

REL 4092/6095---ETHICS, UTOPIAS, AND DYSTOPIAS

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Office Hours: T 10:45-11:45; R 10:45-12:45 and by appointment
Periods T 5-6; R 6

Course Description

This course explores the relationship between religion, nature, and utopias (imagined ideal societies). We will read a number of fictional utopias and dystopias, including both classic and contemporary works. Science fiction works such as Marge Piercy's *He, She, and It* and Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* lead to questions about what it means to be human in the context of genetic engineering and cyborgs.

We will also look at efforts to put utopian ideas into practice, including religious communities, 60's communes, and contemporary ecovillages. In addition to looking at specific utopian visions, we will explore some theoretical discussions and critiques of the idea of utopia.

Writing and Participation Requirements

1. Active participation in class discussions, based on timely and close reading of all assigned readings; Unannounced quizzes on readings may be included (15% of final grade).
2. Two individual short essays (4-5 double-spaced pages, 1000 words each). Each essay will be worth 15% (or 15 points) of your final grade (30% total). The first draft should both be submitted to E-learning **AND** brought to class for feedback and discussion. First draft – 3 points; final version – 12 points.* (30% total)

For Essay #1, you will analyze a fictional utopia described in a film or book (not read in class), and compared to the fictional utopias discussed in class; Essay #2 will analyze “real life” utopias and dystopias and compared to utopias discussed in class;

3. In-class exam on February 26. (25% of final grade).
5. Final paper, due April 16, proposing or describing a utopia or dystopia (10-12 pages), to be presented in-class April 16-23. (Written work = 25 points; presentation = 5 points). Details of presentation format will be handed out later in the semester. (30% of final grade).

University Writing Requirement (formerly known as the Gordon Rule) –

This course counts for University Writing Rule 2 credit (2000 words).

The University Writing Requirement ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades now have two components. To receive writing credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, usage of standard written English, clarity, coherence, and organization. Students will receive a grade and corrections on their work. Students will be graded according to the following rubric:

Assessment:

1.) What type of feedback will be provided to the student (in reference to writing skill)?

Grade Corrections Drafts Other

2.) Will a published rubric be used? Yes (see below)

Grading Policies and Scale

Full information about UF's grading policy, including credit for major, minor, General Education, and other requirements, is available at this website:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

The grade scale for this course is as follows:

A	93-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
E	Below 60

Please note that a C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, General Education, Gordon Rule, or College Basic distribution credit. To achieve such credit you must achieve a C or better in this class. <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

Policies, Rules, and Resources

1. *Handing in Assignments*: Place all papers in my mailbox in the Religion Department, 107 Anderson Hall. DO NOT slip them under the door or leave them on the door of my office, the main department office, or the teaching assistant's office. Please also keep a dated electronic copy of all your papers.

2. *Late or Make-Up Assignments:* You may take an exam early or receive an extension on an exam or essay assignment *only* in extraordinary circumstances and, barring emergency situations, prior approval from the instructor. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down 1/3 grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.
3. *Completion of All Assignments:* You must complete all written and oral assignments and fulfill the requirement for class participation in order to pass the course. I will not average a grade that is missing for any assignment. You are responsible for knowing the course requirements and making sure you hand them in. I will not remind you of missing assignments.
4. *Attendance and Participation:* Class attendance is required, except for excused absences, e.g. religious holidays, participation in curricular activities, and university-sponsored sporting events. Do not register for this class if you cannot arrive on time. Students should arrive on time and prepared to discuss the day's readings. Tardiness harms your understanding of the material and disrupts the class. After the first late arrival, the instructor reserves the right to mark you absent, without an excused absence. The instructor will *not* provide notes or discuss material that has already been covered for students who arrive late, barring extraordinary circumstances (which do not include failing to find a parking place or sleeping in).
5. *Common Courtesies:* Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. Students who receive or make calls or text messages during class will be asked to leave and counted absent for the day. Students may take notes on a laptop computer only with prior approval from the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to ask you to turn off the computer if circumstances warrant. The instructor also reserves the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class. If that occurs, the student will be marked absent for the day.
6. *Honor Code:* On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. For more information about the definition of these terms and other aspects of the Honesty Guidelines, see <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>. Any student(s) demonstrated to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in *any assignment* for this course will fail the course. In addition, violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and the sanctions listed in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code.
7. *Accommodation for Disabilities:* Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

8. *Counseling Resources*: Resources available on-campus for students include the following:
- a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
 - b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
 - c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling;
 - d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.
9. *Software Use*: All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.
10. *Writing Assistance*: In addition to scheduling time with the instructor, students are highly encouraged to seek assistance from the University Reading and Writing Center (<http://www.at.ufl.edu/rwcenter/index.html>). For additional assistance, I recommend Joshua Sowin's "A Guide to Writing Well" (<http://www.fireandknowledge.org/archives/2007/01/08/a-guide-to-writing-well/>). The University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center is also a valuable resource, especially for basic citation information: (<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>).

