

Humanities Seminars Program

Reimagining Human Futures with Octavia Butler

Summer 2018

Dr. Monica J. Casper and Dr. Stephanie Troutman

Details

Thursdays, 10 AM – Noon

May 10, 17, 24, 31, June 7

Dorothy Rubel Room, UA Poetry Center

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Description

This course explores the work of speculative fiction writer Octavia Butler, recipient of the Hugo and Nebula awards and a MacArthur “genius.” Credited with influencing the field of Afrofuturist studies, Butler rendered a dystopian vision of the world, one rooted in her own experiences as a Black woman in twentieth-century America. Like all good literature, her work says something important about the period in which she wrote. It was also eerily prescient and can serve as a lens turned on our current moment of political instability, climate change, inequality, social disorder, and the Movement for Black Lives. The course will incorporate original texts alongside supplemental materials and will focus on the recurring themes of race, gender, sexuality, environmentalism, reproduction, social hierarchies, and varied meanings of human. There has never been a more apt and rewarding time to reexamine Octavia Butler’s award-winning work and to reimagine human futures.

All readings are *recommended*, but we hope you will consider reading the selected novels in their entirety.

Week 1, May 10

Recommended

Octavia E. Butler, *Kindred*, 2003 [1979], Beacon Press

Visit: <http://octaviabutlerlegacy.com/blog/>

Listen: <https://soundcloud.com/thehuntington/sets/conference-octavia-e-butler-studies-convergence-of-an-expanding-field>

Week 2, May 17

Recommended

Damian Duffy and John Jennings, *Octavia E. Butler's Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation*, 2017, Abrams Comic Arts

Listen: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/623/we-are-in-the-future>

Week 3, May 24

Recommended

Octavia E. Butler, *Fledgling*, 2005, Seven Stories Press

Listen/View: <http://www.armoryarts.org/exhibitions/exhibitions-2016/radio/>

Week 4, May 31

Recommended

Walidah Imarisha and adrienne marie brown (eds.), *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements*, 2015, AK Press [Selections TBD; will be available in PDF]

View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUz3jqI9m0w>

Week 5, June 7

Recommended

Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Sower (Earthseed)*, 2000 [1993], Warner Books Inc.

Listen: <https://vimeo.com/170519426>