

Course Proposal

Dystopian Literature

Credit: 2

Course Instructor: Yi-Chuang E. Lin

Course Description:

Utopia by definition is an ideal place, state, or condition in respect of its politics, laws, customs, and other social aspects, whereas a dystopia is usually a place that begins with an attempt at such a perfect condition by means of bureaucratic or totalitarian control and often ends with quite a contrary outcome where human values are brought into question. Even Plato's *Republic* remains arguable that, with the banishment of the poet and the endeavour to attain an absolute rational society by applying a rigid censure upon emotional life, it could possibly be read as the first ever dystopian work. Dystopian Literature by providing us a futuristic, imagined society aims at a critical reflexion of the current trend, political system, and social norms. In this course, we will read four of the best known dystopian fiction: H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. By reading these texts, the course seeks to examine the origin of utopianism and its relation to Platonism and finally to answer whether Utopia is essentially an idealist fantasy while all strive for a perfect state would eventually lapse into a dystopian disillusionment.

Textbook:

The Time Machine by H. G. Wells

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell

Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro

Oryx and Crake by Margaret Atwood

Reference and additional reading:

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

Utopia by Thomas More

The utopian fantastic : selected essays from the twentieth International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts / edited by Martha Bartter.

Science, pseudo-science, and utopianism in early modern thought / edited by

Stephen A. McKnight.

Teaching Methods: Seminar Discussion, midterm and final paper (1500 words)

Course Schedule

Session one:	Introduction: constructing Utopias
Session two:	The Time Machine
Session three	The Time Machine
Session four	The Time Machine
Session five	Brave New World
Session six	Brave New World
Session seven	Brave New World
Session eight	Brave New World
Session nine	Midterm
Session ten	1984
Session eleven	1984
Session twelfth	1984
Session thirteen	1984
Session fourteen	Never let me go
Session fifteen	Never let me go
Session sixteen	Oryx and Crake
Session seventeen	Oryx and Crake
Session eighteen	Final