REQUIRED READINGS

PLEASE NOTE: All readings will be available on reserve at Library West and/or on line.

Margaret Atwood, *Year of the Flood*
Callenbach, *Ecotopia*
Thomas More, *Utopia*
Marge Piercy, *He, She and It*
Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*
B. F. Skinner, *Walden Two*

Graduate Books: Richard Fox, *Gandhi's Utopia*
David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*
TBA

Required reading: Books
Topic/Assignment

January 8	Introduction to the course
January 10	Introduction to the course
January 15	Thomas More, <i>Utopia</i>
January 17	Thomas More, <i>Utopia</i>
January 22	Marge Piercy, <i>He, She and It</i>
January 24	Marge Piercy, <i>He, She and It</i>
January 29	Marge Piercy, <i>He, She and It</i>
January 31	Margaret Atwood, <i>Year of the Flood</i>
February 5	Margaret Atwood, <i>Year of the Flood</i>
February 7	Margaret Atwood, <i>Year of the Flood</i>
February 12	Selections from Pitzer, <i>America's Communal Utopias</i> Draft of First Essay due
February 14	Selections from Pitzer, <i>America's Communal Utopias</i>
February 19	Selections from Pitzer, <i>America's Communal Utopias</i> Final Version of First Essay due
February 21	Selections from Pitzer, <i>America's Communal Utopias</i>
February 26	Midterm Examination
February 28	Film: Commune
March 5	Spring Break
March 7	Spring Break
March 12	Callenbach, <i>Ecotopia</i>
March 14	Callenbach, <i>Ecotopia</i>

March 19	B. F. Skinner, <i>Walden Two</i>
March 21	B. F. Skinner, <i>Walden Two</i>
March 26	Ecovillages and Contemporary Environmental Utopias TBA
March 28	Timothy Miller, “Jesus Freaks and Contemporary Utopias”
April 2	Dystopia Smackdown: The Giver v. The Hunger Games Draft of Second Essay due
April 4	Dystopia Smackdown: The Giver v. The Hunger Games
April 9	<i>Sleep Dealers</i> Final Version of Second Essay due
April 11	TBA
April 16	Class presentations
April 18	Class presentations
April 23	Class presentations/Conclusions

Grading Rubric for Essays:

Qualities & Criteria	Unsatisfactory (C- or below)	Satisfactory (B-C range)	Satisfactory (A-B+ range)
Format/Layout <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the text • Structuring of text • Follows requirements of length, font and style <i>(Weight 15%)</i>	Follows poorly the requirements related to format and layout.	Follows, for the most part, all the requirements related to format and layout. Some requirements are not followed.	Closely follows all the requirements related to format and layout.
Content/Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All elements of the topics are addressed • Critical evaluation and synthesizing of sources • Information based on careful research • Coherence of information <i>(Weight 50%)</i>	The essay is not objective and addresses poorly the issues referred in the proposed topic. The provided information is not necessary or not sufficient to discuss these issues.	The essay is objective and for the most part addresses with an in depth analysis most of the issues referred in the proposed topic. The provided information is, for the most part, necessary and sufficient to discuss these issues.	The essay is objective and addresses with an in depth analysis all the issues referred in the proposed topic. The provided information is necessary and sufficient to discuss these issues. Critical thinking and synthesis of sources is fully evident
Quality of Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of sentences and paragraphs • No errors and spelling, grammar and use of English • Organization and coherence of ideas <i>(Weight 20%)</i>	The essay is not well written, and contains many spelling errors, and/or grammar errors and/or use of English errors. The essay is badly organized, lacks clarity and/or does not present ideas in a coherent way.	The essay is well written for the most part, without spelling, grammar or use of English errors. The essay is for the most part well organized, clear and presents ideas in a coherent way.	The essay is well written from start to finish, without spelling, grammar or use of English errors. The essay is well organized, clear and presents ideas in a coherent way.
References and use of references <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarly level of references • How effective the references are used in the essay • Soundness of references • APA style in reference list and for citations <i>(Weight 15%)</i>	Most of the references used are not important, and/or are not of good/scholarly quality. There is not a minimum of 4 scholarly resources, and/or they are not used effectively in the essay. References are not effectively used, and/or correctly cited and/or correctly listed in the reference list according to APA style.	Most of the references used are important, and are of good/scholarly quality. There is a minimum of 4 scholarly resources that are for the most part used effectively in the essay. Most of the references are effectively used, correctly cited and correctly listed in the reference list according to APA style.	All the references used are important, and are of good/scholarly quality. There is a minimum of 4 scholarly resources that are used effectively in the essay. All the references are effectively used, correctly cited and correctly listed in the reference list according to APA style.

Overriding criterion: Originality and authenticity. If the essay is identified as not being original, and/or not done by the student, the instructor has the right to grade the paper as an F.

*Rubric originally developed by Dr. Stella Porto of UMUC

