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Reinventing Species, Sex, and Race
A Section of English 300, “Junior and Senior Seminar”
The College of Wooster

Although *species*, *sex*, and *race* have been key categories for classifying living beings, they are highly problematic terms. Their boundaries and meanings have been continually contested and reinvented both across and within historical periods. This course investigates constructions of biological difference—and the political uses they are made to serve—through case studies of literature contextualized with disparate moments in the history of the life sciences, such as comparative anatomy (17th century), taxonomy (18th century), evolutionary biology (late 19th century), and sociobiology (late 20th century). We will attend especially to ways in which literature employs biological categories while also pressing their limits, propelling readers toward re-imagining living beings and their interrelationships. Featured literary texts may include Margaret Cavendish’s *Blazing World*, H. G. Wells’s *Time Machine*, Octavia Butler’s *Dawn*, and E. O. Wilson’s *Anthill*. *Prerequisites: English 200 and two other literature classes.*

Course Texts:

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Gerald Graff and James Phelan, 2nd ed. (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008). 978-0312457525
Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World and Other Writings*, ed. Kate Lilley (Penguin, 1994). 978-0140433722
H. G. Wells, *Time Machine*, ed. Stephen Arata (Norton, 2008). 978-0393927948
Octavia Butler, *Dawn* (Aspect, 1997). 978-0446603775
E. O. Wilson, *Anthill: A Novel* (Norton, 2011). 978-0393339703

Learning Goals:

By the end of this course, you will have improved your abilities to

- think, converse, and write about literature;
- express your ideas and arguments in dialogue with existing literary criticism;
- compare/contrast key moments in the history of the life sciences;
- analyze how literary characters reinforce and/or challenge categories from the life sciences in specific cultural contexts;
- evaluate how literature and the life sciences interact to shape notions of otherness; and
- defend a persuasive position in debates about essentialism vs. constructivism.

Assignments and Grading:

For calculating final grades, assignments will be weighed as follows.

participation	20%
<i>Tempest</i> essay	15%
perspective papers / discussion facilitation (2)	15%
article summary/presentation	10%
final project presentation	15%
final research essay	25%

Semester At a Glance

Week 1	introduction	
Week 2	<i>The Tempest</i>	
Week 3	Renaissance vs. post-Darwinian Calibans	
Week 4	<i>The Blazing World</i>	<i>Tempest</i> essay due
Week 5	<i>The Blazing World</i> ; apes in the 18th century	
Week 6	<i>The Time Machine</i>	
Week 7	<i>The Time Machine</i> ; <i>Dawn</i>	
Fall break		
Week 8	<i>Dawn</i>	
Week 9	<i>Dawn</i>	
Week 10	<i>Dawn</i> ; <i>Anthill</i>	
Week 11	<i>Anthill</i>	
Week 12	<i>Anthill</i>	
Week 13	<i>Anthill</i>	
Week 14	<i>Anthill</i>	
Week 15	student presentations	
Exam Week		Research essay due

Course Requirements and Policies

Attendance. To achieve the learning goals of this course, it is essential that you attend every class for its full duration. Since extenuating circumstances, including illness and unavoidable delays, do sometimes arise, I make the following allowances for missing class time.

You may miss up to one week's worth of classes without penalty. That means that you may miss 2 (not necessarily consecutive) classes in a course that meets twice per week and 3 (not necessarily consecutive) classes in a course that meets three times per week without any penalty to your grade.

For each absence in excess of this allotment, your final grade in the class will decrease by 1/2 of a letter grade (*i.e.*, 5%) in a course that meets twice per week and by 1/3 of a letter grade (*i.e.*, approximately 3.33%) in a course that meets three times per week. For example, if you would have made an A- in a course that meets three times per week but have missed 4 classes, then your final grade will be reduced to B+.

Timeliness. Arriving late is disruptive and disrespectful. It is also detrimental to learning—not only for the person arriving late but also for other members of the class. Missing 10 or fewer minutes of class counts as 1/3 of an absence; missing more than 10 minutes of class counts as 2/3 of an absence. Similar penalties apply for leaving class early and for leaving but returning to the classroom. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to speak with me after class to make sure that you are not accidentally counted absent.

Excused Absences. Absences for extracurricular activities sanctioned by The College of Wooster will be excused if you provide documentation of your participation in the event, including date and time (*e.g.*, letter from a coach or music director). Absences for religious observances are always excused. Please notify me of anticipated absences as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements for you to make up work that you will miss. Do not expect absences for other reasons to be excused.

