**ENGL 4399-001 T/R 9:30-10:50 PH 211 Fall 2016**

**Representations of Race in Contemporary Science Fiction**

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**Office Hours**: T/R 12:30-2:00 pm or by appointment

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Part of the success and appeal of Gene Rodenberry’s *Star Trek* was its ability, in the era of Civil Rights unrest, to neutralize the fear of racial difference by foregrounding that difference. Science fiction as a genre has not always lived up to the potential of Rodenberry’s vision, often resorting to tokenism and caricature. The kiss between Lieutenant Uhura and Captain Kirk in the 1968 episode “Plato’s Stepchildren” is believed to be one of the first, if not the first, consensual “interracial kiss” on television and provides an interesting benchmark by which to view interracial intimacy as well as interracial relations, more generally, in current science fiction productions.

Studying a variety of texts, including novels, novellas, and film and television productions, this course will explore representations of race in contemporary science fiction and compare it to representations found in earlier texts. We will consider whether science fiction as a genre offers the promise of a future without racism or whether it resorts to well-traveled stereotypes of difference. Central to this investigation will be an introduction to the field of Afrofuturism, a movement of artists and intellectuals that provides a variety of black perspectives on science, science fiction, and technology, imagining new worlds and new possibilities for raced bodies in and out of space.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

* Understand the ways science fiction texts engage with and contest ideologies of race.
* Develop a capacity for critical thinking. You will be equipped with the tools to perform critical analysis of popular culture and history.
* Appreciate the role that film and TV play in the construction of cultural norms, the maintenance of cultural hegemonies, and the production and contestation of ideologies of the center.

R**equired** **Reading:**

Isiah Lavender, *Race in American Science Fiction*. Indiana University Press, 2011

Adilifu Nama, *Black Space: Imagining Race in Science Fiction Film*. UT Press, 2008.

Octavia Butler, *Kindred*. 1979. Beacon Press, 2003.

Nnedi Okorafor, *Binti*. EBook available on Amazon.

*Giant X-Men #19* (Comic available on Kindle)

Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*. This book has many editions. Try to get the latest one. I will not be assigning readings from this book but it will help you to write your screening responses.

**The following readings are available in pdf format on Blackboard.**

* Bernardi, “Star Trek in the 1960s”
* Scodari, “Nyota Uhuru is Not a White Girl”
* Greene, Chapter One, *Planet of the Apes*
* Fawaz, “Where No X-Man Has Gone Before”

**The following links are to articles that are assigned on the syllabus.**

* “Racism and Science Fiction,” Samuel Delany <http://www.nyrsf.com/racism-and-science-fiction-.html>
* “Afrofuturism: Reimagining Science and the Future from a Black Perspective

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/dec/07/afrofuturism-black-identity-future-science-technology>

* “Star Wars: A Salute to Black Storm Troopers”

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2014/dec/29/star-wars-force-awakens-black-stormtrooper>

* “Black Lives Matter’s First Science Fiction Film.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/dec/29/star-wars-the-force-awakens-black-lives-matters-first-science-fiction-film>

**Films and episodes to be watched outside of class:**

* *Star Trek* original series “A Journey to Babel” (1967) and “Plato’s Stepchildren” (1968) These are available to watch for free on <http://www.cbs.com/shows/star_trek/>
* *Star Trek* (2009). Dir. J.J. Abrams
* *Planet of the Apes* (1968). Dir. Franklin Schaffner
* *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (2011). Dir. Rupert Wyatt
* *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* (2014). Dir. Matt Reeves
* *Extant* (2014) Pilot episode “Reentry” and episode 12 “Before the Blood” Watch on CBS All Access. Sign up for a free trial and then cancel.
* *Star Wars: Episode I-The Phantom Menace* (1999). Dir. George Lucas
* *Star Wars: Episode VII-The Force Awakens* (2015). Dir. JJ Abrams
* *Almost Human* (2013) Pilot and episode 10 “Perception.” Available to watch on Amazon Prime
* *Humans*. Episodes 1&2. (Pilot is on YouTube and the second episode is available on Amazon)
* *X-Men: First Class* (2011). Dir. Matthew Vaughn
* *X-Men: Days of Future Past* (2014). Dir. Bryan Singer

**Your Grade:** This course requires active and consistent participation from all members of the class. The breakdown of your final grade is as follows.

* Screening Responses (8 of these. Each will receive a grade out of 10) **40%**

## Presentation& Paper (this will be a letter grade) **20%**

* Final Paper (this will be a percentage) **40%**

**SCREENING RESPONSE**

The screening response is like a reader response paper, but it examines elements that are specific to film. You should consult the guidelines in chapters 1, 2 & 3 of *A Short Guide to Writing About Film* (Corrigan). I have posted 2 sample screen responses on BB to help you.

