



ENG 2320 | Section 100
Speculative Appalachia
Spring 2026 | Ohio University
Dr. Edmond Y. Chang

ENG 2320
Section 100
CN 7107
MWF
12:55-1:50 PM
Ellis 103
Spring 2026
Ohio University

Dr. Edmond Y. Chang
331 Ellis Hall
Office Hours:
MW 10-11:30 AM
or by appointment
change@ohio.edu



"There are thirteen states with Appalachian counties—Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky, West Virginia, Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York—and West Virginia is the only state entirely within Appalachia."
—Elizabeth Catte

"Life is old here, older than the trees."
—John Denver

WHAT IS SPECULATIVE APPALACHIA? What critiques, challenges, and possibilities might speculative literature and media set in and about Appalachia, especially by Appalachian authors, artists, and activists, offer? How might we engage Richard Miles Britton's assertion in "Appalachia in Science Fiction" that speculative fiction authors "have often used an Appalachian setting. The sublime mysteriousness of mountains, the dense and fog-enshrouded forests, along with the popular stereotype of a region of isolated people cut off from contemporary culture, all lend themselves to making Appalachia an enticing choice on which to build imaginative, literary worlds"? This course takes up these provocations and surveys a range of speculative Appalachian (and Appalachian speculative) literature, broadly conceived, as political and vernacular theory, as strategies for thinking critically about the past, present, and future in order to imagine what this time, space, and place would be like under different conditions and configurations of race, gender, sexuality, ability, environment, technology, and other formations. Therefore, we will explore Appalachian literature and media, some more overtly speculative than others, that imagine alternative, even radical narratives, desires, environments, relationships, existences, and futures.

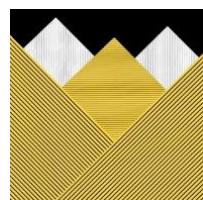
A REQUIREMENT for this class is a well-developed curiosity about the world, about the cultures we live in, and about the cultural productions we imagine, produce, and consume. In other words, this class is about reading, critiquing, and analyzing our culture through different literatures and texts. We will engage different practices enjoying and analyzing literature and other media, as well as develop literary, feminist, queer, and intersectional strategies, habits, and perspectives of reading, thinking, and writing. Foremost, we will read and write and research with pleasure and for pleasure. We will also close read for analysis. And lastly, we will read and deploy literature as theory, as dramatizing the concerns, wonders, struggles, and politics of lived life and experience.

SPECIFICALLY, the ENG 2320 course goals and learning objectives include:

- Students will be able to employ appropriate literary terminology to describe and discuss texts related to social justice, oppression, discrimination, inequality, and privilege.
- Students will be able to use appropriate evidence in analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating literary texts related to social justice, oppression, discrimination, inequality, and privilege.
- Students will be able to explain the relationship between literary texts and issues of social justice in the cultures or historical periods being depicted or in which the literary text was produced.
- Students will be able to critically state, describe, and consider issues of social justice, oppression, discrimination, inequality, and privilege as they are depicted in literary texts.
- Students will be able to systematically and methodically analyze and

"If you don't tell your story, somebody else will."

—Frank X. Walker



Required
Course Texts
& Materials

- Elizabeth Catte, *What You Are Getting Wrong About Appalachia*.
- Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*.
- Crystal Wilkinson, *The Birds of Opulence*.
- Alison Stine, *Trashlands*.
- Christopher Rowe, *These Prisoning Hills*.
- Moniquill Blackgoose, *To Shape a Dragon's Breath*.
- Don Martin, *Vox and the Curse of Foxfire*.
- Denali Sai Nalamalapu, *Holler: A Graphic Memoir of Rural Resistance*.
- Short readings will be available via Canvas.
- Web and Canvas access and an active Ohio University email account.



Course Requirements

Presentations	(20%)
Quizzes	(10%)
Creative Responses	(10%)
Critical Response Papers	(20%)
Final Project	(20%)
Class Participation	(20%)

evaluate the assumptions of authors, texts, or characters about social justice.

