Afrofuturism, Cyborg Feminism and Afro-German Literature

GERM 655
FALL 2016

MW 3:10-4:25 pm
Dr Priscilla Layne

Discussions in English.
Readings in English & German (translations will be provided)

Though Afro-German literature reaches as far back as the early twentieth century, it has only became a concrete field of study in the past 30 years. The first recognized Afro-German authors primarily produced autobiographies and literature addressing the quotidian experience of being black in German society. However, in the past twenty years, Afro-German authors, poets and playwrights have increasingly looked to Afrofuturism as an inspiration for rethinking what it means to be black and German. The turn towards Afrofuturism in Afro-German literature is especially revolutionary, considering its potential for countering Afro-pessimist discourses circulated in Europe and abroad.

This course seeks to explore what is at stake in Afro-German artists’ turn to futurity. In order to investigate this topic, we will begin by asking what is Afrofuturism? What differentiates it from an earlier movement like Futurism? What motivates African diasporic artists to engage with the modes of science fiction and speculative fiction? And what can futurist discourses in feminist theory and queer theory contribute to these questions? In this course we will trace discourses around Afrofuturism in literature, film and music by engaging with texts from across the African Diaspora. We will also read a range of theorists including Arjun Appadurai, José Estaban Munoz, Shulamith Firestone, Donna Haraway and Leslie Adelson.