

English 697
Dystopian Futures
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Fall, 2012

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Office Hours:
 T10-11 & 3-5; R 9-11
 and by appointment

Course Description:

Through a variety of primary texts (including narratives that push boundaries regarding dystopia), secondary texts, class discussion, and personal contemplation, we will try to garner a better understanding of dystopian fiction beginning with Lyman Tower Sargent's conceptualization of dystopia. "The traditional dystopia," writes Sargent, a name frequently associated with scholarship surrounding both dystopian and utopian fiction, "was an extrapolation for the present that involved a warning. . . . The dystopia, in the tradition of the jeremiad [a handy word to know when discussing dystopias] says if you behave thus and so, this is how you will be punished" (8). For Sargent, a dystopia is best characterized as "a non-existent society. . . normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived" (9).

As you can see, our mission appears to be relatively straightforward. But of course, it won't be.

Sargent, Lyman Tower. "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited." *Utopian Studies* 5.1 (1994): 1-37. Print.

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students:

1. Will be able to identify some of the main scholars associated with dystopian fiction
2. Produce a final text that demonstrates a solid understanding of some facet of dystopian (or utopian or other topian) literature.

Required Texts: Please note that you are welcome to access texts electronically through Kindle, Nook and other similar devices. Audio versions are also acceptable. All texts, however, must be unabridged.

Author	Title	ISBN
Bradbury	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	9781451673319
Gilman	<i>Herland</i>	9780486404295
More	<i>Utopia</i> (also available for free on Google Books)	9780486295831
Piercy	<i>Woman on the Edge of Time</i>	9780449210826
Roth	<i>Plot Against America</i>	9781400079490
Butler	<i>Parable of the Sower</i>	9780446675505
James	<i>Children of Men</i>	9780307275431
Currie	<i>God is Dead</i>	9780143113485
Sargent	<i>Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction</i>	9780199573400

Assignments:

Annotated Bib Entries (120 pts total)

Four times during the semester (see Reading/Assignment Schedule), you will be identifying 2 (two) *scholarly* articles or book chapters that are in some way associated with dystopia and this class. Read the texts carefully and for each:

- Provide the bibliographic information
 - Use MLA format
- Write an annotation (a summary) of each text consisting of 150 words (do not count the bib information)
 - Keep quotations to a minimum—no more than 25 words should be quoted.
 - Unless you have good reason to use older texts, they should be published on or after 2000.
- Post to the discussion board
 - Check the discussion board to make certain you are not duplicating any other entries (including past entries). You can post the title early as a place holder and then return to it before class and post the actual entry.
- Upload to eCollege dropbox. Make sure you are uploading a Word document, and not copying/pasting it into the comment area of the dropbox.
- Be prepared to discuss your articles in class, for that will be part of your grade

30 pts total for each assignment:

10 pts for each entry (20 pts) (80 for the entire class)

10 pts for discussion of entry (40 for the entire class). If you're not here, you'll miss out on those points.

Final Project: 100 pts.

Please note that you should use MLA format on all assignments

You have three options:

Option 1:

➤ An article-length essay:

- identifying and discussing a topic that would be considered appropriate for a scholarly journal similar to *Extrapolation*, *Science Fiction Studies*, or other journals that have published articles about dystopian or similar literature
- 5,500-7,000 words, not including endnotes or works cited
- Argument should be clearly stated and supported.
- Keep quotations to a minimum—no more than 2 40-word quotations.

Option 2:

➤ **Bib Essay with Annotated Entries**

- Essay=3,500-4,000 words
- That means your focus/theme will need to be very tight and you'll need to be very particular regarding the texts you choose to write about.
- Keep quotations to a minimum—no quotations exceeding 3 lines of your typewritten text

➤ Annotate 10 *scholarly* articles or book chapters

- Provide the bibliographic information
- Not less than 75 words (do not count the bib information)
- At least 5 of the entries need to be new (that is, not identified in the 4 AB assignments).
- If using a previous AB entry, it needs to be entirely rewritten.

