



Cristina de Middel, *The Afromanauts* (2012)

## LIT 135: AFRICAN FUTURISMS

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Summer Session 2  
 July 27-August 28  
 Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00-4:30pm

[Zoom link](#)

Instructor: Kelsey McFaul  
[kmcfaul@ucsc.edu](mailto:kmcfaul@ucsc.edu)

Office hours: Tuesdays 1-3pm,  
[sign up here](#)



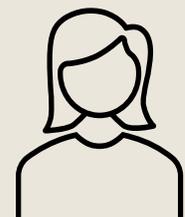
UCSC Canvas – LIT 135  
<https://canvas.ucsc.edu/courses/35124>



Shared Google Drive  
<https://tinyurl.com/LIT135>



Zoom Meetings  
<https://ucsc.zoom.us/j/91264550639?>



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## course description + trajectory

Ytasha Womack defines futuristic African writing as a synthesis of “science fiction, historical fiction, speculative fiction, fantasy, Afrocentricity, and magical realism with non-Western beliefs.” With its tentacles in multiple genres and times, futuristic African writing is “an artistic aesthetic and a framework for critical theory.”

This course takes an area studies approach to speculative literature. It explores historical and present visions of political futures that draw on indigenous and diasporic ideas of Africa in a range of creative media including novels, short stories, and films. Analyzing these visions in conversation with texts written by African scholars and cultural critics, we will come to understand the ways “Africa” has been imagined by those in and outside it and its spaces, times, histories, and identities used as the basis for anti-colonial, non-extractive, beyond-human futures.

In week 1 we define the central terms and practice literary analysis skills necessary for reading contemporary African fiction. We then move from West to South to Central to East Africa and backwards and forwards in time through literary texts and films. In each area, we learn about a theory of or collective vision for the future and connect it to the creative production and context of that region.

## learning objectives

- **Identify African regions and countries**, as well as key texts and figures associated with them.
- **Explain how ideas of Africa and the African literary canon** have been formed within histories of colonialism, migration, language politics, and race and ethnicity.
- **Critically analyze literary and theoretical texts** in terms of forms, genres, and historical and social context.
- **Communicate ideas and interpretations in writing**. Specifically, writing prompts of different lengths and styles will practice discussing a literary text in relation to a critical tradition, evaluating multiple interpretations, and writing an evidence-based argument.
- **Understand** the socio-historical and political contexts and characteristics of **Pan-Africanism, Afrofuturism, and Africanfuturism**, and be able to put them **in conversation** with each other around visions of futurity.
- **Think critically about representations and ideas of Africa** in disciplines and contexts beyond literature (including history, politics and government, economics, humanitarianism, and natural resource management).
- Understand ourselves as **actors with agency** within a global publishing ecosystem and reading as a form of activism.

## course philosophy

Education, in my view, is an ongoing process of liberation in which students develop critical thinking skills and become more self-directed in their learning. I too do my best to be honest in my positionality and relationship to these materials, nor do I claim to be the only one who possesses knowledge. I teach using active and collaborative learning methods where students engage with one another and me to process and produce course content through guided activities. In this way, students and I relate to each other as co-creators of knowledge and move toward further self-actualization as we take responsibility for our own learning within the cultural system of education.

## course materials

All course material will be available to you on Canvas.

Below is the list of novels if you'd like to buy your own paper copies (not required).

- *Lagoon*, by Nnedi Okorafor. Saga Press/Simon & Schuster, 2015.
- *Zoo City*, by Lauren Beukes. Jacana Media, 2010.
- *The Old Drift*, by Namwali Serpell. Penguin Random House, 2019 [excerpts].
- *Everfair*, by Nisi Shawl. Tor Books, 2016.

\*I suggest purchasing from [Bookshop.org](https://www.bookshop.org) (which allows you to select an independent bookseller to support) or [Bookfinder.com](https://www.bookfinder.com) (for new and used options).

## taking this course remotely

We are living through an extraordinary global crisis. While our personal lives have always been part of our learning experience, we are perhaps learning this in new ways. We may be living in different time zones, facing technological access issues, and caring for ourselves and others. Our expectations for ourselves and this course should reflect those changed circumstances. Reading and writing components have been scaled back and made more flexible in anticipation of the challenges we are all dealing with, and we will revisit them throughout our five weeks together.

Prior to the first week of class (July 27), I will send out a survey asking you about your schedule and access to technology. Please answer to the best of your ability, since your answers will help determine how the course is delivered.

