

## Dystopian Literature

Credit 3

### 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 EightyFour*, and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, etc. 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:

Plato, *The Republic*

H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine*

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*

Ayn Rand, *Anthem* and Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We*

Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*

Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*

Session one : Introduction Constructing Utopias

From Utopia to Dystopia

The Corrupt/ hard-wired Human Nature

Session two : Totalitarian, Communist, Oligarchy

Plato's *Republic*, and Aristotle's *Politics*

Session three: H. G. Wells and Social Darwinianism

*The Time Machine*

Session four: Science and Eugenic control

T.H. Huxley and Matthew Arnold (The Two Cultures debate)

*Brave New World*

Session five: The Words/World of Shakespeare

*Brave New World*

Session six: World State, Power/control and Bentham's Panopticon

*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Session seven: Love, Sex and the human Fundamental Fear

*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Session eight : Equality (quantitative or qualitative)/ individuality

Individual Rights/ common good

I Versus We

*Anthem and We*

**Session nine:** *Anthem and We*

**Midterm Deadline**

Session ten: The Burning of the Words and the Banishment of the Poet

*Fahrenheit 451*

Session eleven: Computable Pleasure and Happiness

*Fahrenheit 451*

Session twelve: Scientific Horizons and the *Faust* allegory

*Never Let Me Go*

Session thirteen: Art/Creativity Soul/Individuality

*Never Let Me Go*

Session fourteen: Movie *Never Let Me Go*, *The Handmaid's Tale*

Session fifteen: Genetic engineering and *The Gay Science*

*Oryx and Crake*

Session sixteen: Religion and Free Will (Schopenhauer/ Sartre/ the Stoics)

*Oryx and Crake*

Session seventeen: Rethinking of Utopia/Dystopia

**Session eighteen:** Human Nature and the inevitableness of a dystopian world

**Final Deadline**

Requirement:

Two term papers (min. 3000 words each max. 4000 words) 60%

Oral Report 20%

Participation and contribution 10%

Attendance 10%