

## Call for Proposals for First Year Seminar

### FSEM Goals

First year seminars will be distributed across the disciplines, yet they are structured around a set of common principles whose purpose is to introduce first year students to the pursuit of intellectual inquiry. Specific topics are determined by the instructor's background and interests. The objective of the first year seminar is to cultivate the intellectual skills necessary for liberal learning through the in-depth study of a topic and the provision of instruction on how to gather and analyze information for the purpose of formulating and defending an opinion. Seminars will be deep in terms of the critical approach employed, but will involve topics, which are accessible to first year students. In addition, first year seminars anticipate the experience of the senior seminar without the requisite background knowledge and skills that such seminars demand.

Although first year seminars will neither be part of the Writing/Speaking Intensive Program(s) nor be a replacement for a first year writing course, all first year seminars involve meaningful writing and speaking assignments in which students are given instruction and guidance on writing and speaking at the college level.

**Every course should have the following basic components and new student learning outcomes, outlined in the QEP.**

First-year seminars will:

- utilize active, discussion-based, participatory learning;
- be exploratory in nature, rather than just presenting conclusions;
- have students read primary sources, not simply textbooks;
- have students synthesize material from multiple sources to develop their own views on the topic; and
- be capped at 15 students.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages or arguments;
- Improve development and organization of written arguments;
- Demonstrate the ability to edit and revise in the writing process;
- Apply the basic theories and principles of oral communication;
- Communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion.

We are looking for seminars, which are not traditional courses, but illustrate the sort of intellectual inquiry higher education can offer. See, for instance, the sample syllabus appended to this document. In other words, you should not take an existing course and re-title and renumber it.

### Deadline for FSEM proposals:

**Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup> 2013** for courses to be offered in the **Spring 2014** course schedule.

Proposals must be **submitted electronically** to John P. Broome ([jbroome@umw.edu](mailto:jbroome@umw.edu)) using the FSEM Course Proposal Form. An example of a completed proposal is attached.

Please address your questions to any member of the committee.

Sincerely,  
*First Year Seminar Committee*  
John P. Broome, Chair

Rosalyn Cooperman  
 Janie Lee  
 Will Mackintosh, Secretary  
 Dave Stahlman

**FIRST YEAR SEMINAR COURSE PROPOSAL**  
 UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Use this form to submit **FSEM 100 topics** courses for review **or any other existing course** that you wish to have designated to meet the first year seminar requirement.

<b>COURSE NUMBER:</b>	<b>FSEM 100</b>		
<b>COURSE TITLE:</b>	<b>OCTAVIA BUTLER: SCIENCE FICTION</b>		
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Clarence W. Tweedy III	<b>DATE:</b>	September 26, 2013
<i>This course proposal has the department's approval. (Put a check in the box to the right.)</i>			

**COURSE DESCRIPTION.** In the space below, provide a one to two sentence description of this class. The description will be entered in Banner, and will also be used in other publications about the first year seminar program (such as the “Eagle Essentials” booklet).

**The course examines a selection of novels by Octavia Butler in tandem with speculative fiction short stories across the African diaspora, investigating the construction of race, gender, and class.**

**RATOINALE.** Include short statement addressing how this course meets the FSEM’s basic components and new student learning outcomes (see FSEM call above), and why this course should be approved to meet the FSEM General Education requirement.

This class contributes to the FSEM’s goals of encouraging students to engage in discussion based exploratory learning, to communicate in a variety of settings, to gain knowledge of appropriate research and information-retrieval techniques, and produce original arguments about speculative fiction and society at large. In this course, students will examine the development of science fiction/ speculative fiction as literature in a social and historical context, with an emphasis on the contemporary works of Octavia Butler. Students will explore the genre through the major themes and motifs, as a phenomenon of popular culture. Students will investigate how African American writers participate in the science fiction genre and how socio-historical themes of racial, gender as well as social injustice influence African American authors’ writing; while, ultimately, exposing issues that affect American culture at large. Finally, the course will focus on the ways that race, gender, class, and science fiction interact to describe the contemporary world, while shaping visions of the future.

**SYLLABUS.** *Attach a course syllabus.*

**SUBMIT** this form and attached syllabus **electronically as one document** to **John P. Broome** ([jbroome@umw.edu](mailto:jbroome@umw.edu)). All submissions **must** be in electronic form.