Currently, we will plan to meet together **2 times per week during our scheduled time, Mondays and Wednesday, 1:00-4:30pm**. Our time will be allocated as follows:

### First 30 minutes (1:00-1:30pm)

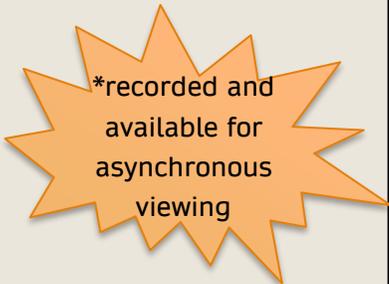
Prepare for class by independently reading or viewing assigned material and completing reflection exercise

### Zoom meeting (1:30-4:00pm)

Three 40-minute activities with 5-minute breaks

Each session will be a combination of:

- Short lectures by instructor\*
- Interactive large group discussions\*
- Small group breakout groups
- Additional readings and viewings
- Collaborative readings and journals
- Guest lectures\*
- Student generated discussion questions, quizzes, debates\*



\*recorded and  
available for  
asynchronous  
viewing

### Last 30 minutes (4:00-4:30pm)

Optional community worktime for mapping activities, reading journals, and writing responses

The course has a combination of asynchronous and synchronous parts. It is possible to participate fully in the course even if you do not always have predictable access to Internet / Zoom.

### informed consent for recording synchronous class sessions

Please note that “live” or synchronous sessions (marked with \*) will be recorded to ensure access to all enrolled students. By participating in this class session, you are consenting to be recorded. Course recordings will be uploaded to Canvas and are for private use. Please do not circulate them.

## course components

The graded components of this class are:

- Four map quizzes
- In-class reading journal (complete/incomplete)
- Four 500-word written or audio responses
- 5-7 page final paper

### map quizzes

You will complete four map quizzes, one each week, to familiarize yourself with the geography of the African continent, its countries and their capitals. These will be organized into four regions (West Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa, North and East Africa), and I will provide you with the list each week.

In addition to identification, you'll be asked to find and research one African writer from the given region each week. Please write 2-3 sentences about them (ex: their location, literary works, awards, etc.) and attach a photo of them or a book cover. I will organize your entries into a collective archive for us all to share, so do your best to be creative and select authors you don't think others will replicate. You could also choose a particular genre or language to organize your entries: i.e., romance, crime, scifi, nonfiction, francophone, lusophone, or indigenous language writers.

These quizzes ask us to acknowledge the ways maps have been used to dominate and colonize the African continent, the artificiality of present borders, and the ethical problems with mapping and capture. At the same time, they allow us to collaboratively generate particular knowledge about the continent, its regions, countries, and writers to complicate the monolithic "idea of Africa." They can help us become responsible readers.

### reading journal

The reading journal will be your record of the theoretical readings we complete together in this course. All journal entries will be completed in class on Zoom (no outside work is required). You and your small group chose from a selection of short theoretical readings, have time to read and discuss it (with guided discussion questions), and then collaboratively write a detailed one-paragraph summary of the article's main argument. This reading journal will support your progress toward several of this course's learning objectives:

- (1) identifying and explaining critical texts, figures, and debates within the African literary tradition
- (2) critically analyzing literary and theoretical texts, and
- (3) communicating your ideas, interpretations, and analysis in writing.

We will collect the journal entries together in a shared class Google document, so that we all have access to and can reference our shared work. It will also provide you a record of your learning to carry with you and continue to reference after the completion of this course.

### weekly 500-word writing or audio response

You are also asked to complete 4 short written or spoken responses for this course (one for each of the first four weeks). Each entry will be guided by questions and prompts asking you to reflect on a piece we've read together, close-read a passage, or put a piece of theory and a fictional passage in conversation. They can be an opportunity for you to put some of the ideas raised in class down on paper and begin writing your final paper. They're also intended to help you practice writing about literary texts and about theory in your own words, building on skills you've developed in other courses and will carry with you after this course.

**Prompts are posted on Canvas and your responses are due each Sunday evening of the course at 11:59pm.** Your response can be:

- A 500-word written document
- A 5-minute audio recording (2 maximum)

### final paper

Because this course is only 5 weeks long, please begin thinking about your ideas and collecting materials for your final paper right away. Feel free (encouraged!) to choose journal entries and writing responses strategically for use in your final paper.