- Students will be able to formulate a clear thesis and draw conclusions about the relationship between literature and issues of social justice that addresses form, content, and cultural/historical context.

IN OTHER WORDS, we will use literature, other mediums, and popular culture as vernacular theory to think, talk, write about and to interrogate the world around us. We will spend the semester asking and addressing difficult, challenging, and sometimes discomforting ideas, questions, and topics, focusing on different identities, bodies, histories, desires, experiences, and even struggles and violences. Whether on the page, screen, on campus, or in the community, we will explore and engage multiple perspectives, levels of familiarity with the material, and heady and heartfelt responses. In other words, our class will be a safe, respectful, but not necessarily comfortable space. However, you do not have to believe in the ideas, theories, and analyses of the course, but you do have to demonstrate that you understand and can apply them. While pushing boundaries and comfort zones are essential to critical thinking, making connections, and intellectual and personal freedom, see me with concerns and queries, for reasonable accommodations, and for further resources on campus.

Requirements & Grading

Your grade should not be the sole exigence or motivation for this class. It is the hope of the course that you walk away from the class with something more. Find some pleasure and some edification and some knowledge from this class (or any class really) and success is usually not far behind. With that in mind, your grade will reflect your engagement, effort, close reading, critical thinking, writing, and participation.

Critical Question Presentation and Roundtable (20%)

You will be required to sign up in small groups for an oral presentation and roundtable during the course of the semester. For your presentation, you will read the texts assigned for a particular week, summarize and articulate two or three main points from the week's scholarly or critical text (as assigned), generate a critical question connecting the theory to the text, and contribute to in-class and online discussion for the week. Curations should have a group presentation plan, a substantive framing post, may include media, and each group member must contribute to the discussion and post.

In-Class Quizzes (10%)

There will be seven or more in-class five-minute quizzes at various times during the semester. These quizzes serve as a review of the week's main ideas, terms, texts, and readings. These quizzes might include brief identifications, fill-in-the-blanks, definitions, and short answers.

Creative Responses (10%)

Over the course of the semester, you will write a short-short story or poem, create a drawing, and generate a critical review as an alternative way to explore and demonstrate the ideas and goals of the course. These creative responses will be evaluated on completion and your critical, thoughtful engagement with the prompts.

Critical Response Papers (20%)

Over the course of the semester, you will complete a number short, critical,

"I just write all the time. In my whole life I've never had what I've heard people talk about writer's block. I've never had that. Life is like a song to me. I just hear everything in music, so I have never once thought, 'Well, I'm never gonna be able to write again.' I've got thousands of songs.'

—Dolly Parton



"I don't really think the outburst is recent; there have always been writers in Appalachia."

—Donald Ray Pollock

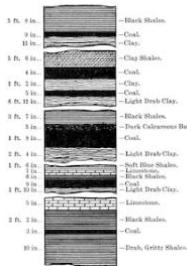
"Appalachia is often portrayed as a place separate and apart from the rest of America. Among other things, this allows Americans to absolve themselves of any accountability or relation. But Appalachia is America, even if those who live outside the region do not want to admit it."

—Charles B. Keeney

analytical response papers. These single-spaced, one-page writings serve as close readings of, analyses of, and articulations of the texts and connections you see, read, and talk about in the tutorial. These responses are more than just summaries or personal reactions and will be graded on clarity, focus, coherence, critique, and your ability to concisely formulate arguments. You will be required to generate a response paper approximately every 2-3 weeks for a **total of 5**. See the response paper prompt for more details.

Mixed-Paper/Mash-Up Final Project (20%)

Your final paper project will be a “mixed-paper,” a multimodal mash-up that collects together three of your short response papers, which you’ll revise, your creative responses, and incorporates the addition of images, verse, and other kinds of evidence, all of which is framed by an introduction and conclusion page. The “mixed-paper” asks you to think critically about the course questions and texts, to make connections, and to create an argument across texts and different kinds of evidence. See the “mixed-paper” final project prompt for more details and explanations.



