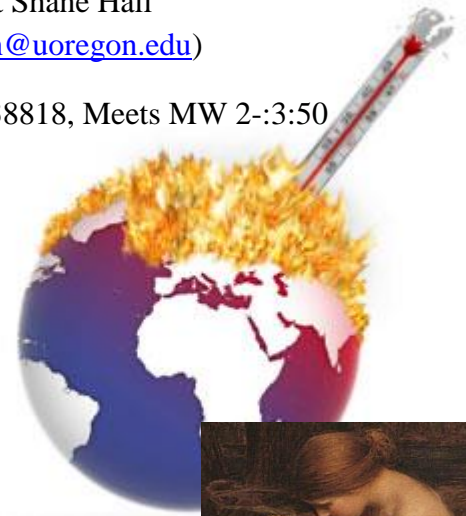




Contact Shane Hall
(shaneh@uoregon.edu)

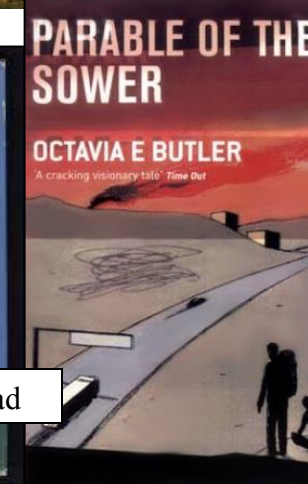
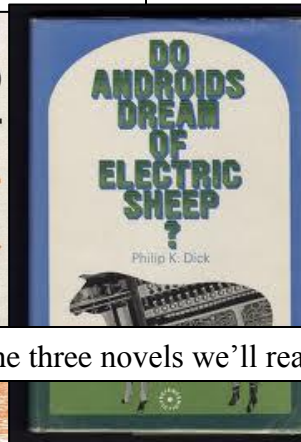
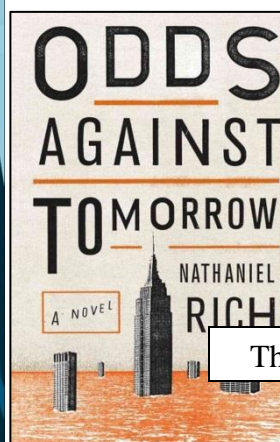
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ENVS 411: Imagining the Environment of Tomorrow

What does the future have in store for Earth—for us? Have we reached the end of nature? Do we only have to keep Earth functional long enough to make a light-speed leap into the cosmos and boldly go to a galaxy far, far away, or are we on the verge of a great bottleneck disaster, leading to a grim post-apocalyptic pastoral occupied by the occasional mutant toiling in the radioactive dust?

Our “environmental imaginations” are determined in part by our vision of what the future holds. Environmentalist movements have often been mobilized against *time*. We’ll explore the ways in which we imagine the past, present, and future by critically and creatively reading a variety of historical and contemporary cultural ‘texts’ such as literary fiction, essays, films, news coverage, advertisements, and public policy. By using these texts as a cipher for environmentalist aspirations and anxieties in American culture from the 19th century to the present, we’ll explore the opportunities and limits imposed by different rhetorics of crisis, calamity, utopia, and dystopia that construct environmental problems and our sense of future worlds. These topics demand that we creatively interrogate how we ourselves “predict the future” in an increasingly unpredictable world of climate change, new technologies (plus biotechnologies), expanding markets, and growing human population.



The three novels we'll read