

AFS 4930 Afrofuturism Section 13EA
Spring 2018
M 6-7; W 6
CSE E221

Dr Alioune Sow

Office: 484 Grinter Hall

Email: sow@ufl.edu

Phone: (352)-392-2421

Office hours: Monday period 8, Wednesday period 7-8 or by appointment.

Course description

This interdisciplinary course examines how the future is thought and imagined in Africa. Often presented as a powerful political and cultural movement, Afrofuturism produces some of the most exciting and innovative works by African artists, creators, decision makers and even politicians to engage with the futures of the continent. The aim of the course is to understand it better, to study the distinctive features of the movement by analysing series of works taken from literature, visual arts, films, popular culture and songs. The course will identify the specificities of Afrofuturism by looking at the origins and developments of the movement, paying particular attention to influential science fiction authors such as Lauren Beukes, Neil Blomkamp or Nnedi Okorafor. We will expand our study to the continent's relations to technology, the new forms of activism and participation that Afrofuturism generates and its impact on youth culture. Our focus on the social, cultural and political context in which Afrofuturism develops will enable us to better understand how it responds to critical historical moments and changing socio-political environment.

Course Requirements

Your final evaluation is based on the following components (corresponding points):

- Attendance 10 points
- Assignments 1 & 2 40 points
- Response papers 10 points
- Presentation 10 points
- Final Project 30 points
 - Proposal (10 points)
 - Final project (30 points)

You are expected to complete assigned reading prior to the class in which the material is discussed. Two assignments are required for this class (1 & 2). The guidelines and detailed information will be provided and posted on the course UF canvas site.

For this class, students are expected to do some research on their own in order to prepare for a presentation and for the final project. "Afrofuturism" is not just about arts and culture. Topics covered will include education, technology, sustainability, climate change and politics. Students can choose to focus on one of these topics for the presentation and the final project.

All writing assignments will be returned to students with comments before the final week of classes.

Attendance is mandatory for this class.

Class format: lectures and discussions.

Grades

Total points will be calculated, and the final grade will be assigned according to the following table:

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Tot pts.	93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	<60

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

Presence and participation: attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the start of each class – it is therefore important you arrive in class on time. I will take points off for each class absence, unless appropriate written justification is provided, or the absence is due to one of the “acceptable reasons” as per UF policies. Participation in class discussions is crucial, and you are expected to actively contribute to debates if you want to obtain full score in this component. Un-respectful class demeanor (e.g. talking and texting during the class, using lap-tops for anything else than taking class notes, and studying for other classes) is NOT TOLERATED.

Assignment: Topics will be posted on line.

Students are expected to provide **feedback** on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Make-up policy: Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. Excuses for missing a class test or deadline for assignments will only be accepted for proven and acceptable reasons. You should give me prior notice whenever possible.

Academic Honesty: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Campus Helping Resources

Students experiencing crisis or personal problems that interfere with their general wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university’s counseling resources. The Counseling and Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Contact information: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575.

Other useful contacts are also the University Police Department: 392-1111.

Students with Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Required texts

Lauren Beukes, *Zoo City*
Nnedi Okorafor, *Akata Witch*

Journal articles and additional written resources are available on the UF Canvas website for this course.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Please note: the instructor reserves the right to make minor changes to the following schedule during the semester

Week 1

January 8-10 Introduction and presentation of syllabus
Futurism and the future in Africa
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un411t2fGII>
Mark Dery “Black to the future”

Week 2

January 15 No class
January 17 Futurism and the future of Africa 2

Mbembe “Africa in the new century”
<http://africasacountry.com/2013/11/africa-and-the-future-an-interview-with-achille-mbembe/>

Week 3

January 22-24 Science fiction in Africa 1
Lauren Beukes *Zoo City*
<https://www.afrocyberpunk.com/>

Week 4

Jan 29-30 Lauren Beukes *Zoo City*
Science fiction in Africa
Shane Graham “The entrophy of built things: Postapartheid Anxiety and the Production of Space in Henrietta Rose-Innes’ *Nineveh* and Lauren Beukes’ *Zoo City*”

Week 5 :

Feb 5-7 Futures and the production of knowledge : technologies and education
Carolyn Rouse “Afrofuturism : dreaming in real time”
“Fak ugesi : african digital innovation”
<http://africandigitalart.com/2017/12/fakugesi-african-digitalinnovation-festival-2017/>

Carter Conference (see program at <https://africa.ufl.edu/>)

Assignment 1

Week 6

February 12-14 Futures, cities, public spaces and habitat
“Africa Renewal : Africa’s cities of the future”
http://www.un.org/africarenewal/sites/www.un.org.africarenewal/files/Africa_Renewal_EN_April_2016.pdf

Week 7

Eebruary 19-21 Futurism and climate change: what is “ecofiction”
Articles by Christian Chelebourg and Bertrand Vidal

Week 8

February 26- 28 Wanuri Kahiu *Pumzi*

Week 9

5-9 mars Spring break

Project proposal

Week 10

March 12-14 Futurism and literature 2
<http://nnedi.blogspot.com/>

Week 11

March 19-21

Nnedi Okorafor, *Akata Witch*

Matthew Omelys "After the end times : postcrisis African science fiction"

Week 12

March 26-28

Futurism and film 2

Samuel Delany "Racism and science fiction"

<http://www.nyrsf.com/racism-and-science-fiction.html>

John Rieder "Race and revenge fantasies in Avatar, District 9 and Inglorious Basterds"

Assignment 2

Week 13

April 2-4

District 9

Week 14

April 9-11

Futures and contemporary African Art
Jepchumba, Faustin Linyekula's project

Week 15

April 16-18

Futures, music and Entertainment

Week 16

April 23-25

Conclusions

Final project due May 3rd