Response Paper Formatting

- 1) 1" margins top, bottom, left, and right on each page.
- 2) Single-spaced block header with your name, date, course, my name. For example:

Student Name
ENG 2320
January 12, 2026
Dr. Chang

- 3) Response (week) number and title (e.g. Week #2: Race in The Great Gatsby).

- 4) Response papers are single-spaced, standard indented paragraphing, no page numbers.

- 5) Standard Times Roman Font, 12 point only.

- 6) Correct MLA citation and bibliographic format. Bibliography if necessary (not needed for class texts).



Late Assignments

All assignments must be done completely and turned in on time. Late assignments will be penalized half a grade for every day that they are late. So, if your essay is late by one day and you received a B- for your work, then your final grade would be a C+. Moreover, I will not comment on late work. However, you still need to complete late work or you will receive a zero. If you miss class on the due date of a paper, you must notify me and make arrangements to get the paper to me as soon as possible. Unless previously arranged, I DO NOT accept assignments via email.

Remember that a paper has not been officially handed in until it is in my hands. Never turning anything in late is always the best policy.

Attendance

This is not a self-paced course. Attendance is required. If you are absent, you miss the explanation of an assignment, the discussion of a reading, the chance to participate, and overall, the class as a community of learning. Also, you are expected to be in class on time. Chronic or conspicuous attendance or tardiness problems will negatively affect your overall participation grade.

Moreover, absences for more than a third of the course / 14 class sessions may result in a failing grade regardless of reason. University-sanctioned and reasonable accommodations will be taken into account. **All absences are your responsibility.** If you know you are going to miss class, please let me know (via email) as soon as possible and make any necessary arrangements. When you do miss class, always find another student to get class notes or see me during office hours to discuss or make up missed work in a timely manner. You are always responsible for all material covered during your absence.

Assignment Format

All papers must be produced on a word processor. All documents should be saved in Microsoft Word format (or if necessary as a PDF). All papers must follow the manuscript format outlined by the assignment. Unless instructed otherwise, **all papers must use MLA citation and documentation conventions.** All papers must be neatly printed (in black), stapled in the top, left-hand corner, and should not be three-hole punched. Papers that do not follow these

format guidelines will not be accepted. They will be returned unread to you. Papers will be regarded as late until they are resubmitted in the proper format. **Always make a backup copy of every paper you turn in**, lest you be one of the unhappy people whose paper is eaten by the computer. You may even want to take the precaution of e-mailing your paper to yourself as an attachment during the drafting process and certainly before you exit the document and leave the computer. Or you may want to invest in cloud-based file storage like OneDrive (which all OHIO students have already have access) or DropBox.



Learning (With) Technology

Unless you have an official accommodation, the use of technology in our classroom is a privilege, not a right. Mobile devices like phones, media players, and cameras should be off and put away. Computers and tablets should be used for note-taking, in-class work, and readings only. Print is generally preferred for course texts and readings, but full-size e-versions are acceptable provided the student is able to readily highlight, annotate, and index. Finally, be conscientious and respectful in the use of the course website and social media and post no material from class to the internet or non-class sites without explicit permission from the instructor and the class. Keep in mind these three rules:

- 1) Use the Right Tool for the situation and the task—keep it simple and elegant,
- 2) Practice Best Practices—it must improve or enhance your learning (this includes generative AI),
- 3) Be a Good Neighbor—it cannot distract or detract from others' learning.

Inappropriate use and abuse of technology in class will result in the taking away of technology privileges for the offending student and/or class as a whole.

