

Course Name: Dystopian Literature

Instructor: Yi-Chuang E. Lin

Credit: 3

Course description: How to live a good, happy, and fulfilled life and what kind of political state could help to deliver such an idea has long been the quintessential topic of philosophy ever since Socrates and Plato. However, already shown in *The Republic*, human nature of self-preservation seems to be forever antipodal to the ideal where everyone could live happily with what they deserve. Therefore, in this course, we will examine the ironic nature of this utopian dream which seems almost inevitably will turn awry into a nightmare.

Textbooks:

H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine*

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*

Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*

Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake (The Year of the Flood, Maddaddam)*

Additional Reading:

Plato, *The Republic*

Aristotle, *Politics*

Thomas More, *Utopia*

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*

Kazuo Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun*

Evaluation: Two Term Papers (min. 3000 words each) 35% each

Participation, contribution, and attendance 30%

Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction: Constructing Utopias

From Utopia to Dystopia

Alternative World, Complete Otherness, Impossibility?

Week 2: H. G. Wells and Social Darwinism

Progress and Regress

Eloi and Morlocks

The Time Machine

Week 3: Science and Eugenic Control (The Republic)

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

Brave New World

Week 4: The Words/ World of Shakespeare

Brave New World (The Tempest)

Week 5: The Rise of the Socialist Left

Communist Manifesto

Nineteen Eighty-Four

Week 6: World State, Power/Control and Bentham's Panopticon

Nineteen Eighty-Four

Week 7: Love, Sex, and the Human Fundamental Fear

Nineteen Eighty-Four

Week 8: Midterm Paper Due

The Burning of the Words and the Banishment of the Poet

Fahrenheit 451

Week 9: Computable Pleasure and Happiness (Utilitarianism)

Fahrenheit 451

Week 10: Scientific Horizons and the *Faust* Allegory

Never Let Me Go and *Klara and the Sun*

Week 11: Art/Creativity Soul/Individuality

Never Let Me Go and *Klara and the Sun*

Week 12: Equality and Individuality

Individual Rights/ Common Good

I versus We

Week 13: Genetic Engineering and The Gay Science

Oryx and Crake

Week 14: The End of Art and Science as the New Religion

Oryx and Crake

Week 15: Rethinking Utopia/Dystopia

Capitalist Democracy

“The worst kind of government”?

The Year of the Flood, Maddaddam

Week 16: Fredric Jameson versus Terry Eagleton

Archaeologies of the Future

Week 17: Final Paper Due