



ENGLISH 204H-W01
GREAT BOOKS
UTOPIAS & DYSTOPIAS
WINTER 2009

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Meeting Place & Time

190 Dwyer | TTh 1:30-3:10

Course Description

This honors section of ENG 204 will provide a framework for the study of utopian and dystopian literature in formal, stylistic and thematic manifestations. It will also introduce students to the critical and theoretical issues raised by this literature (e.g. the limits of the genre, its engagement with desire and the body, its exploration of gender and sexuality, and its speculations on capitalist technologies). The objective of the course is not only to present a broad, representative selection of literary texts, but also to produce an intellectual versatility in students by encouraging them to approach texts from a range of different theoretical viewpoints.

Texts

Books:

Thomas More, *Utopia* (1516)
Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (1888)
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (1915)
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932)
George Orwell, *1984* (1949)

Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)
Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985)

Television & Video:

Annabel Jankel and Rocky Morten. *Max Headroom* (1985, 1987)
Peter Chung, *Aeon Flux* (1991-1995)
R.E.M., "Imitation of Life" (2001)
Matt Groening, *Futurama* (1999-2003)

Films:

Fritz Lang, *Metropolis* (1927)
William Cameron Menzies, *Things to Come* (1936)
Stanley Kubrick, *A Clockwork Orange* (1971)
George Lucas, *THX 1138* (1971)
Richard Fleischer, *Soylent Green* (1973)
Ridley Scott, *Blade Runner* (1982)
Terry Gilliam, *Brazil* (1985)
Rachael Talalay, *Tank Girl* (1995)
Alex Proyas, *Dark City* (1998)
The Wachowski Brothers, *The Matrix* (1999)
Kurt Wimmer, *Equilibrium* (2002)
M. Night Shyamalan, *The Village* (2005)
Brandon Duncan, *The Cocktail Party* (2007)

(NOTE: Most of the visual media listed here will not be shown in class. Viewing them is optional, although ideally they will function as a frame of reference for student research, especially in the conception of final essays. Students are only responsible for purchasing books.)

Grading Scale

Course grades will be based on the following percentages:

Attendance & Participation	10%
Assignments & Quizzes	15%
Minithemes	50%
Final Essay	25%

Attendance

Attendance is an essential part of this course. It is expected that you will come to each class period prepared for the day's activities; when you do not show up, or when you show up unprepared, the quality of the class's labor suffers. As we only meet twice a week, it is important that you attend class, barring any unforeseen illnesses, family emergencies, religious observances, etc. More than TWO unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade. Should you miss a class, you are responsible for all assignments given during that class period.

Participation

This includes in-class speaking, activities, and responsive listening. Participation is crucial. Simply showing up for class does not constitute participation. You are expected to present your informed ideas and show respect for others in the classroom. Participation is mental attendance. You will be graded on how much you contribute to the learning environment of each class session.

Assignments & Quizzes

Throughout the semester, you will be given a number of assignments to be completed both in and out of the classroom. In-class assignments will generally not be given ahead of time; they will be issued during class and are to be completed during that class session. If you have an unexcused absence from class, you will not be able to make up those assignments. Quizzes will be given periodically to ensure that the reading schedule is being followed. They will usually be administered at the beginning of class. If you have an unexcused absence or are tardy on a day that a quiz is administered, you will not be able to make it up.

Minithemes

A minitheme is a one page, single-spaced work in which you are required to engage with the reading material for the class. The purpose of writing a minitheme is to develop your skills as a critical thinker and reader. In order to write a successful minitheme, you should keep a reading journal. As you read the course texts, look for recurring symbols, images and ideas and write them down in your journal along with anything else that seems interesting, disturbing, or provocative. Then amass the information you have collected. Take one of the themes you have focused on in your reading journal and flesh it out with details, citations, and page numbers. Minithemes should exhibit four primary criteria: 1) evidence of attentiveness to the text under consideration; 2) strong textual support for your argument; 3) an explanation of the significance of the theme you have chosen to focus on; 4) questions or concerns for further investigation.

Minithemes serve as models for the sort of process that should be undergone when you write longer essays. In short, you must first read a given text, taking notes and underlining important phrases and passages. Then gather and sort out your notes, making sure your focus is clear and sufficiently narrow. Finally, develop a meaningful and interesting reading of the text.

A total of SEVEN minithemes will be due at the beginning of our discussion sessions for each major written text. Your first minitheme, for instance, will be on Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and is due on the first day we discuss that novel.

Final Essay

This 5-6 page essay should be based on the ideas developed in your minithemes and our class discussions and assignments. Students are responsible for developing their own topics and choosing two texts on which to write a comparative and contrastive analysis. Final essays must be distinguished by the following:

12 TIMES NEW ROMAN FONT
DOUBLE-SPACED TEXT
1 INCH MARGINS (TOP, SIDES, BOTTOM)
IMAGINATIVE, DISCERNING TITLE
IMAGINATIVE, ARGUMENTATIVE THESIS
MINIMUM 8 CITATIONS FROM PRIMARY TEXTS
MINIMUM 5 CITATIONS FROM SECONDARY SOURCES
BIBLIOGRAPHY
MLA STYLE

Writer's Hotline

This service is available for quick or one-time questions that can be answered over the phone and usually involve grammar or writing mechanics. The phone number is 937.775.2158. The hotline is open daily until 4 p.m.

Class Calendar

Week	Schedule
1	Introduction to the Course R.E.M, "Imitation of Life" (Music Video) <i>Aeon Flux</i> (TV Show)
2	Ray Bradbury, <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> Due: Minitheme #1
3	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i> (Film) Edward Bellamy, <i>Looking Backward</i> Due: Minitheme #2
4	Margaret Atwood, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> Due: Minitheme #3
5	Charlotte Perkins Gilman, <i>Herland</i> Due: Minitheme #4
6	<i>The Village</i> (Film)
7	Thomas More, <i>Utopia</i> Due: Minitheme #5

- 8 Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*
Due: Minitheme #6
- 9 George Orwell, *1984*
Due: Minitheme #7
- 10 *A Clockwork Orange* (Film)
The Cocktail Party (Short Film)
- E **Due:** Final Essay

(NOTE: This schedule is subject to minor changes.)