Evaluation Rubric

Over the course of the quarter, your assignments will receive feedback and comments that will identify what you are doing well and what still needs improvement. Your grades assess your fulfillment of the assignment, the quality of work, detail, analysis, and argumentation, overall effort, and finally, style, polish, and risk taking. Consider the following evaluation rubric as signposts or a kind of legend to your progress and evaluation:

- **Outstanding (A):** Offers a very highly proficient, even memorable demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), including some appropriate risk-taking and/or creativity. No generative AI.
- **Strong (B+/A-):** Offers a proficient demonstration of the trait(s) associated with the course or assignment goal(s), which could be further enhanced with revision, additional support, and creativity.
- **Good (B-/B):** Effectively demonstrates the trait(s) associate with the course or assignment goal(s), but less proficiently; could use revision to demonstrate more skillful and nuanced command of trait(s).
- **Acceptable (C/C+):** Minimally meets the basic course or assignment requirement, but the demonstrated trait(s) are not fully realized or well-controlled and would benefit from significant revision. Some generative AI (with permission).
- **Inadequate (D/D+):** Does not meet the course or assignment requirement; the trait(s) are not adequately demonstrated and require substantial revision on multiple levels. Relies on generative AI.

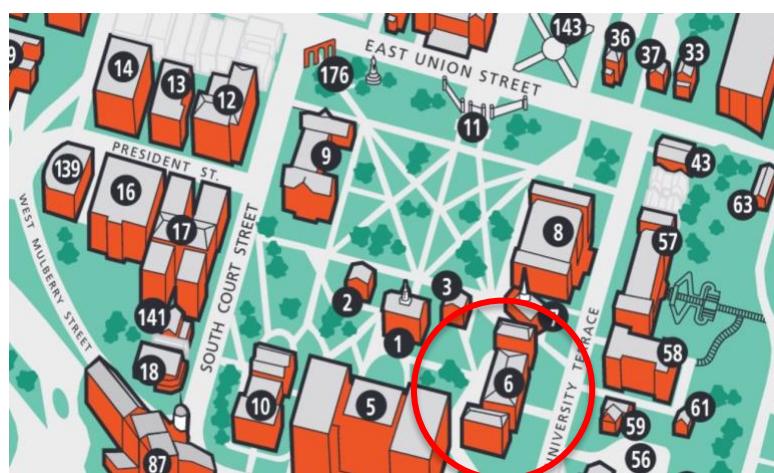


Contact Dr. Chang

Office: 331 Ellis Hall
Office Hours: MW 10-11:30 AM or by appointment
E-mail: change@ohio.edu
Google Chat: EDagogy

Contact TA Jamie Hawley

Office: 312 Ellis Hall
Office Hours: TuTh 1-2:30 PM or by appointment
E-mail: jh268524@ohio.edu



Otherwise, **email** is the best way to contact me. I will do my best to answer your emails and Canvas posts, usually **within twenty-four hours**. If there is an emergency and you need to reach me, please contact the main English office in 201 Ellis Hall. Furthermore, when time permits, I will supplement my office hours with virtual hours via Google Chat (**nickname: EDagogy or edagogy@gmail.com**); if I am logged in, during reasonable hours, you are more than welcome to discuss the class or ask questions. Please, when you initiate an IM conversation, **use a greeting**, please identify yourself to me, and be **patient** because my responses may not be immediate.

You can also find additional writing and academic help at the Writing Commons on campus, a good resource for this class and other classes. The Writing Commons is located in the Academic Advancement Center (AAC) on the second floor of Alden Library and offers a variety of services including help with reading, writing, brainstorming ideas, organization, citation, and research. See <https://www.ohio.edu/student-success/academic-achievement-center> to make an appointment and for more information. Further resources, both on- and off-campus can be found on the Links page of the course website: <http://www.edmondchang.com/courses/2320/links.html>.

Accommodations

Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should see me or contact me **in the first week of class** to discuss their specific needs and provide written documentation from Student Accessibility Services. If you are not yet registered as a student with a disability, please contact Accessibility Services at 740-593-2620 or visit the Accessibility Services office in Alden Library 230. The OU Accessibility Services website is: <https://www.ohio.edu/accessibility>.

