit?usp=sharing)

### January 18<sup>th</sup> Introduction to/origins of Afrofuturism

- **Presentation:**
- Mark Dery, “Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose”
- Ytasha L. Womack, excerpts from *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture*

### January 25<sup>th</sup> Music (Early)

- **Presentation re Parliament:**
- **Presentation re Sun Ra:**
- Parliament, *Mothership Connection* Album (1975):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggp7vLfdC2o>
- Sun Ra, *Space is the Place*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dokLwszdUgY>
- Ytasha L. Womack, “I Came to Africa on a Spaceship” (PDF on OWL)
- T. J. Anderson III “Space is the Place” (PDF on OWL)

### February 1<sup>st</sup> Music (Contemporary)

- **Presentation re *Dirty Computer* emotion picture:**
- **Presentation re *Dirty Computer* musical album:**
- Excerpts from Dan Hassler-Forest *Janelle Monáe’s Queer Afrofuturism* (PDF on OWL)
- Grace D. Gipson “Afrofuturism’s Musical Princess Janelle Monáe” (PDF on OWL)
- In-class screening: Janelle Monáe *Dirty Computer*  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdH2Sy-BINE>)

### February 8<sup>th</sup> Music (Contemporary)

- **Presentation re *Black is King*:**
- Christin Smith “Ancestor is King: The Role of Afrofuturism in Beyoncé’s *Black is King*” (PDF on OWL)
- in-class screening: Beyoncé *Black is King* (Disney)

### February 15<sup>th</sup> Novella

- **Presentation re *Binti*:**
- **Presentation re *Binti*:**
- Nnedi Okorafor, *Binti*

### February 22<sup>nd</sup> Reading Week

### February 29<sup>th</sup> Fashion, Art, and Photography

- **Presentation re Fashion in ONE of: documentary or *Black Panther*:**
- **Presentation re ONE of the visual artists:**
- Art and Photography:
  - o Tullza Fleming, “Afrofuturistic Art” (PDF on OWL)

- “Afrofuturist Visual Artists Shaking Today’s Art World”:  
<https://pointzeroworld.com/2020/09/07/afrofuturist-visual-artists-shaking-today-art-world/>
- Jean-Michel Basquiat: <https://www.jean-michel-basquiat.org/paintings/>
- Renée Cox: <https://hannahtraoregallery.com/exhibition/renee-cox-soul-culture/>
  - <https://morrison.sunygeneseoenglish.org/2018/09/23/renee-cox-afrofuturism/>
- Lina Iris Viktor: <https://www.linaviktor.com/in-the-black-fantastic>
  - <https://www.instagram.com/linairisviktor/>
  - <https://archive.aperture.org/article/2020/04/04/the-black-fantastic>
- Atauliê: <https://www.instagram.com/ataulie/>
- Fashion
- In-class screening: <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/afrofuturism-fashion>
- *Black Panther*: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/23/movies/black-panther-afrofuturism-costumes-ruth-carter.html>
- Rikki Byrd, “Designing our Freedom: Toward a New Discourse on Fashion as a Strategy for Self-Liberation” (PDF on OWL)
- Derrick Weston Brown, “Bruuuuuh or When Brothers Debate Black Panther in a Safeway Parking Lot.” (PDF on OWL)

### March 7<sup>th</sup> Novel

- **Presentation re key scene, character, theme, etc., in Ch. 1-6:**
- **Presentation re key scene, character, theme, etc., in Ch. 7-14:**
- Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Sower* Ch. 1-15
- Herb Boyd, “Dialogues in Space: Octavia Butler and Samuel Delany” (PDF on OWL)

### March 14<sup>th</sup> Novel

- **Presentation re key scene, character, theme, etc., in Ch. 15-20:**
- **Presentation re key scene, character, theme, etc., in Ch. 21-25:**
- Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Sower* Ch. 15-25

### March 21<sup>st</sup> Film and Afropessimism

- **Presentation re *Get Out*:**
- **Presentation re *Get Out*:**
- At-home screening: Jordan Peele, *Get Out* (2017): <https://streaming-acf-film-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/audiocine/watch/479263B4E3B6BDBD?referrer=marc>
- Excerpts from Frank B. Wilderson III, *Afropessimism* (PDF on OWL)
- Ryan Poll, “Can One ‘Get Out?’ The Aesthetics of Afro-Pessimism” (PDF on OWL)

### March 28<sup>th</sup> Film and Ecological Crises

- **Presentation re *Neptune Frost*:**
- In-class screening: *Neptune Frost* (2021):  
<https://www.criterionchannel.com/afrofuturism/season:1/videos/neptune-frost>

### April 4<sup>th</sup>

- Exam Review
- Afrofuturism project due by 11:55PM on OWL