Option 3

➤ **Proposal, Conference Paper, Annotated Entries**

- Proposal will be 500 words and will provide context and then an argument
- Include in the proposal 7 scholarly sources (not annotated)

➤ Conference paper will be 3,000-3,500 words. You can probably use your proposal as the introduction to your paper.

➤ 10 Annotated Entries

- Provide the bibliographic information
- Not less than 75 words (do not count the bib information)
- At least 5 of the entries need to be new (that is, not identified in the 4 AB assignments).
- If using a previous AB entry, it needs to be entirely rewritten.

Instructional Methods/Activities/Assessments

Discussion, lecture, researched writing

Assignments, Evaluation, and Grading:

Annotated Bib Entries	120 pts.
Final Project	100 pts.

90-100% (198-220 pts)	A
80-89% (176-197 pts)	B
70-79% (154-175 pts)	C
60-69% (132-153 pts)	D
59% and below (0-131 pts)	F

Course Policies

Late Papers: I seldom accept late papers, and if I do, it is at my discretion. Additionally, if I do accept a late paper, expect no better than a C on it. A late paper cannot be revised.

Attendance: I know how very complicated life can be. Still, as graduate students, you have greater responsibilities than undergraduate students in terms of attendance and discussion in that you are demonstrating your professionalism through the classes you take and how you conduct yourself in those classes. If you miss classes, I will assume one of two things: you have other priorities or you're not taking the course seriously. You DON'T want me to think that, for I won't make you a priority and it will be difficult to take your work seriously. The classes I teach are my priority; I expect the same from you. If you miss more than two class periods, expect your grade to reflect as much. If you miss more than three class periods, I reserve the right to drop you.

Revision Policy: Revisions are at my discretion, but I generally encourage students to revise. Some circumstances that preclude revision:

1. The assignment has been turned in late
2. You have made an A or B on the assignment
3. I perceive that the mistakes are careless
4. The assignment does not meet the basic requirements (incomplete, doesn't meet word count, etc.) I have established
5. The paper is plagiarized or has been recycled or was not written by you. A recycled paper is one written for another class and handed in under the pretense that it was written for this class. Students are welcome to use material written for other classes, but they must first clear it with me, and I will explain what needs to be done in order for it to be acceptable.

Incomplete Grades: Only under the direst of circumstances will I grant an incomplete for the course, and then it depends on the Dean as to whether or not the incomplete will be permitted. You will have to supply documentation in order to obtain an incomplete. This policy doesn't come from me. It comes from the dean.

Academic Honesty Policy: Texas A&M University-Commerce does not tolerate **plagiarism** and other forms of academic **dishonesty**. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. "Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), recycling papers written for other classes, cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material. See the following helpful resources regarding plagiarism:

1. your *MLA Handbook*
2. <http://www.plagiarism.org/>
3. <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/plagiarism.html>
<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

Ultimately, you are responsible for indicating when you have used specific words, sentences, or paragraphs, which belong to other writers. These words, sentences, or paragraphs should be designated via quotation marks and in-text citations. Additionally, identify when you use ideas from other sources. If you use the exact wording of something you've read or if you paraphrase it, provide a specific citation indicating where you found your information. If in question, cite it, and indicate that you've cited it by using quotation marks and in-text citations. Think of it in these terms: knowledge is a commodity, especially in the academic community. If you had a brilliant idea, or a wonderful way with words, would you like it if someone used your idea or words without acknowledging you? In short, I will fail papers that are copied or that do not acknowledge sources. If you have questions, ask me, and I will help you. If I discover a paper has been plagiarized, I will fail the paper, which will likely result in an F for the class. Further, according to the Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3], penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion.

Egregious plagiarism such as recycling a paper, turning in a paper that you did not write, or similar actions will result in one or more of the following: a 0 for the assignment, an F for the class, disciplinary action administered by the university.