**PROMPT: Choosing 1-3 texts from the course (for example, 1 novel; 2-3 short stories and/or films), how do they envision and enact an African future(s)?**

This prompt is intentionally open-ended, an invitation to explore an aspect or vector of futurity that most interests you and/or that builds on your previous writing assignments. You should make sure define what you mean by "African future" and why imagining and enacting futures is important, but beyond that the focus of the paper is up to you. Some possible directions include:

- How does the text generate a future or futures from encounters with African histories and pasts, from "mythic presents," or from encounters with the diasporic politics of blackness?
- What is the role and nature of time, space, language, and/or genre in visualizing and textualizing the future?
- What is the role of animals, the nonhuman/natural world, magic/spirituality, the mechanical and/or the technological in the future? How might these categories interact and to what ends?
- What is the future's tense, its conditions and possibilities of realization? What is the tense of the past and/or the present?

- What is the significance and politics of place in imagining African and/or Afro-diasporic futures? Specifically, what is the "idea of Africa" upon which Afro-diasporic futures imagine the future? In what ways has this idea persisted/evolved over time? How is this future imagined, why, and for whom?

**Your paper should contain a concise and clear thesis statement, supporting evidence in the forms of textual quotation and close textual analysis, a strong line of argument, and a substantial conclusion.**

**Paper length and formatting:**

- 5-7 pages
- Double-spaced, 12-point font
- Pages should be numbered
- Your name, instructor's name, and course name listed on the first page
- Please title your paper
- Proofread for grammar, punctuation, and spelling

