

Full Name: The Final Frontier?: Decolonising Speculative Fiction
Short Name: Decolonising Speculative Fiction
Lecturer Name and Email Address: Mary Grace Albanese (malbanes@tcd.ie)
ECTS Weighting: 5
HT/MT: Hilary Term
Year JS/SS: Either (whatever is most useful for the dept)

Speculative fiction, and genre fiction more broadly, have historically intertwined with histories of coloniality, reproducing and often romanticising narratives of exploration and exploitation; technological progress and technological domination; alien invasion and imperial encounter; frontier expansion and territorial dispossession; “lost races” and racist hierarchies. In contrast, this module will explore decolonial approaches to speculative fiction, centering literary and artistic production that subverts the genre’s colonial biases. We will give particular attention to recurring thematic such as apocalypse and catastrophe; artificial intelligence and posthumanism; time travel and pluriversality in order to excavate counter-histories that reckon with the colonial past and gesture towards liberated futures. Read in this framework, speculative fiction becomes not only a popular genre, but a site for thinking historical production itself: not as a tidy linear narrative but rather fractured, recursive, spiraled, and open to futurity.

We will draw from a range of media, including novels, short stories, comic books, films, television, philosophy, and political theory from a variety of linguistic and national traditions.

Authors/artists/filmmakers to be included (subject to revision): W.E.B. DuBois; Octavia Butler; Skawenatti; Joshua Whitehead; Grace Dillon; TJ Cuthand; Silvia Moreno-Garcia; Julio Torres; Frankétienne; Ling Ma; N.K. Jemisin; Nalo Hopkinson; Victor Lavalle.

Learning Aims

1. Students will gain a working knowledge of speculative fiction and its implication in colonial ideologies (empire, race, gender etc.)
2. Articulate and apply key concepts in decolonial theory to a wide range of media
3. Analyse how writers and artists from Black, Indigenous, Latino, and immigrant cultural backgrounds subvert and reimagine the generic conventions of speculative fiction

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Deploy multidisciplinary methodologies to analyse speculative fiction
2. Reflect on how genre shapes our understanding of both the past and the future
3. Craft well-supported arguments in written form

Assessment Details:

- Number of Components: 1
- Name/Type of Component(s): Essay
- Word Count of Component(s): 3,000
- Percentage Value of Component(s): 100%

Please note:

- Curricular information is subject to change.
- Information is displayed only for guidance purposes, relates to the current academic year only and is subject to change.