FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
THE HONORS COLLEGE

IDH 3005-3006 / 4007-4008 — Visions of Utopia

Instructor: Rubén Garrote; garroter@fiu.edu; 305.348.1620
Class hours: W @ 0930-1215; TBA
Office hours: T/R @ 0930-1030, or by appt.; DM-232

You may say I’m a dreamer,
But I’m not the only one.
John Lennon, “Imagine” (1971)

Course Overview and Objectives
In this course we will explore the phenomenon of “utopianism”, framing the discussion in historical and philosophical, as well as literary terms, by tracing the development of utopian literature from its ancient precursors to its flowering in modernity. Through the readings, viewings and discussions, we will address the shifts in utopian thinking as it was affected by the sociopolitical realities surrounding the utopian thinkers and the relationships between the utopian imagination and these realities—the perennial yearning for better days past transformed into the hopes of the perfect society to come; the self-conscious warnings of authors faced with the real results of a planned society; the dystopian fantasies looking ahead to the new frontiers of technology and the future of humanity.

Through the utopian imagination the men and women whose works we will read have given voice to theories of social organization and human nature that often fly in the face of contemporary social and religious norms. In many cases these theories, radical or reactionary in nature, have challenged the political and economic realities of the time. Through the readings, viewings and lectures we will examine the issues associated with these theories: sexual and economic communism, myth-creation and ritual control, and eugenics and cybernetics; and will ask relevant questions, such as: What is utopia? What are the aims of the utopian imagination? What are the common qualities of utopian writings and theories? What is the ideal place? What is the ideal society? What role do dissatisfaction and alienation play in the utopian imagination? How has utopianism fared in application? and, Is utopia achievable?

Students should expect to complete the course with a broad knowledge of the many designs man has produced for the possible future society, and the attempts to implement such designs—and perhaps also leave with a deeper sense of their place in the present as a prerequisite for an unclouded look to the future.
Required Reading:
Students will be responsible for reading the following works as assigned in the course calendar. Some readings will be provided by the instructor and are marked accordingly below. (A list of references—by no means exhaustive—is attached to this syllabus for further research.)


THOMAS MOORE, *Utopia*, in *Ideal Commonwealths* (Dedalus, ISBN 094662626x)

TOMMASON CAMPANELLA, *City of the Sun*, in *Ideal Commonwealths* (Dedalus, ISBN 0946626-26x)


JAMES HARRINGTON, *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, in *Ideal Commonwealths* (Dedalus), ISBN 094662626x


RAY BRADBURY, *Fahrenheit 451* (Del Rey, ISBN 0345342968)


*Provided by instructor:*

Hesiod, *Works and Days* (excerpts)

Plato, *The Laws* (excerpts)

—. *Atlanticus* (excerpts)

“The Hymn of the Pearl”

“The Greatest Human Evil”

Epiphanes, *On Righteousness* (excerpts)

Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God* (introduction)

Eusebius of Caesarea, *Oration in Praise of Constantine* (excerpts)

Francesco Patrizi, *The Happy City*

François Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (excerpts)

Charles Fourier, *Design for Utopia*

Robert Owen, *A New View of Society*

Josiah Warren, *Manifesto*

Aleister Crowley, *The Lost Continent*
Course Policies and Requirements

LAPTOPS AND MOBILE PHONES ARE TO BE TURNED OFF BEFORE CLASS BEGINS

Attendance: Attendance is required. All students are expected to be on time to class and to remain in class for the duration of the lecture. Material will be covered in class that is not covered in the readings, thus each absence will negatively affect the student’s ability to do well on assignments.

For every unexcused absence the final grade will be lowered 1/3 of a letter. Work not submitted on time will lose points. Unexcused late arrivals and early departures will be counted as absences.

Assignments: The each semester will have three assignment components. Each will account for a percentage of the final grade as listed below:

1. Reading and Class Participation (25%): We will be reading extensively* in the utopian literature. You are expected to read all assigned material and be prepared to discuss intelligently it in class. Failure to do this will reflect negatively on your final grade. Occasional quizzes may be given to asses the level of preparation.

*Please note that this course will be reading-intensive. However, some reading assignments will be lighter than others. I recommend that you take advantage of the time allowed by these lighter assignments to read ahead.

