# ENGL 0154

Speculative Fiction

Instructor Name: Meghan K. Riley

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Student Hours: **Monday:** 4:30 – 6 P.M. (Zoom)

**Tuesday:** 9:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M. (Elliott Hall)

**Wednesday:** 4:00 – 6:30 P.M. (Elliott Hall)

**Thursday:** By appointment only (Zoom)

**Friday:** 8:30 – 9:30 A.M. (Elliott Hall), 4:30 – 6 P.M. (Zoom)

## Course Catalog Description

Speculative Fiction will engage with prevailing questions of society, identity, history and technology through the lens of science fiction, fantasy, horror and other genres. It will explore how literature uses provocative premises to engage in thought experiments and social critique. It will focus on key topics which will be addressed through a sequence of works, emphasizing comparative analysis and a variety of perspectives. Throughout the class we will engage in discussion and debate about the daily readings and their subject matter, produce analytical work about the material, and develop our own speculative topics which reflect the experiences and concerns which are most relevant to us.

## Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate awareness of the historical origins and generic conventions of speculative fiction
2. Demonstrate awareness of trends in the genre across time and during specific periods in the development of the genre
3. Articulate the relationships between texts, both chronologically and thematically
4. Develop and articulate broad questions about speculative fiction, including its affordances, limitations, relationship with other genres and texts, and applicability
5. Analyze and articulate the impact of specific speculative fiction tropes within and across texts
6. Demonstrate an awareness of and appreciation for diversity within the field, both in terms of authorship and in terms of style and theme
7. Apply critical theory to texts in order to enrich your comprehension of the texts

## Required Texts

Evans, Arthur B, et al, editors.*The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*. Wesleyan University Press, 2010.

Butler, Octavia E. *Wild Seed.* Doubleday Books, 1980.

Lai, Larissa. *Salt Fish Girl*. Thomas Allen Publishers, 2002.

Additional texts as assigned (check updated reading/assignment schedule)

## Course Assignments and Grading

**Weekly Reading Responses (30%):** For every reading assignment, you will be asked to write (or record) reading notes and submit them by the end of the week in which the readings were assigned. Preparing these notes will ensure your readiness for class discussion and develop critical reading and annotation skills.

**Participation (15%):** I plan to make this course largely discussion-based; therefore, you need to contribute to class activities, as well as attend to the contributions of others. Too much of one or the other is equally detrimental to the class environment as a whole. That noted, I provide a variety of ways to participate, from short reflective writing exercises to “ink shedding” and anonymous Google doc discussion question development exercises. While I understand and empathize if you occasionally have an “off” day, if you are uncomfortable participating regularly despite the variety of options for participating or if you are dealing with a life situation that prevents you from participating regularly, I recommend that you either discuss the matter with me or contact an SLC/the Assistant Director of Academic Guidance/the Director of Academic Affairs or some other person to advocate on your behalf (there is no need to disclose the details to me if you do not feel comfortable doing so, but I will need to receive some notification that there are extenuating circumstances on your part so that I can adjust accordingly). You will earn a ½ point or full point for any given week during the course, depending on your overall engagement.

**Project 1 (15%):** For this project, you will contextualize the development and/or purpose of speculative fiction. Project options include a timeline and a theory or manifesto of speculative fiction.

**Project 2 (20%):** For this project, you will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the genre, and apply that understanding to the creation of one of the following: a syllabus, an anthology table of contents with short introductions for selected texts, a short story, or a multimedia speculative fiction text.

**Final Paper/Exam (20%):** For the final assessment, you will have an option of a final exam (which will include multiple choice as well as short and long essay questions), or a paper which demonstrates a close reading and analysis of a speculative fiction text, as well as its significance within the genre and its use of speculative fiction tropes.**’**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

It is extremely important that your work is your own and that you give credit for any borrowed ideas, words, or information. If you need more detailed information on plagiarism, visit me; otherwise, if you’re in doubt, cite it. Conducting yourself honorably with regard to tests and other graded assignments/projects goes without saying. Avoid a situation where we have to address this embarrassing and injurious issue. Should an incident of plagiarism arise, I will deal with it according to the plan of action in the “Academic Honesty” section outlined in your Student Handbook.

**Papers**

Unless completed in class or otherwise stated, all assignments are to follow the following format:

Typed in Times New Roman 12-point font or Arial 10.5 or 11-point font

Double spaced

Original title

Follow MLA style citing and referencing

A note about your writing: Aside from in-class writing assignments, all written work should be thoroughly checked beforehand for grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. (Please note that intentional use of world Englishes is not an example of an error; we will discuss this in the first week).

**PAPER HEADING FOR ASSIGNMENTS**

First Name Last Name

Due Date

Title of assignment

Riley Section #

**HELP**

Please take advantage of my student hours. I expect you to think and work independently to a large extent, but if you need help, take the initiative to contact and/or visit me. (Impromptu visits are totally welcome, but if you would prefer to email me chat using Zoom, that is fine too!)

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me (or have someone contact me on your behalf) as soon as possible. My office location and hours are listed on this document. Please note that you need not share specific details with me to receive accommodations; if you choose to have someone contact me on your behalf, all I need to know is what accommodations you should receive and the duration of those accommodations.

**Diversity**

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our Beneficence Pledge and through university resources found at http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter

**Disability**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. The [***Office of Disability Services***](https://www.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/disability-services) coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or [***dsd@bsu.edu***](mailto:dsd@bsu.edu).

**Indiana Academy Absence Policy**

It is the policy of the Indiana Academy that any absence from class is unexcused, except for illness, death in the family, college or school-related activities, and extenuating circumstances. When a student is absent from a class, the instructor reports the student absence to the Faculty Attendance Coordinator in the Office of Academic Affairs. Unless the absence is excused by a school official, it is considered unexcused. The decision as to whether an absence is excused is not determined by the instructor. Although all absences, both excused and unexcused, are tracked within the Office of Academic Affairs, professors of each class are free to use discretion with a student’s first three unexcused absences. Four or more unexcused absences in any particular class a student takes will lead to academic and residential consequences to be determined by the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Residential Life that may include detention, residential groundings, parent/principal conference, among others.