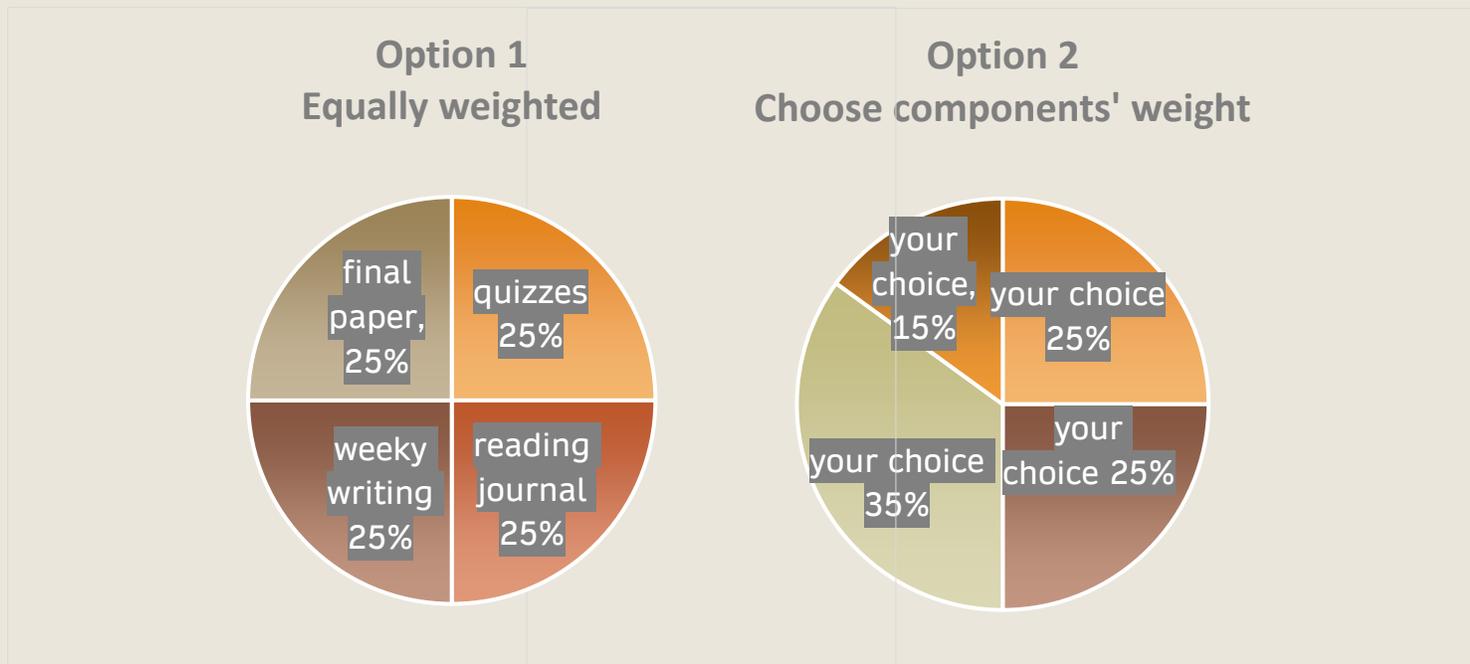
**Citation guidelines:**

- Please follow MLA format for quotations, in-text citations, your works cited page, formatting, and style.
- If you quote from a primary [novel or short story] or secondary [theory] source, place the quoted material in quotation marks and identify the source in parentheses with the page number. For example,
  - Sunstrum argues that “the politics of imagining means not only operating within the limiting mode of the political reactionary but also imagining, and more significantly, *occupying* alternative African futures” (114).
  - For the writers in this paper, imagining themselves and other Africans in the future means “not only operating within the limiting mode of the political reactionary but also imagining, and more significantly, *occupying* alternative African futures” (Sunstrum 114).
- If you paraphrase a source or are particularly indebted to a source for an idea, identify the source and the page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence and in the works cited page

## grading

Because we have different strengths as students, as well as different circumstances during summer session, there are two possible grading distributions for this course. When choosing which option you'd prefer, please consider factors like how much time per week you plan to allocate to this class, what your best work is and how you produce it, your access to reliable internet, and your ability to attend all in-person class sessions.

Option 1 is the default. **If you choose option 2, please send me an email assigning each component a weight (no component may be less than 10%). You can change your option or allocation through the end of week 2 (August 8).**



Letter grade	Percentage
A+	100-97
A	96-93
A-	92-90
B+	89-87
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	76-73
C-	72-70

## study schedule recommendations

To achieve an A, the UCSC Educational Opportunity Program recommends a ratio of 3 hours studying per week for each unit. That means on a 5-unit course, you would be studying for 15 hours each week. However, summer courses move twice as quickly, roughly 30 hours each week.

This class has been designed in a synchronous online format that allows you to do much of the reading and writing work in class. In-class reading is noted on the course schedule and you will also have opportunities to work on map and writing assignments in class. Because of this, I recommend allocating about 20 hours / week to this class. Five hours/week will be spent on Zoom, 1 hour/week preparing for Zoom, and 14 hours reading and writing independently.

## important dates for summer session 2

July 20	Financial Aid Disbursement (if enrolled by <u>June 1 priority deadline</u> )
July 27	First day of class
July 30	Add date
<b>August 3</b>	<b>Drop date (tuition reversed)</b>
August 8	Change grade distribution (email instructor)
<b>August 14</b>	<b>Request “W” grade (no tuition reversal)</b>
	Change grade option
August 28	Last day of class
September 3	Grades due

Summer is unique. **You will not be dropped for non-attendance or non-payment.** You must drop yourself. Dropping before the deadline results in a full-tuition reversal/refund. Withdraw posts a W for the grade and full tuition is charged (no refund).

For all dates and deadlines, including ‘change of grade option’ (P/NP) and grades due, please refer to the summer academic calendar: <https://summer.ucsc.edu/studentlife/index.html>. For questions about dropping, requesting a W grade for a course, or withdrawing from the summer quarter, email [summer@ucsc.edu](mailto:summer@ucsc.edu).

## university policies and resources

resources: DRC, Writing Tutors, Title IX, and CARE

Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude

you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

I encourage you to contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to determine how you could improve your learning as well. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met. If you have accommodations documentation, **please send it to me by the end of the first week of class.** There are also a range of resources available to summer session students, including the Writing Center and Learning Support Services.

### DRC remote accommodations

The Disability Resources Center reduces barriers to inclusion and full participation for students with disabilities by providing support to individually determine reasonable academic accommodations. Operations continue via remote appointments. If you have questions or concerns about exam accommodations or any other disability-related matter, email the DRC Schedulers at [drc@ucsc.edu](mailto:drc@ucsc.edu) for an appointment.

### small group tutoring

Small Group Tutoring (SGT) supports students academically to advance educational equity by designing inclusive learning environments outside of the classroom. In SGT, you can expect the Tutor to facilitate cooperative group activities designed to have students work together on the course content and develop study skills for the course. SGT is offered at least three times each week for the entire quarter. The Tutor is an undergraduate student who took the class, did well, and is trained to facilitate group sessions to focus on students' needs to succeed in the course. SGT is open to all students enrolled in the class and they must sign up on our online system: TutorTrac. When students sign up for SGT, they are committing to attend every week. For Summer 2020, students can begin signing up for tutoring on **Monday, June 22rd** and tutoring will begin **Wednesday, June 24th**. Students only have to sign up once for tutoring and their appointments will repeat weekly. Sign-ups will close on **Friday, August 14th** for all Summer Session Sign-Ups. This means that after **August 14th**, no new students can sign up for tutoring. You can sign up using [this link](#). You can also find the link on the Learning Support Services website: <https://lss.ucsc.edu/index.html>.

