

History 4994W
Fall Semester 2013
MODERN UTOPIAS
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12.30pm – 1.45pm

Rowe 318

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Office hours: Wednesdays 2.15 – 4.15pm, or at other times by appointment

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The object of this course is to introduce students to the concepts of “utopia” and “utopianism” in modern Western cultures; to provide through common readings and discussion knowledge of and ideas about various efforts in the past to envisage or enact notions of the “ideal society”; and to offer students the opportunity to identify, explore, and write about an aspect of modern utopianism. Guidance about historical research and writing will be provided during the course.

This course has an on-line site in HuskyCT, accessible at <http://huskyct.uconn.edu> **which you should visit and check regularly**. The site will include:

- This syllabus
- Discussion threads for you to participate in, and space for you to share information, comments, and reflections with members of the class
- Announcements from me, including recommendations for further reading and links to certain source materials

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance at all class meetings is required. **If you should be unavoidably delayed or prevented from attending, you must e-mail or speak to me about it as soon as you can (in advance unless that’s impossible).**

Classes on September 3-5, 10-12, 17-19, 24-26, October 1-3, and October 8-10 will be devoted to discussion of common **readings** (see the schedule of class meetings on pp. 3-4). You must prepare by ensuring that you have done all the assigned reading and are ready to take part in discussion. To facilitate this, you will be expected to contribute comments beforehand to the course’s HuskyCT discussion board (see below). A major purpose of the readings is to help provide you with ideas and questions that you can use to frame your own written work for the course.

Other class meetings will focus on the preparation of your own short papers and **research** topics. You will be expected to be ready to speak in each of these meetings about the progress of your work and to share comments and suggestions with one another.

Credit will be awarded at the end of the semester for good class participation.

Each student must complete one **5-page paper** on a topic relating to class discussion during the first half of the course. These papers will be submitted on October 17; after they are returned with comments, they must be revised and resubmitted for final grading no later than December 3.

Early in the semester each of you will identify and obtain approval from me for a topic to be the subject of a **20-page research paper**. Guidance on research methods and on the preparation of the paper will be provided. You must submit a draft version of this paper no later than November 14. You will receive comments on the draft. You will also each give a 5-minute presentation of your topic in class on November 19 or 21, or December 3 or 5, and submit a final version of the paper for grading no later than the date and time (to be announced) that will be designated as the Final Examination period for this course. **Papers must be on the approved topic**; any change in paper topic must be discussed with me and approved in advance.

Preparing for classes

Seven books are required for the course, and can be obtained from the UConn Co-op:

- ❖ Thomas More, *Utopia* (1516; Penguin Classics Edition, 2012), translated by Dominic Baker-Smith ISBN: 978-0141442327 -- the book that brought you “utopia”
- ❖ Spencer Klaw, *Without Sin: The Life and Death of the Oneida Community* (Penguin Books, 1994) ISBN: 978-0140239300 – a classic study of an American communal society
- ❖ Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* (1888; Dover Thrift Editions, 1996) ISBN: 978-0486290386 – the most important American utopian novel
- ❖ Greg Grandin, *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City* (Picador, 2010) ISBN: 978-0312429621 – how many “utopias” can you spot?
- ❖ Roberta Price, *Huerfano: A Memoir of Life in the Counterculture* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2006) ISBN: 978-1558495739 – the best autobiographical account of the 1960s-1970s counterculture
- ❖ Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time* (Fawcett, 1985) ISBN: 978-0449210826 – a late-20th century classic
- ❖ Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 7th Edition (Bedford/St Martin's, 2012) ISBN: 978-0312610418 – to refer to for all sorts of matters that you'll encounter

Before the first of each pair of readings classes (marked * in the class schedule below) you must post to the HuskyCT site a comment, at least 250 words long, about the topic to be discussed. You are free to choose what form your comment takes – you may, for instance, list points you want to have discussed in class, suggest questions that occur to you from the reading, or comment on a particular author's interpretation of an issue – but you must contribute something *by no later than 8.00 am on the morning the class meets*. Timely participation in these discussion threads is a requirement, and will count towards the class participation element of the final course grade.