Participation. Active participation, which means not only listening but also contributing to in-class discussions and group work, is essential to your success in this course. Your participation grade also reflects your preparation for class, as demonstrated by in-class comments and pop quizzes, and your performance on informal assignments or presentations. Here is a rubric that explains criteria for evaluating participation:

- A Always engaged and prepared; makes frequent, valuable contributions to in-class discussions and group work; listens attentively; takes notes
- B Contributes to in-class discussions and group work; listens attentively; takes notes
- C Listens attentively and takes notes, but rarely speaks in class
- D Does not listen attentively, take notes, bring copies of course texts, or contribute regularly to in-class activities
- F Has major problems with participation (*e.g.*, falling asleep in class)

If you are concerned about meeting expectations for participation, please make an appointment to talk with me during the first two weeks of the semester.

Respectful Class Discussion. All members of the course commit to expressing their views in a considerate and respectful manner. While disagreement and debate are vital to a thriving academic community, participants in this class have obligations to respect those with whom they disagree and to treat all people with dignity.

Preparation for Class. I expect you to come to class having read the assigned reading carefully and thoughtfully. I also expect you to come to class ready to discuss the controversial issues of the assigned texts. You should have notes, including your comments and questions, prepared, as

well as written or typed answers to any study questions that have been provided in advance.

Reading Quizzes. Over the semester, there will be many unannounced quizzes on assigned readings; these quizzes enable not only me but also you to assess your preparation for class. Quizzes may consist of questions about factual matters, as well as questions about interpretative issues that have been addressed in any study questions provided in advance.

Editions of Course Texts. Editions of literary works can vary widely—not just in superficial ways, such as pagination, but also in substantive ways, such as the text. Even when variations are merely superficial, the use of different editions creates significant challenges and problems in the classroom. I have carefully selected editions of the works that we are reading in this course. You must use the assigned editions.

Guidelines for Written Work. To present your work in a professional manner, please follow these instructions:

- Type all written assignments in 12-point Times New Roman font.
- Use double spacing.
- Set all four margins to 1 inch.
- Include your name, the course number, and the correct date on page 1.
- Give your essay a creative yet informative title.
- Number every page after the first.
- Use a standard citation format, such as MLA or Chicago Style.
- Spell-check and proofread your essay.

Instructional Use of Student Work. In teaching writing, it is often helpful to discuss real examples of work submitted by students. I would therefore like to share anonymous examples of student work with this class or future classes for respectful discussion. If you would prefer that your work not be used in this way, then please send me an e-mail to that effect. (I would also encourage you to meet with me to discuss your concerns.) Although I believe that volunteering your work for such discussion can benefit both you and your peers, I will of course respect your wishes.

Late Work. I accept late assignments but deduct points based on how late they are. Assignments are due on Moodle by the designated time (see below). Promptly thereafter, the submission folder on Moodle will close, and you must submit your late essay to me by e-mail so that it will have a date and time stamp. The grade on a late assignment automatically suffers a 10% deduction. For each additional calendar day that an assignment is late, its grade will suffer another 10% deduction. For instance, an assignment due on Monday by 11:59 pm but submitted on the following Wednesday would lose 20% of the total points possible. It is your responsibility to complete your work early enough to allow time to resolve any technical failures or glitches that may occur so that you can submit the assignment on time.

Final Exam Date and Time. The College of Wooster sets the date and time for our final exam or assessment. (For the exam schedule, see <http://www.wooster.edu/academics/registrar/exams>.) Only the Dean for Curriculum and Academic Engagement can approve a petition to reschedule

your exam. Unless you are rescheduling for a medical reason, the petition must be submitted 3 or more weeks before the exam date.

Technology Policy. In general, I do not allow the use of cell phones, pagers, laptops, tablets, and similar devices in the classroom. If you believe that you have a legitimate reason for using any of these devices in the classroom, please make an appointment with me to discuss your specific situation.

Office Hours and Other Meetings. I am happy to meet with you during office hours or by appointment to discuss matters relevant to the course or your academic career. My schedule tends to fill up quickly, though, so please e-mail me well in advance to reserve a meeting time, especially if you want to discuss an upcoming assignment.

Academic Integrity. Each person at The College of Wooster is responsible for obeying its Code of Academic Integrity, as well as other rules. For full statements of the Code and other rules, see *The Scot's Key* and *Handbook of Selected College Policies*, both of which are available online.

All work submitted for this class must be authored by you alone and must be written specifically for this class. You may not submit any writing that you have previously or concurrently submitted for another class. If you commit plagiarism or any other violation of academic integrity in any of your formal or informal assignments, you will receive an F for the course.

For Students with Disabilities. Please speak with me privately during the first two weeks of the course if you need academic accommodations for a disability. I am happy to make any necessary arrangements. You will also need to contact the Director of the Learning Center, Pam Rose (e-mail: prose@wooster.edu; phone: extension 2595).