“here in this
untouched wood
a dirge a lamentation
for earth to live
again
earth that is all at
once a grave
a resting place a bed
of new beginnings
avalanche of
splendor”
—bell hooks

Generative AI-Free

This course will be a generative AI free zone. Students are encouraged to explore and understand their relationship to and limits for technology and to develop a philosophy of technology use that reflects their social, cultural, ethical, environmental, and creative values. **This course asks you to make informed, ethical, and consensual choices about generative AI.** All formal and informal assignments submitted for this course should represent your own thinking and effort and should be prepared entirely by you. There may be times when the use of AI-generated text or images would be appropriate in this course, particularly regarding reasonable accommodations and accessibility, but you should **obtain advance permission** from the instructor for any use of generative AI technologies. Without clearance, the use of generative AI at any stage of your work in this course (as indicated by manual and/or cross-digital detection) will be zeroed and constitutes academic dishonesty, a violation of course policy and of the Ohio University Student Code of Conduct (see below).



“Do work that
matters. *Vale la
pena.*”
—Gloria E. Anzaldúa

Academic Integrity

All students are required to uphold the highest academic standards. Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing—as long as you cite them. Many students do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes plagiarism, so feel free to ask questions at any time. For our class, plagiarism includes:

- a student failing to cite sources of ideas
- a student failing to cite sources of paraphrased material
- a student failing to site sources of specific language and/or passages
- a student submitting someone else's (**including an AI's**) work as their own

“When I look back, I
am so impressed
again with the life-
giving power of
literature. If I were
a young person
today, trying to gain
a sense of myself in
the world, I would do
that again by
reading, just as I did
when I was young.”
—Maya Angelou

- a student submitting their own work produced for another class

If you have any doubt about how to cite or acknowledge another's writing, please talk to me. Any plagiarism or academic dishonesty will result in failure of an assignment or of this course, and the Office of Community Standards and Student Responsibility may impose additional sanctions. It is always better to be safe than sorry. Please review the Ohio University Student Code of Conduct, which includes full definitions, procedures, and appeals processes: <https://www.ohio.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/student-code-of-conduct>.

Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct

Ohio University and our course are committed to a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment. All OHIO faculty and staff share in the responsibility to create a safe learning environment for students and for the campus as a whole. With the exception of the confidential resources listed below, all OHIO employees are required to report any instances of sexual harassment or other sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Civil Rights Compliance (CRC), even if they learn of it through classroom assignments, discussions, or the like. Reports are made to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Civil Rights Compliance and can be made electronically at <https://www.ohio.edu/civil-rights> by selecting the "report sexual misconduct" tab, by phone at 740.593.9140, by fax at 740.593.9168, or by email at titleix@ohio.edu or civilrights@ohio.edu. If you are not yet ready to have something that happened to you or someone else reported to CRC, you can speak confidentially with the Survivor Advocacy Program (740-597-SAFE or <https://www.ohio.edu/survivor>), Counseling and Psychological Services (740.593.1616 or <https://www.ohio.edu/student-affairs/counseling>) or Campus Care (740.592.7100).

Other Policies

See the Course Policies & Syllabus page on the class Canvas for a more detailed list of statements, requirements, and guidelines:

<https://ohio.instructure.com/courses/64656>

syl-la-bus: *n* 1: a summary outline of a discourse, treatise, or course of study or of examination requirements 2: subject to change

Dr. Chang / ENG 2320 / Spring 2026 / Ohio University

Mon 1/12
First Day of Classes

January						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Mon 1/19
MLK, Jr. Day

Week 1: January 12-16: INTRODUCTION, CLOSE READING
Introduction to the Course, Outcomes, & Syllabus
Defining Appalachia, Speculative Literature, Speculative Appalachia
Manly Wade Wellman, "O Ugly Bird!" (1951)
Elizabeth Catte, "Introduction," *What You Are Getting Wrong about Appalachia* (2018)
Berry, "Appalachia: Who Cares, and So What?"
Henderson, "Representation," *Keywords*

Sign Up for Presentations

Week 1 or 2 CR required.