### academic integrity

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. Academic dishonesty diminishes the university as an institution and all members of the university community. It tarnishes the value of a UCSC degree. All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty in order to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC.

In the event a student is found in violation of the UCSC Academic Integrity policy, he or she may face both academic sanctions imposed by the instructor of record and disciplinary sanctions imposed either by the provost of his or her college or the Academic Tribunal convened to hear the case. Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript.

For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the [Academic Integrity page](#) at the Division of Undergraduate Education.

## title IX

The university cherishes the free and open exchange of ideas and enlargement of knowledge. To maintain this freedom and openness requires objectivity, mutual trust, and confidence; it requires the absence of coercion, intimidation, or exploitation. The principal responsibility for maintaining these conditions must rest upon those members of the university community who exercise most authority and leadership: faculty, managers, and supervisors.

The university has therefore instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct. [Information about the Title IX Office](#), the [online reporting link](#), applicable campus resources, reporting responsibilities, the [UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#), and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can be found at [titleix.ucsc.edu](http://titleix.ucsc.edu).

The Title IX Office is actively responding to reports and requests for consultation. If you are not currently working with someone in the office and want to make a report/request a consult, you can expect the fastest response by using our [online reporting link](#). For more information please visit the [Title IX Operations under Covid-19](#) page.

## course schedule

### WEEK 1 Introductions and embarkations

July 27

#### Outside of class materials

Reading:

- bell hooks, “Engaged Pedagogy,” *Teaching to Transgress*. New York: Routledge, 1994: 13-22.
- Nnedi Okorafor, *Lagoon* [first half]

#### In-class materials

Viewing:

- Nnedi Okorafor, [“Sci-fi stories that imagine a future Africa,”](#) TedTalk

Reading:

- Nnedi Okorafor, [“Africanfuturism Defined”](#)
- Mohale Mashigo, “Afrofuturism: Ayashi’s Amateki,” *Intruders: Short Stories*. Johannesburg: Picador, 2018: ix-xv.
- Mark Dery, “Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose.” *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture*, Duke University Press, 1994, pg. 179–222 [excerpt]

In-class reflection activity:

- Binyavanga Wainaina, [“How to write about Africa,”](#) *Granta* 92 (2005).

July 29

#### Outside of class materials

Reading:

- Nnedi Okorafor, *Lagoon* [second half]

Listening:

- [“Reading Women Discuss Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism”](#) podcast

#### In-class materials

Reading:

- Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Howard University Press, 1972, excerpts: pg. 13-14 and 20-28, 95-103, 135-145.

August 2

#### DUE ON CANVAS

- Week 1 Map Activity: West Africa
- Week 1 Writing Response

## WEEK 2 Of other realities: myths and magic

August 3

### Outside of class materials

Reading:

- Amos Tutuola, *The Palm-wine Drinkard*. Grove Press (1954): 191-200, 228-264.
- Chikodili Emelumadu, "What to do When Your Child Brings Home a Mami Wata," *The Shadow Booth: Vol. 2* (2019), 1-8.
- Lillian Akampurira Aujo, "[Where pumpkin leaves dwell,](#)" *Jalada 02: Afrofuture(s)*. 15 January 2015.
- Dayo Ntwari, "Mother Love," *Water: New Short Fiction From Africa*, Ed. Nick Mulgrew and Karina Szczurek. Cassava Republic (2015): 217-231.

### In-class materials

Reading:

- F.A. Irele, "The African Imagination," *The African Imagination and the Black Diaspora*, Oxford University Press, 2001, pg. 3-22.

In-class exploration:

- [The Caine Prize](#)
- [Short Story Day Africa](#)
- [Omenana](#)
- [Nommo Awards](#)

August 5

### Outside of class materials

Reading:

- Lauren Beukes, *Zoo City* [first half]

### In-class materials

Viewing:

- [Alive in Joburg](#)
- [District 9 trailer](#)

Reading:

- Achille Mbembe, "The Becoming Black of the World," *Critique of Black Reason*, Duke University Press, 2017, pg. 1-9.