Primarily you are undertaking a preliminary analysis of the film, which can include an examination of the **narrative elements** (story, characters, point of view, etc), the **elements of composition** (shot, costumes, editing, etc.), and the **ideological elements** (the politics or vision of the movie; how it represents its characters, etc. see Corrigan p. 92). **Remember that whatever your focus, you want to tie your observations back to the larger question of how race is being articulated or represented through these elements.** You will not be able to cover all of these areas in each response, so pick the elements that are most interesting to you. Be sure to vary your focus in subsequent responses. In other words don’t write about the same topic (narrative or composition, etc.) every time.

* This is a formal piece of writing. It is **NOT a journal or diary entry.** **Do not** just explain why you do or don’t like the film.
* You are required to complete eight of these during the semester. That means that you do not need to write on every film or show. The choice is yours.
* **These should be typed in Times New Roman 10 or 12pt. font, single-spaced and one page.**
* They should be uploaded to blackboard before 9:30am on the day they are due.
* **No** **late papers, except in the case of documented illness, will be accepted.**

**PRESENTATION**

**Length: 15 minutes + discussion questions**

**Each of you will be required to give a 15-minute presentation on one of the films or tv episodes of the course.** A sign-up sheet will be provided on the first day of class.

One of the key components of this course is examining the cultural work undertaken by science fiction films and television; specifically how they utilize representations of race to comment upon or critique prevailing ideologies.

You should examine the methods and choices your film or episode makes in relation to representations of race and think about the influence that the film might have had or seeks to have on public discourse or perceptions about race.

* The formal part of the presentation should be no more than 15 minutes. At the end of the presentation, you should lead the class in a discussion of the film. You must prepare at least 5 questions for discussion. NOTE: The discussion period comes AFTER your 15 minutes. YOU MUST HAVE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.
* You must include clips from your film/episode in your formal presentation, so you will need to bring a copy of the film to class.
* You must cite your sources
* Powerpoint/Prezi presentations usually work best for these types of presentations.

**Presentation Paper**

PLEASE NOTE: You must hand in a written paper on the day of your presentation. It should represent the content of the presentation, but will be a formal piece of writing, NOT bullet points. Do NOT read your paper during the presentation. You may refer to it, of course, but don’t read it word for word, please. Late presentation papers will not be accepted.

**Length: ~3 pages double-spaced.**

**FINAL PAPER**

**Due: 12/6 via BB**

**Length: 8-10 pages**

For your final paper you must choose a film or tv series that we have NOT viewed in class. Your text should speak to the themes of the course, specifically how race and otherness is represented in science fiction. You should use the secondary materials that we have read in class AS WELL as other peer-reviewed sources relevant to the themes and text.

**ABSTRACT**

**A one-paragraph abstract—(a thesis statement and the outline of an argument) of your paper is due 11/1 via BB. I will assess the viability of your text and give you feedback on your thesis. There is no grade for this assignment.**

**PLAGIARISM**

In both oral and written communication, the following guidelines for avoiding plagiarism must be followed:

1. Any words quoted directly from a source must be in quotation marks (for a written assignment and referenced for an oral presentation) and cited.
2. Any paraphrasing or rephrasing of the words and/or ideas of a source must be cited.
3. Any ideas or examples derived from a source that are not in the public domain or of a general knowledge must be cited.
4. **All papers and presentations must be the student’s own work.**

Students who are confused about what constitutes plagiarism should meet with me.

Academic Honesty is expected of all students. Cheating and plagiarism are violations of academic honesty. Any student caught violating the academic honesty code will be failed and the matter will be reported, with documentation, to the Office of Student Conduct for further disciplinary action.

**Attendance:** At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students’ academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, I will take attendance every class period. If you miss more than 2 classes your grade will be affected. However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients “begin attendance in a course.” UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Disability Accommodations:** UTArlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA),* and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.* All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of **a letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD).Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

**The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability).

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit*[*uta.edu/eos*](http://www.uta.edu/hr/eos/index.php)*.*

**Title IX Policy:** The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated.*For information regarding Title IX, visit* [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX) or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or <jmhood@uta.edu>.

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Campus Carry:** Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” are directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students’ anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** for semester-long courses**,** a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located at the East end of Preston Hall, directly to your right when exiting the classroom. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**Student Support Services**:UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include [tutoring](http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/current/academic-support/learning-center/tutoring/index.php), [major-based learning centers](http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/college-based-clinics-labs.php), developmental education, [advising and mentoring](http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/advising.php), personal counseling, and [federally funded programs](http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/current/academic-support/mcnair/index.php). For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.

**The IDEAS Center (**2nd Floor of Central Library) offers **free** tutoring to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. To schedule an appointment with a peer tutor or mentor email [IDEAS@uta.edu](mailto:IDEAS@uta.edu) or call (817) 272-6593.

**The English Writing Center (411LIBR)**: The Writing Center Offers free tutoring in 20-, 40-, or 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Our hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mon.-Thurs., 9 am-3 pm Fri. and Noon-6 pm Sat. and Sun. Register and make appointments online at http://uta.mywconline.com. Classroom Visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students are also available. Please see [www.uta.edu/owl](http://www.uta.edu/owl) for detailed information on all our programs and services.

