



# Activist Imagination and the Politics of Hope

CHID 480 B

Instructor: Tamara Myers | Spring 2016 | M/W 1:30-3:20

Over the past decade, scholars and activists have been giving increasing attention to the power of imagination as an essential element in the pursuit of social justice. A generation ago, Robin Kelley's book *Freedom Dreams* documented expressions of radical imagination among African Americans across a range of movements aimed at revolutionary social change, from Surrealism and feminism to socialist and Third World liberation struggles, among others, in order to advocate not only that we better understand the ways past movements looked, but that "we tap our own collective imaginations" and "do what earlier generations have done: dream." More recently, the new anthology *Octavia's Brood* has picked up this challenge by gathering short stories that theorize about the complexities of injustice and point the way toward more just worlds – and strategies for pursuing them – using the genre of "visionary fiction." Inspired by both texts, this course will probe theories and practices of justice-focused radical imagination by drawing on theoretical works, case studies, and short stories to examine the possibilities and limits of imagination in the pursuit of change. In a spirit of collective experimentation, participants will also play with methods for tapping their own visions of change and inviting others to do so.