Grades

Final grades will be based on the revised 5-page paper (20%), the draft 20-page paper (10%), the revised 20-page paper (40%), and class participation (30%). Failure to submit any piece of required work will be penalized by a reduction in the final course grade.

Grade “**A**” is for work of very high quality, demonstrating an accurate and insightful understanding of the topic; that states and develops a coherent line of argument which is well supported by evidence and attentive to historical context; and that is well written and free of major spelling or grammatical errors;

“**B**” is awarded for good-quality work that demonstrates an accurate understanding of the topic, develops a clearly identifiable line of argument, adequately supported by evidence and grasp of historical context, and is organized into coherent paragraphs and complete sentences with few errors of spelling or grammar;

“**C**” is for mediocre work that fulfils the requirements of the assignment, but is superficial or simplistic, shows incomplete understanding of the topic or of the historical context, or is poorly written or poorly organized;

“**D**” is for poor-quality work that falls short of fulfilling the requirements of the assignment because it lacks understanding, fails to attempt to make an argument, or is badly written or organized;

“**F**” is for work that demonstrates ignorance of the topic, or that is in any way plagiarized.

A warning about plagiarism

Academic misconduct is a violation of the University of Connecticut’s Student Code and will not be tolerated. Misconduct includes plagiarism or having someone else do your academic work. Penalties range from an F for an individual piece of work to an F for the course according to the seriousness of an offense.

Plagiarism in written work consists of presenting someone else’s words as if they were your own. We check submitted papers to ensure that this has not happened. You must read Rampolla, chapter 6, which offers a good discussion of how to avoid plagiarism (something that can be committed unintentionally as well as deliberately). If you have any doubts or questions about how you should proceed, ask me.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

* = HuskyCT posting required by 8am that morning

August 27	Introduction to the course
August 29	Discussion of paper topics
September *3 & 5	The idea of “utopia” Read Thomas More, <i>Utopia</i> , in its entirety, and be prepared to discuss it
September *10 & 12	American “utopian communities” Read Klaw, <i>Without Sin</i> , in its entirety, and be prepared to discuss it Preliminary discussion of research paper topics
September *17 & 19	Edward Bellamy’s <i>Looking Backward</i> Read all of Bellamy, <i>Looking Backward</i>

Week of September 16-20	Individual meetings to discuss research topics Read Rampolla, <i>Pocket Guide</i> , chapters 1, 2, 5; and Jay Winter, "Minor Utopias and the Visionary Temperament," <i>Dreams of Peace and Freedom</i> (2006), 1-11 (on HuskyCT)
September *24 & 26	An industrialist's vision Read Grandin, <i>Fordlandia</i> , at least Introduction, chapters 2-4, 6, 9-12, 14-19, 21, 23, Epilogue – more if possible
October *1 & 3	Life in the counterculture Read all of Roberts, <i>Huerfano</i>
October *8 & 10	A vision of the future Read all of Marge Piercy, <i>Woman on the Edge of Time</i>
October 15	No meeting
October 17	<u>Deadline for submission of 5-page papers</u> Discussion of students' research topics Read Rampolla, <i>Pocket Guide</i> , chapter 4
October 22 & 24	Discussion of students' research topics Read Rampolla, <i>Pocket Guide</i> , chapters 4, 6, 7
October 29 & 31	No meeting: students work on research topics
Week of Oct 28-Nov 1	Individual meetings to discuss research topics
November 5 & 7	Discussion of students' research topics
November 12	No meeting
November 14	<u>Deadline for submission of draft 20-page papers</u>
November 19 & 21	Student presentations THANKSGIVING BREAK
December 3	<u>Deadline for submission of revised 5-page papers</u>
December 3 & 5	Student presentations
Week of December 9	<u>Deadline for submission of revised 20-page papers</u> Time and place to be announced, as specified in the Final Examination schedule