# Spring 2014 FSEM 100—Octavia Butler: Science Fiction

---

**Dr. Clarence W. Tweedy III**

Email: [ctweedy@umw.edu](mailto:ctweedy@umw.edu)

Mailbox located in: Combs ELC main office 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

Office Phone: (540)654-1541

Office Hours: **TBD**

Office #: Combs 305

---

## *Required Texts*

1. *Kindred*
  2. *Parable of the Sower*
  3. *Parable of Talents*
  4. *Wild Seed*
  5. *Bloodchild and Other Stories*
  6. *Dawn*
  7. *Fledgling*
  8. *Adult Rites*
  9. *Dark Matter: a Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora*, ed. Sheree R. Thomas (**Make copies of stories from reserved library text or order text from ABE books, Amazon.com, etc.**)
- 

I believed most blacks shunned sf and fantasy because there was little for us to identify with in the content. And what little there was tended (with, of course, some exceptions) to conform to the negative stereotypes of blacks endemic to other literary genres and, indeed, other media. A literature that offered mainstream readers an escape route into the imagination and, at its best, a window to the future, could bestow a similar experience for black and other minority readers

—Charles Saunders, “Why Blacks Should Read (and Write) Science Fiction”

“We have to bring some to get some in outer space and otherspace, as we have done here on Earth. Just as our ancestors sang their songs in a strange land when they were kidnapped and sold from Africa, we must, now and in the future, continue to sing our songs under strange stars” (Saunders 392). Thus, this course will be a study of the development of science fiction/speculative fiction as literature in a social and historical context, with an emphasis on the contemporary works of Octavia Butler. Students will explore the genre through the major themes and motifs, as a phenomenon of popular culture. Students will investigate how African American writers participate in the science fiction genre and how socio-historical themes of racial, gender, as well as social injustice influence African American authors’ writing, while, ultimately, exposing issues that affect American culture at large.

Finally, the course will focus on the ways that race, gender, class, and science fiction interact to describe the contemporary world, while shaping visions of the future. Students will explore the ways that science fiction creates worlds and offers salvation, and how gender, power and race are developed as well as deconstructed in African American science fiction writing

---

**Course Objectives:**

- Engage in active, discussion-based, participatory learning.
  - Use writing as a tool for the exploration and expression of ideas and arguments.
  - Gain knowledge of appropriate research and information retrieval techniques.
  - Learn how to process and synthesize ideas into original arguments.
- 

**Course Requirements:**

- Class Participation 15 points
- Journal 10 points
- Group presentation— 15 points
- Individual presentation—10pts
- Midterm essay 3-4 pages 20 points
- Final Essay 5- 7 page 30 points

Total = 100 points

---

**Journal:** For this course, you will be required to keep a journal. Thus, for each text of the course (**8 entries for the novels, 1 for your short story, and 1 of your own choosing**), you are required to compose a one (285 words) page critical analysis, using an outside academic source to support the argumentative claim of your thesis. Also, you **must compose 1 critical analysis** (worth one point) that discusses a topic that you have become interested in over the course of the semester. **Your journal should contain a total of 10 critical writings and be a minimum length of 10 pages.**

**The grading criteria are as follows: Invention 50%—does your analysis demonstrate a well thought out logical argument based on a specific thesis, Style 50%—does your analysis use appropriate MLA citation, while conforming to the grammatical rules of Standard American English.**

**Presentations:** Presentations should provide the author’s biographical information, relevant facts about the culture, society, country, or city etc. in which the novel takes place, while using at least two outside academic sources and one review in order to highlight significant themes of the text. Groups should prepare handouts for the class. Presentations should be approximately 10-15 minutes in length. Moreover, each individual group will be responsible for generating and leading class discussion the day of their presentation.

**Individual Short Story presentation**—each member of the class will present a brief five to ten minute analysis of a short story read from the *Dark Matter* text. The presentation should be substantive and reflect critical as well as theoretical arguments previously reviewed and discussed during the course.

**Final Research Essay/ Groups:**

For this class, each student will be assigned to a writing cohort group of no more than five students. All members of individual cohorts will be held accountable for attending and participation in group activities.

- Each Cohort group will be required to meet a minimum of four times (twice for midterm and twice for final) to brainstorm for paper topics, draft outlines of essay projects, and to peer review drafts. Finally, you must type two group memos (one for the midterm and one for the final) that clearly outline what was accomplished during your meetings, who attended and who made helpful contributions. Please attach copies of memos to your midterm and final. Failure to do so will result in a 5 point deduction from your midterm and final essay grades.
- I strongly recommend that if individual students have questions about my expectations etc., that they arrange a time to meet with me during my office hours. Also, remember, that the University of Mary Washington does provide a writing center that is available to all UMW students. Remember, the writing center is there to assist you and not to write your paper so please go prepared as well as ready with questions about your work.

**Midterm Essay:** Your midterm will be a 3-4 page essay, answering the provided prompt of the midterm writing assignment. Students are required to use a minimum of two outside sources in their essay. You will be required to meet with your assigned writing cohort groups a minimum of two times in order to provide critical feedback as well as suggest possible revisions for essays. Also, when you turn in your midterm essay you must attached a group memo that clearly discusses the value of feedback provided by your individual group members.

**Final Research Essay:** For this class, students will **develop their own topic for their final essay**. However, ideas for final essays must be approved by me. This project must be a 5-7 page research essay that follows your own research agenda and will require you to consult numerous scholarly sources (a minimum of five outside sources will be needed). A final draft of your essay must be completed by the last week of the semester. Also, we will have two in-class peer reviews in which both I and your fellow classmates will provide critical responses to your work.

**Assigned Readings:** I will expect for you to have completely read the assigned reading/ text by the first day we are scheduled to discuss it in class.

