



ETHICS, UTOPIAS, AND DYSTOPIAS
REL 4092 (sect 0622)/RLG 6095 (sect 069C)
Fall 2016, MWF 6th period (12:50-1:40), Matherly 7

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Office Hours: Mon., Wed., and Friday, 11:45-12:45

Description

This course examines the ways that utopian, dystopian, and anti-utopian ideas interact with ethics, understood as systematic thinking about the good for individuals and societies. We will focus in particular on the ways that dystopias and utopias – fictional, theoretical, and also historical – serve as political and ethical critiques of present conditions and present positive visions of a good society. Readings will include fictional utopias, historical utopian communities, and theoretical analyses of the idea of utopia.

REQUIRED READINGS

Books

1. Lyman T. Sargent, *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2010); ISBN 0199573409
2. Thomas More, *Utopia* (various publishers, also Kindle edition)
3. Chris Jennings, *Paradise Now: The Story of American Utopianism* (Random House, 2016)
4. Kate Brown, *Dispatches from Dystopia: Histories of Places Not Yet Forgotten* (Chicago, 2015)
5. Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*
6. Ursula LeGuin, *The Dispossessed* (Harper Collins, 1974)

Articles and chapters (available on Canvas and/or other online sites)

John Winthrop, "City on a Hill" Sermon

Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," *The National Interest* 16 (Summer 1989): 3-18.

Pablo Neruda, *Toward the Splendid City: Nobel Lecture*

(http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1971/neruda-lecture.html)

"Sermon on the Mount" – Matthew 5-7

John Howard Yoder, *The Priestly Kingdom* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), Chapter 4, "The Kingdom as Social Ethic" (80-101).

Lahouari Addi, "Islamicist Utopia and Democracy," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 524 (Nov. 1992): 120-130

Paul Tillich, "The Political Meaning of Utopia," from *Political Expectation*.

Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream" and "Mountaintop" sermons

(<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkhaveadream.htm>)

Additional books for graduate students only:

1. Alberto Flores Galindo, *In Search of an Inca: Identity and Utopia in the Andes* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). 0521598613
2. Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Belknap Press, 2012)

REQUIREMENTS

1. Active participation in class discussions, based on timely and close reading of all assigned readings. 10% of grade.
2. In-class essay, on September 12. 20% of grade.
3. In-class essay, on October 12. 20% of grade.
4. In-class essay, on November 14. 20% of grade.
4. Final project: Essay on a utopian or dystopian novel and/or film. You will choose a book and/or film in consultation with the instructor.
 - A. Title must be approved by Nov. 10.
 - B. Rough Draft due Nov. 28, for in-class peer review on Nov. 30. Bring two copies of your essay to class on Nov. 28. The rough draft will not be graded, but your final grade will be reduced if you do not have it done on Nov. 28.
 - C. Peer Review on Nov. 30. You must give careful written comments on your partner's rough draft. 10% of grade.
 - D. Final essay due Dec. 9. 20% of grade.

SCHEDULE

Schedule changes are possible, and will be announced in class and via email. It is your responsibility to be aware of any changes.

M 8/22 Introduction to the class

PART I. UTOPIAS IN FICTION AND THEORY

W 8/24 More, *Utopia*, Introduction and all material up to Book I

F 8/26 More, *Utopia*, Book I

M 8/29 More, *Utopia*, Book II

W 8/31 Sargent, *Utopianism*, Introduction and Ch. 1

F 9/2 Sargent, *Utopianism*, Ch. 2-3

M 9/5 LABOR DAY – no class

W 9/7 Sargent, *Utopianism*, Ch. 4-5

F 9/9 Sargent, *Utopianism*, Ch. 6-7 and Conclusion

M 9/12 * In-class essay

PART II. UTOPIANISM AND UTOPIAN COMMUNITIES IN THE AMERICAS

W 9/14 John Winthrop, “City on a Hill” Sermon

F 9/16 Jennings, *Paradise Now*, Introduction

M 9/19 Jennings, *Paradise Now*, Shakers

W 9/21 Jennings, *Paradise Now*, New Harmony

F 9/23 Jennings, *Paradise Now*, New Harmony

M 9/26 Jennings, *Paradise Now*, Fourierist Phalanxes

W 9/28 Jennings, *Paradise Now*, Fourierist Phalanxes

F 9/30 Jennings, *Paradise Now*, Icaria

M 10/3 Jennings, *Paradise Now*, Oneida

W 10/5 Jennings, *Paradise Now*, Oneida

F 10/7 Jennings, *Paradise Now*, Conclusion

M 10/10 Grad student only meeting to discuss Flores Galindo

W 10/12 * In-class essay

F 10/14 HOMECOMING – no class

PART III. UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA AS CRITIQUE AND VISION

M 10/17 Brown, *Dispatches from Dystopia*, Ch. 1

W 10/19 Brown, *Dispatches from Dystopia*, Ch. 2-3

F 10/21 Brown, *Dispatches from Dystopia*, Ch. 4-5

M 10/24 Brown, *Dispatches from Dystopia*, Ch. 6-7

W 10/26 Fukuyama, “The End of History”

F 10/28 Neruda, "Toward the Splendid City"

IV. UTOPIA AND RELIGIOUS ETHICS

M 10/31 Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7)

W 11/2 Yoder, "The Kingdom as Social Ethic"

F 11/4 King "I have a Dream" and "Mountaintop" speeches

M 11/7 Addi, "Islamicist Utopia and Democracy"

W 11/9 Tillich, "The Political Meaning of Utopia"

Th. 11/10 * Grad student only class to discuss Moyn, *The Last Utopia*
* Title for final essay must be approved by TODAY

F 11/11 VETERANS' DAY – no class

V. FICTIONAL UTOPIAS AND DYSTOPIAS

M 11/14 Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*

W 11/16 Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*

F 11/18 Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*

M 11/21 Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (or a short story)

11/23-11/25 Thanksgiving Holiday – no class

M 11/28 * Rough drafts due in class: Bring TWO copies of your rough draft

W 11/30 * Peer review in class

F 12/2 LeGuin, *The Dispossessed*

M 12/5 LeGuin, *The Dispossessed*

W 12/7 LeGuin, *The Dispossessed*

F 12/9 ** Final papers due by 4:00 pm in my box in 107 Anderson

POLICIES, RULES, AND RESOURCES

1. *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.” UF 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.

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* with prior approval from the instructor. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down ½ grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.

3. *Attendance and Participation*: Class attendance is required. Poor attendance will harm your course grade. Students should arrive on time and prepared to discuss the day’s readings.

4. *Common Courtesy*: Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. Students who receive or make calls during class will be asked to leave. You may take notes on a laptop computer, although 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.

5. *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.

6. *Counseling Resources*: Resources available on-campus for students include the following:
a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575
b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171
c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161
d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601

7. *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.