



2024-2025  
ENGLISH HONORS SENIOR SEMINAR

# SPECULATION:

## Fabulation, Fabrication, & The Literary Imagination

Professor Duncan Faherty  
Mondays 1:40-5:30 pm  
Or  
Tuesdays 5:00-8:50

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Speculation, the activity of guessing possible answers to a question without having enough information to be certain, is an action born out of a lack that refuses to accept its condition and theorizes despite insufficient evidence.

- Carlota Ortiz Monasterio

Speculation is a multivalent term that signals all manner of conjecture, whether poetic, philosophical, technocratic, or economic. Literary speculation involves imagination and fabulation, creating alternative realities and fantastic worlds that involve an uneven, unpredictable mixture of the true and the unverifiable.

As we read a diverse collection of speculative texts -- including poems, plays, novels, and graphic narratives -- we will consider how a range of authors (from a variety of periods, places, and traditions) employed speculation to express what cannot be definitively known. In so doing, we will examine how they understood speculation as a mode of inquiry with epistemological, socio-political, and temporal dimensions.

Across the semester we will explore speculation as a way of thinking which may insist upon or disavow uncertainty, unknowability, openness, and risk. And we will contemplate how speculation might refer to a narrative practice, an aesthetic disposition, or a particular character's orientation; and how it can point in utopian and dystopian directions, grounded simultaneously in hopeful idealism, pessimistic realism, and calculative cynicism.



"East New York Gateway" - Olalekan Jeyifous

### AUTHORS MIGHT INCLUDE:

Kyle Baker, William Blake, Octavia Butler, Jennifer Chang, Geoffrey Chaucer, Suzanne Collins, Saidiya Hartman, Silvia Moreno-Garcia, Avery Gordon, Marlon James, Jocelyn Nicole Johnson, John Keene, Karl Marx, John Milton, Thomas Moore, Carlos Santos Perez, Christine de Pizan, Edgar Allan Poe, William Shakespeare, Mary Shelley, Héctor Tobar, Eve Tuck, W.B. Yeats, and Charles Yu.

If you have any questions about this seminar or want more information about the English Honors Program, please email Prof. Steven Kruger at: [steven.kruger@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:steven.kruger@qc.cuny.edu).

The Honors Program involves a two-semester sequence of seminars taught by Prof. Faherty in Fall 2024/Spring 2025. For more information, visit the Honors Program webpage: <https://qcenglish.commons.qc.cuny.edu/undergraduate/honors-program/>.