August 9

### DUE ON CANVAS

- Week 2 Map Activity: Southern Africa
- Week 2 Writing Response

## WEEK 3 Figures of blackness: the animalled and the alien

August 10

### Outside of class materials

#### Reading:

- Lauren Beukes, *Zoo City* [second half]

#### Viewing:

- *District 9* (streaming link on Canvas)

### In-class materials

#### Reading:

- Ato Quayson, "[Unthinkable Nigeriana: The Social Imaginary of District 9](#)," *Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism*, 16 October 2009.
- Harry Garuba, "Explorations in Animist Materialism: Notes on Reading/Writing African Literature, Culture, and Society," *Public Culture* 15.2. (2003): pg. 261-285 [excerpts].

August 12

### Outside of class materials

#### Reading:

- Namwali Serpell, *The Old Drift*, excerpt: pg. 140-200.
- Namwali Serpell, "[The Afronaut Archives: Reports from a future Zambia](#)," *Public Books*, 8 March 2019.
- Sofia Samatar, "[Those](#)," *Uncanny Magazine*, 2015.
- Sofia Samatar, K'eguro Macharia, and Aaron Bady, "[What Even is African Literature Anyway?](#)", *The New Inquiry*, 9 February 2015.

### In-class materials

#### Reading

- Achille Mbembe, "Time on the Move," *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, pg. 1-18.

#### Viewing:

- Nuotama Bodomu, [Afronauts](#)

August 16

### DUE ON CANVAS

- Week 3 Map Activity: North Africa
- Week 3 Writing Response

## WEEK 4 Extractive economies, speculative pasts

August 17

### Outside of class materials

Reading:

- Nisi Shawl, *Everfair* [first half]

Listen:

- Guest Lecture, Axelle Toussaint, “Visualizing Histories of Colonialism in Africa”

### In-class materials

Reading:

- Martin Delany, “Condition of Many Classes in Europe Considered,” “A Project for an Expedition of Adventure, to the Eastern Coast of Africa,” *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*, 1852.
- W. E. B. Du Bois, “[To the Nations of the World](#),” First Pan African Convention, 25 July 1900.
- Marcus Garvey, “[Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World](#),” 13 August 1920.

August 19

### Outside of class materials

Reading:

- Nisi Shawl, *Everfair* [second half]
- Gabriel Teodros, “Lalibela,” *Octavia’s Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements*, AK Press (2015): 123-133.

### In-class materials

Reading:

- Haile Selassie, “[Towards African Unity](#),” Organization of African Unity, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 25 May 1963.
- Sofia Samatar, “Toward a Planetary History of Afrofuturism,” *Research in African Literatures* 48.4 (2017): 175-191 [excerpt]
- Kodwo Eshun, “Further Considerations on Afrofuturism,” *The New Centennial Review* 3.2 (2003): 287-302 [excerpt]

Listen:

- Bob Marley, “[War](#)”
- Sun Ra, *Space is the place* [[full version](#)] [[in America](#)]
- [Black Panther trailer](#)

August 23

### DUE ON CANVAS

- Week 4 Map Activity: East and Central Africa
- Week 4 Writing Response

## WEEK 5 Whose future? Pan-Africanism and Black Power

August 24

### Outside of class materials

#### Reading:

- “The Last Pantheon,” [Parts 1](#) and [2](#), Nick Wood and Tade Thompson, *The Manchester Review*

#### Watch:

- *Black Panther* (streaming link on Canvas)

### In-class materials

#### Reading:

- “[On Black Panther, Afrofuturism, and Astroblackness: A Conversation with Reynaldo Anderson](#),” *The Black Scholar*, 13 March 2018.
- Jamil Smith, “[The Revolutionary Power of Black Panther](#),” *TIME*
- Dikeledi A. Mokoena, “[Black Panther and the problem of the black radical](#),” *Pambazuka News*, 9 March 2018.

August 26

### Outside of class materials

#### Reading:

- Deji Bryce Oluotun, “[We are the Olnauts](#),” *Electric Lit*.
- Louis Greenberg, “Oasis,” *Water: New Short Fiction From Africa*, ed. Nick Mulgrew and Karina Szczurek. Cassava Republic (2015): 44-55.
- Efe Okogu, “Proposition 23,” *AfroSF: Science Fiction by African Writers*, ed. Ivor Hartmann. StoryTime (2012): 352-405.

### In-class materials

#### Viewing:

- Wanuri Kahiu, [Pumzi](#) (2009).

August 28

**FINAL PAPER DUE ON CANVAS, 11:59PM**