Week 2: January 19-23: GENDER
Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (2008)
Catte, "Part I," *What You Are Getting Wrong about Appalachia*
Teets, "The Ethics of a Dystopian Appalachia in the *Hunger Games* Books," <https://tinyurl.com/3x9v3r4u>
Britton, "Appalachia in Science Fiction"
Halberstam, "Gender," *Keywords*

Week 3: January 26-30: STEREOTYPE

Qui Nguyen, *She Kills Monsters* (2011, play)
 Joshua Young, *Appalachian Pachinko!* (2019, play)
 Bray, “Off-Off-Broadway’s Performance of Geek Culture”
 Morris & Shockley, “Theater in an Arts Desert: Partnerships for Enrichment”
 Catte, “Part II,” *What You Are Getting Wrong about Appalachia*
 Adams, Reiss, Serlin, “Disability,” *Keywords*

Week 4: February 2-6: RACE

Frank X. Walker, *Affrilachia* (2000, poetry)
 bell hooks, *Appalachian Elegy* (2012, poetry)
 Cochran, “I Pledge Allegiance to Affrilachia”
 Walker et al., “Coal Black Voices: A Discussion”
 Luu, “The Legendary Language of the Appalachian ‘Holler,’”
<https://daily.jstor.org/the-legendary-language-of-the-appalachian-holler/>

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Week 5: February 9-13: RACE

Crystal Wilkinson, *The Birds of Opulence* (2016)
 Harrison, “Writing Black Life in Mountains: Race and Representation in an Emerging American Literary Field”
 Ferguson, “Race,” *Keywords*

Week 5 or 6 CR recommended.

Week 6: February 16-20: RACE

Crystal Wilkinson, *The Birds of Opulence* (cont.)
 Robertson, “Gothic Appalachia”

Week 7: February 23-27: ENVIRONMENT

Alison Stine, *Trashlands* (2021)
 Deininger, “Young Adult Fiction and Ecofeminism”
 Alston, “Environment,” *Keywords*

Week 8: March 2-6: ENVIRONMENT

Alison Stine, *Trashlands* (cont.)

March						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

3/9-3/13
 Spring Break

Week 9: March 9-13: VIDEO GAME

Night in the Woods (2017, game)
 McCloud, “Virtual Appalachia: Video Game Representations of the Region”

Week 10 or 11 CR recommended.

Week 10: March 16-20: WEIRD

Christopher Rowe, *These Prisoning Hills* (2022)
 Britton, “Appalachia in Science Fiction”

Week 11: March 23-27: INDIGENOUS

Moniquill Blackgoose, *To Shape a Dragon’s Breath* (2023)
 Justice, “Preface” & “Introduction,” *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*
 Warrior, “Indian,” *Keywords*
 Somerville, “Queer,” *Keywords*

Fri 3/27
 Last Day to Drop

Week 12: March 30-April 3: INDIGENOUS

Moniquill Blackgoose, To Shape a Dragon's Breath" (cont.)

Green and Locklear, "Writing Appalachia: Intersections, Missed Connections, and Future Work"

Enke, "Cis," *Keywords*Lau, "Trans," *Keywords*

April						
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
21	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Week 13: April 6-10: YADon Martin, *Verity Vox and the Curse of Foxfire* (2025)

Waitt, "A Good Story Takes Awhile": Appalachian Literature in the High School Classroom"

Week 14: April 13-17: YADon Martin, *Verity Vox and the Curse of Foxfire* (cont.)**Week 15: April 20-24: GRAPHIC NOVEL**Denali Sai Nalamalapu, *Holler: A Graphic Memoir of Rural Resistance* (2025)Catte, "Part III," *What You Are Getting Wrong about Appalachia*Oksman, "Graphic Novel," *Keywords***Week 16: April 27-May 1: FINALS WEEK**

Final Project Due

May						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30