

Amer. Studies 316, Rutgers University, Fall 2015  
Instructor: Frances Tran

### **Assignment #3 Final Project**

**Student Presentations:** Monday, November 30th; Wednesday, December 2nd; Monday, December 7th; Wednesday, December 9th (order TBD)

**Reflection Paper Due Date:** Must be posted on the course blog by no later than 6:00pm on Wednesday, December 16th

**Prompt:** Since this course is about 21st Century Expression, the final project invites you to look hard at your daily experiences and encounters for texts, objects, and media connected to the kinds of questions we have been discussing in class about what it means to envision other worlds through the genre of science and speculative fiction. For this project, you will get the opportunity to collaborate with your peers to select an external text to share with the class. As a group, you will facilitate a class discussion of this work for 30 minutes on one of the presentation dates above.

\*You will be working in groups of 3-4 students. I will give you time during the class session to determine your groups. Each group should select one person to email me ([proftran100@gmail.com](mailto:proftran100@gmail.com)) a list of the names of all group members as well as the title of your chosen text. (Two groups will facilitate on any given day. The specific order for group facilitations will be determined later).

#### **Guidelines for selecting your external text:**

- The text you choose must have been created/ published in the 21st century and can be of any medium (e.g. short story, visual image, music video, an episode from a TV show, etc.). This text should also be connected to at least one of the other readings we have discussed during the semester. (Part of your facilitation will be elaborating on this connection- more about this below).
- Your group must make this text available to the rest of the class at least one week prior to your presentation date to give everyone enough time to read/watch it in advance. (For instance, if you are sharing a short story, create a .PDF that I can help you upload on to the course blog. Or, if you want the class to watch a music video, create a post on the blog with the appropriate links to YouTube, etc.)
- Be considerate of everyone's time! In other words, do not expect that we can read a 200-page novel just for your facilitation.

#### **Guidelines for facilitation:**

- Your group will be facilitating class conversation for 30 minutes. Since we have been doing student facilitations throughout the semester, you should know that your primary goal is to stimulate discussion around your chosen text.

- The only requirement for the facilitation is to get the class thinking about the connections between your external text and at least one of the texts we have already reviewed in class. This can be accomplished by drawing on related themes, encouraging us to examine the similarities between characters from the two texts, etc.
- Otherwise, you are free to approach this facilitation however you would like. You can create handouts, develop writing or group activities, stage a class debate, etc. Be creative!

**Reflection Paper Prompt (1-2 pages):** In addition to the group facilitation, you are each expected to write a reflection essay that examines how the external text you have chosen speaks to the present moment and why we need to critically attend to the issues and questions it raises.

Some questions to consider include, but are not limited to:

- How are characters portrayed? What kinds of conflicts do they encounter and are they successful in overcoming them?
- Setting is often crucial to science and speculative fictions. What can you say about the landscape depicted in this text? Is it dark, dystopian, magical, optimistic?
- How might the fantastical, supernatural, or science fictional elements of the text be connected to a broader social critique? What specific issues or questions does the text grapple with? And how are they related to our contemporary moment?

#### **Things to Keep in Mind:**

- Have you provided a clear, explicit and focused thesis about the significance of the text you are examining?
- Have you used enough **textual support** to make your argument as compelling as possible? When you quote from the text, you want to provide an analysis of why that quote is relevant -- explain fully how that quote supports your argument at that particular point.
- **Never generalize** or make broad, sweeping claims--always be specific and explicit, and say only what you can prove in the scope of your essay.

#### **Formatting and other details\***

- Your reflection paper should be posted on the course blog by no later than 6:00pm on Wednesday, Dec. 16th
- Your reflection piece should have a **creative title** and be between **500-700 words**
- Include parenthetical citations and a Works Cited section at the bottom of your blog post
- A late assignment will be penalized a full letter grade for each day it is late

\*Points will be deducted for incorrect formatting