---

**Format:** All essays must be in **12 point Times new Roman or 10pt Courier** with **one inch margins** as well as **correct MLA citation**. Be sure to **number the pages** of your final essay

**Completion and submission of assignments:** Failure to submit preliminary drafts on schedule, to participate in scheduled peer evaluations, or to turn in all drafts and other materials that may be required with the final version of the essay, may result in significant grade reduction, even to the extent of a failing grade for the assignment.

**All drafts/ revisions/ final drafts must be typed!!!!**

**Grading Scale:** A = 100-93/ A- = 92-90/ B+ = 89-87/ B = 86-83/ B- = 82-80/ C+ = 79-77/ C = 76-73/ C- = 72-70/ D+ = 69-67/ D = 66-63/ D- = 62-60/ F = 59 and below.

---

### Course Guidelines and Policies

**Due Dates:** Due dates will only be extended for excused absences only. No Exceptions!!!!

**Late Work:** Absolutely no late work will be accepted. All assignments are due at the beginning of class!!!

**Office Hours:** If you need to meet with me please sign up for my office hours. Each week a sheet will be posted outside of my office with available times. Meetings will be limited to 10 to 15 minutes only. Thus, you need to come prepared with drafts, questions, etc..

**Return of Assignments:** Final versions of major assignments are returned within two weeks following the due date. Daily work is returned within a week. Students who miss classes when assignments are returned are responsible for collecting their own work during office my hours.

**Attendance:** Because FSEM 100 relies on writing workshop methods and class discussion, regular attendance is essential. Thus, I will be taking attendance. **If you miss 3 or more classes your final grade will be reduced by 1 letter grade and ½ a letter grade for each class missed after that point.**

**Grades for class participation** will be determined by the student's participation in completing in class focus questions, short writing assignments, attendance, and peer reviews, etc...

**Unsatisfactory on mid-semester reports:** Students with a grade average of **below 70 (C)** will receive an unsatisfactory grade report at the mid-term.

**Honor Pledge:** Write the honor pledge and your signature on the back page of work submitted for evaluation.

**Punctuality:** Students are expected to come to class on time and stay for the whole period.

**Food/Drinks/ Tobacco:** You may bring food or beverages into the class. However, remember that this is a privilege and will be taken away if you fail to clean up after yourselves. No tobacco products are allowed in class whatsoever.

**Cell phones:** need to be either turned off or placed on mute and be placed out of sight.

**Computers/ laptops:** only to be used with permission of the instructor.

---

## *Provisional Schedule*

### Week One

#### **Course Introduction; Syllabus Review**

Lecture: Dark Matter and Butler

“Racism and Science Fiction,” Samuel R. Delany and “Black to the Future,” Charles R. Saunders

### Week Two:

#### *Neo-slavery and textuality*

Kindred

Kindred; **Group Presentation #1**

Kindred

### Week Three:

#### **Short Presentations 1-3**

“Sister Lilith,” Honoree Jeffers and “The Comet,” W. E. B. DuBois

“Chicago 1927,” Jewelle Gomez and “Black No More,” George Schulyer

### Week Four:

Fledgling; **Group Presentation #2**

Fledgling

Fledgling

### Week Five:

#### **Short Presentations 3-7**

Separation Anxiety,” Evie Shockley and “Tasting Songs,” Leone Ross

“Can You Wear My Eyes,” Kalamu ya Salaam and “Like Daughter,” Tananarive Due

### Week Six:

#### *Earthseed*

Parable of the Sower; **Group Presentation #3**

Parable of the Sower

Parable of the Sower

### Week Seven:

Parable of Talents; **Group Presentation #4**

Parable of Talents

Parable of Talents

### Week Eight:

Spring Break

Spring Break

Spring Break

### Week Nine:

Film: “White Man’s Burden”

Film:

Film:

Week Ten:

**Short Presentations 8-11**

“The Space Traders,” Derrick Bell and “The Astral Visitor Delta Blues,” Robert Fleming  
“The African Origins of UFOs,” Anthony Joseph and “At Life’s Limits,” Kiini Ibura Salaam

Week Eleven:

Blood Child and Other Stories; **Group Presentation #5**

Blood Child and Other Stories

Blood Child and Other Stories

Week Twelve:

**Short Presentations 12-15**

“Rhythm Travel,” Amiri Baraka and “Aye, and Gomorrah,” Samuel R. Delaney  
“At the Huts of Ajala,” Nisi Shawl and “Butta’s Backyard Barbecue,” Tony Medina

Week Thirteen:

***Lilith’s Brood***

Dawn; **Group Presentation #6**

Dawn

Dawn

Week Fourteen:

Adult Rites; **Group Presentation #7**

Adult Rites; **Dark Matter presentations 9-12**

Adult Rites

Week Fifteen:

***Seeds to Harvest***

Wild Seed; **Group Presentation #8**

Wild Seed

Wild Seed

Week Sixteen:

**1<sup>st</sup> Peer Review for Final Essay**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Peer Review for Final Essay**

**Last Day of Class!! Final Essay and Journal Due!!**