Course Calendar

Reading assignments should be completed by the date for which they are listed. Bring assigned readings to class so that you can refer to them during discussion. You will lose participation points if you do not bring copies of assigned texts to class. For readings not in one of the main course texts, see Moodle. Note that the following schedule is subject to change.

Week 1

Th 8/25 introduction; Carolus Linnaeus, excerpts from *Systema naturae*, 1st ed. (1735), and 10th ed. (1758); Donna Haraway, excerpt from "Introduction: The Persistence of Vision," *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 9–13

Week 2

Tu 8/30 William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Acts 1–3
Th 9/1 *The Tempest*, Acts 4–5

Week 3

- Tu 9/6 Michel de Montaigne, "On the Cannibals," *The Complete Essays*, trans. M. A. Screech (New York: Penguin, 2003), 228–41; Julia Reinhard Lupton, "Creature Caliban," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 51.1 (2000): 1–23
- Th 9/8 Daniel Wilson, *Caliban: The Missing Link* (1873), excerpted in *The Tempest*, ed. Graff and Phelan, pages 141–60; Glen A. Love, "Shakespeare's Origin of Species and Darwin's Tempest," *Configurations* 18.1–2 (2010): 121–40

Week 4

- Tu 9/13 Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World*, front matter and pt. 1, pages 119–75
- Th 9/15 *The Blazing World*, pt. 1, pages 176–202
- Sa 9/17 **Tempest Essay (1500–1800 words; i.e., 5–6 pages) due by 11:59 pm**

Week 5

- Tu 9/20 *The Blazing World*, pt. 2 and epilogue, pages 203–25; Sujata Iyengar, "Royalist, Romancer, Racialist: Rank, Race, and Gender in the Science and Fiction of Margaret Cavendish," *ELH* 69.3 (2002): 649–72
- Th 9/22 Londa Schiebinger, "The Gendered Ape," *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 75–114; Edward Long, "Negroes," *The History of Jamaica* (London, 1774), vol. 2, bk. 3, ch. 1, pages 351–83

Week 6

- Tu 9/27 H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine*, ch. 1–11, pages 1–56
- Th 9/29 *The Time Machine*, ch. 12–16 and epilogue, pages 56–71

Week 7

- Tu 10/4 H. G. Wells, "The Man of the Year Million" and "The Extinction of Man," in *The Time Machine*, ed. Arata, pages 138–47; Edwin Ray Lankester, excerpt from *Degeneration*, in *The Time Machine*, ed. Arata, pages 157–63; Michael Parrish Lee, "Reading Meat in H. G. Wells," *Studies in the Novel* 42.3 (2010): 249–68
- Th 10/6 Octavia E. Butler, *Dawn*, pt. 1, ch. 1–5, pages 1–42

Fall break (class does not meet on 10/11 or 10/13)

Week 8

- Tu 10/18 *Dawn*, pt. 2, ch. 1–9, pages 43–100
- Th 10/20 *Dawn*, pt. 2, ch. 10–12, and pt. 3, ch. 1, pages 100–27

Week 9

- Tu 10/25 *Dawn*, pt. 3, ch. 2–11, pages 128–81
 Th 10/27 *Dawn*, pt. 3, ch. 12–14, and pt. 4, ch. 1–7, pages 181–237

Week 10

- Tu 11/1 *Dawn*, pt. 4, ch. 8–9, pages 237–48; Haraway, excerpt from “Science Fiction, Fictions of Science, and Primatology,” *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989), pages 376–82; Nancy Jesser, “Blood, Genes and Gender in Octavia Butler’s *Kindred* and *Dawn*,” *Extrapolation* 43.1 (2002): 36–61
 Th 11/3 E. O. Wilson, *Anthill: A Novel*, prologue, pt. 1, ch. 1, and pt. 2, ch. 2–3, pages 15–51. Note: I will be out of town to attend an academic conference; class session details TBA.

Week 11

- Tu 11/8 *Anthill*, pt. 2, ch. 4–14, pages 52–140. Note: More pages of reading than usual.
 Th 11/10 *Anthill*, pt. 3, ch. 15–18, pages 143–72

Week 12

- Tu 11/15 *Anthill*, pt. 4, ch. 19–23, pages 175–224
 Th 11/17 *Anthill*, pt. 4, ch. 24–27, pages 225–47

Week 13

- Tu 11/21 *Anthill*, pt. 5, ch. 28–32, pages 251–307
 Th 11/24 Thanksgiving break

Week 14

- Tu 11/29 *Anthill*, pt. 6, ch. 33–36, pages 311–353
 Th 12/1 *Anthill*, pt. 6, ch. 37–38, pages 354–78

Week 15

- Tu 12/6 student presentations
 Th 12/8 student presentations; final discussion; course evaluations

Finals Week

- Th 12/15 **Research essay (3500–4500 words; *i.e.*, approximately 10–15 pages) due by 10 pm**