The Library’s 2nd floor Academic Plaza offers students a central hub of support services, including IDEAS Center, University Advising Services, Transfer UTA and various college/school advising hours. Services are available during the library’s hours of operation. <http://library.uta.edu/academic-plaza>

**Librarian to Contact:** The subject librarian for English is Diane Shepelwich. [817-272-7521](tel:817-272-7521)

dianec@uta.edu

**Assignment Schedule (subject to change)** Readings are due on the date recorded and should therefore be completed BEFORE the corresponding class day.  *As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course” –Penelope A Ingram*

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| **DATE** | **ASSIGNMENT DUE/CLASS ACTIVITIES** |
| Week 1  R 8/25 | Introduction to the Course  Delaney, “Racism and Science Fiction” <http://www.nyrsf.com/racism-and-science-fiction-.html> |
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| Week 2  T 8/30 | Lavender, “Racing Science Fiction” If you don’t have the book yet, you can access the pdf of this chapter on BB. |
| R 9/1 | 1) Bernardi, “Star Trek in the 1960s” pdf on BB  2) *Star Trek* original series “A Journey to Babel” and “Plato’s Stepchildren.” These are available to watch for free on <http://www.cbs.com/shows/star_trek/> |
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| Week 3  T 9/6 | Nama, Ch. 1 of *Black Space*, “Structured Absence and Token Presence” |
| R 9/8 | 1) *Star Trek* (2009) Screening response due  2) “Nyota Uhuru is Not a White Girl” |
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| Week 4  T 9/13 | Nama, Ch. 3, *Black Bodies* |

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| R 9/15 | Butler, *Kindred* –Prologue, The River, The Fire |
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| Week 5  T 9/20 | Butler, *Kindred* --The Fall, The Fight |
| R 9/22 | Butler, *Kindred* --The Storm, The Rope, Epilogue |
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| Week 6  T 9/27 | Lavender, Chapter 2. “Meta-Slavery” |
| R 9/29 | *Planet of the Apes* (1968) Screening response due |
| Week 7  T 10/4 | Greene Ch. 1 “Planet of the Apes” pdf on BB |
| R 10/6 | Lavender, Ch.4. “Ailments of Race” |
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| Week 8  T 10/11 | *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (2011) Screening response due |
| R 10/13 | *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* (2014) Screening response due |
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| Week 9  T 10/18 | 1) *Extant* (2014) pilot “Reentry” Watch on CBS All Access. Sign  up for a free trial. Screening response due  2) Lavender, Ch.5. “Ethnoscapes” |
| R 10/20 | 1) *Extant* (2014) episode 12 “Before the Blood” (Watch on CBS All Access) Screening response due  2) Nama, Ch. 2. “Bad Blood” |
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| Week 10  10/25 | *Star Wars: Episode I- The Phantom Menace* (1999)  Screening response due |
| R 10/27 | *Star Wars: Episode VII- The Force Awakens I* (2015)  Screening response due   * “Star Wars: A Salute to Black Storm Troopers”   <https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2014/dec/29/star-wars-force-awakens-black-stormtrooper>   * “Black Lives Matter’s First Science Fiction Film.”   <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/dec/29/star-wars-the-force-awakens-black-lives-matters-first-science-fiction-film> |
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| Week 11  T 11/1 | Lavender, “Technologically Derived Ethnicities” (pdf)  Abstract for Final Paper Due via BB |
| R 11/3 | *Almost Human* (2013) pilot episode and episode 10 “Perception”  These are available on Amazon Prime  Screening response due |
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| Week 12  T 11/8 | *Humans* episodes 1& 2 (First episode is on You Tube; you can buy the second from Amazon)  Screening response due |
| R 11/10 | 1) *Giant X-Men* #1. This is a comic book available on Kindle at Amazon. [Giant Size X-Men #1](http://www.amazon.com/Giant-Size-X-Men-1-Linda-Fite-ebook/dp/B00ZNVNLHA/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1452367708&sr=8-2&keywords=giant+size+x-men+1" \t "_blank)  2) Fawaz, “Where No X-Man Has Gone Before” pdf on BB |
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| Week 13  T 11/15 | *X-Men: First Class* (2011) Screening response due |
| R 11/17 | *X-Men: Days of Future Past* (2014) Screening response due |
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| Week 14  T 11/22 | “Afrofuturism: Reimagining Science and the Future from a Black Perspective” <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/dec/07/afrofuturism-black-identity-future-science-technology> |
| R 11/24 | Thanksgiving NO CLASS |
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| Week 15  T 11/29 | Nama, Ch.6. “Mothership Connection |
| R 12/1 | *Binti,* Nnedi Okorafor. Available as EBook. |
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| Week 16  T 12/6 | Last Day. Final Papers Due. |
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**Emergency Phone Numbers**: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911. Non-emergency number 817-272-3381