Technology Requirements, Access, & Navigation:

The following information has been provided to assist you in preparing to use technology successfully in this course. You will need access to the following technologies:

1. Access to eCollege. All written assignments will be uploaded to the eCollege dropboxes.
2. Internet access/connection – high speed recommended
3. Word Processor: MS Word [doc or docx]. If you do not have MS word, you can save your texts as rtf (rich text format) or txt (plain text). Be aware that saving documents in rtf or txt will possibly cause problems with formatting, and formatting is important in this class. If saving your document in txt or rtf, contact me, and I will help you identify a solution.

Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you use a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (8.0).

Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.

I strongly recommend that you perform a “Browser Test” prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login in to eCollege, click on the “myCourses” tab, and then select the “Browser Test” link under Support Services.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamu-commerce.edu.]

Communication and Support and Primary Communication Tools

I rely mainly on e-mail, class time, and face-to-face appointments. I also encourage you to visit me in person (if you’re on campus) during office hours. I will generally respond within 2-3 hours of receiving emails (if not sooner) Monday through Thursday if I receive your e-mail by 3:00.

While I reply to individual e-mails with non-campus e-mail addresses, if I send out a mass e-mail, it will go to your campus e-mail address. Please check your campus e-mail daily.

eCollege Student Technical Support:

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of eCollege. The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Chat Support: Click on “Live Support” on the tool bar within your course to chat with an eCollege Representative.

Phone: 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with eCollege Technical Support Representative.

Email: helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with eCollege Technical Support Representative.

Help: Click on the “Help ” button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege (i.e. How to submit to dropbox, How to post to discussions etc...)

University Student Technical Support

The writing center located in the Hall of Languages is a great resource. They work with graduate students all of the time. Take advantage of their expertise.

University Procedures/Policies

Drop a Course: Students may drop a course by logging into their myLEO account and clicking on the hyperlink labeled “Drop a class” from among the choices found under the myLEO section of the Web page.

Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

e-mail: StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Website: Student Disability Resources & Services at <http://web.tamuc.edu/studentLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Reading/Assignment Schedule

Please note that the schedule is subject to revision

Week	Date	Activities/Assignments
1	8/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read by the first class: --“The Ones Who Walk away from Omelas” available at http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/faculty/dunnweb/rprnts.omelas.pdf --Sargent, Lyman Tower. “The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited.” <i>Utopian Studies</i> 5.1 (1994): 1-37. Available through JSTOR. I have also e-mailed it.
2	9/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sargent, <i>Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction</i> ● More, <i>Utopia</i>
3	9/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gilmore, <i>Herland</i> ● “Systems, Not Men,” available in doc sharing.
4	9/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read “Dark Times,” available in eCollege. Post 2 annotated bib entries to discussion board Upload entries to eCollege dropbox (AB1) Discuss in class
5	9/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read Dystopia Introduction, available in doc sharing ● Piercy, <i>Woman on the Edge of Time</i>
6	10/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post 2 annotated bib entries to discussion board Upload to eCollege dropbox (AB2) Discuss in class
7	10/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Subject and Power Foucault, available in doc sharing ● Butler, <i>Parable of the Sower</i>
8	10/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post 2 annotated bib entries to discussion board Upload to eCollege dropbox (AB3) Discuss in class
9	10/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What Almost Was, available in doc sharing ● Roth, <i>Plot against America</i>
10	10/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Death of God, available in doc sharing ● Currie, <i>God is Dead</i>
11	11/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post 2 annotated bib entries to discussion board Upload to eCollege dropbox (AB4) Discuss in class
12	11/13	● James, <i>The Children of Men</i>
13	11/20	<i>The Children of Men</i> (part 2)
14	11/27	● Bradbury, <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>
15	12/4	Film, TBA Final Project Due Friday, Dec. 7
	12/11	Finals Week