2. Leading Class Discussion (25%): You will be responsible for leading at least two class discussions, one in the fall and one in the spring. In preparing for this assignment you should familiarize yourself not only with the text assigned, but also with its historical context, its author, its philosophical antecedents and political implications, etc. You are encouraged to bring your own expertise and interests to bear on the discussion.

Discussion topics will be assigned during the first two weeks of class.

3. Course Project (50%): You will be involved in a project across both semesters, which will entail extensive analysis of a theme, motif or idea related to utopianism, as discussed in class.

In the fall semester this will involve considerable individual research in preparation for the final product in the spring semester.

You will submit a research proposal with bibliography and three drafts to me (and one classmate for each of the first two drafts), as assigned in the Course Calendar. After the first draft we will discuss your projects, and you will revise your draft reflecting class comments and those of your classmate (for that draft) and myself. This process will be repeated for the revised draft.

All papers submitted to me by the final deadline will fulfill the class requirement.
N.B. This is an Honors seminar. As such, writing evaluation will be equally critical of both grammar and content. You are advised to carefully proofread all papers before submitting them.

Students with marginal writing skills should consult the university’s free tutoring services: On-Campus Learning Center: PC 247; Online Learning Center: learningcenter.fiu.edu.
Grade Criteria
All work will be assigned letter grades corresponding to the following levels of quality:

A- to A+ = Excellent to exceptional work, free of technical errors and displaying grasp of concepts, depth of analysis and comprehension at an impressive academic level

B- to B+ = Good to very good work, surpassing minimal standards in student performance, but with some occasional technical errors

C- to C+ = Average to above average work, meeting minimum standards, but marked with technical errors and/or exposing gaps in student performance

D- to D+ = Poor to below average work, barely meeting minimum standards, replete with technical errors and/or deficient in student performance

F = Unacceptable work, failing to meet minimum standards
Academic Misconduct:
You are expected to do original work, and are required to complete this work individually, except when collaborating in the group project. You are responsible for understanding what amounts to academic misconduct (cheating or plagiarism), and will be held to the strictest standards.

University Academic Misconduct Statement:

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Misconduct includes: Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Plagiarism – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

You should also be aware of The Honors College’s Plagiarism Policy. Students who remain in the course agree contractually to abide by this policy.
S.R.A.I.
Students who choose the S.R.A.I. 4th-year option will be enrolled in IDH 4905 (for six credits total) during the fall and spring semesters in which the project is being completed. S.R.A.I. projects must be presented at the annual Honors College Research Conference and students must complete other requirements as stated by the Director of the S.R.A.I. Program. Students who wish to conduct a SRAI project for the 4th-year option must submit an application signed by the S.R.A.I. Research Affiliate with a 250-word abstract describing the project no later than May 30th, 2009. No extensions will be made to this deadline. Incomplete proposals will not be approved. Only projects that comply with these procedures will be applied toward the fourth year requirements for graduation through The Honors College.
Course Calendar

Fall Semester

Week 1
Aug. 27  Class overview and introduction

Week 2
Sept. 3  Lecture: myths of the Golden Age
        *Readings:* Genesis 1-3; Hesiod, *Works and Days*, ii.90-201; Plato, *Atlanticus*

Week 3
Sept. 10 Lecture: Plato and the first planned society
        *Readings:* Plato, *The Republic*

Week 4
Sept. 17 Discussion: Plato and the first planned society
        *Readings:* Plato, *The Republic*

Week 5
Sept. 24 Discussion: Plato and the first planned society
        *Readings:* Plato, *The Republic*

Week 6
Oct. 1   Lecture: Christianity and utopia
        **PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE**

Week 7
Oct. 8   Discussion: Renaissance and the ideal city
        *Readings:* Francesco Patrizi, *The Happy City*

Week 8
Oct. 13  **HONORS CONVOCATION**

Oct. 15  Discussion: Humanism and utopia
        *Reading:* Thomas Moore, *Utopia*

Week 9
Oct. 22  Discussion: Hermeticism and the new science
        *Readings:* Tommaso Campanella, *City of the Sun*
Oct. 23  HONORS COLLOQUIUM

Week 10
Oct. 29  Discussion: Social renewal
  Readings: Francis Bacon, New Atlantis

Week 11
Nov. 5  Discussion: The Enlightenment and the Commonwealth

Nov. 6.  FALL HONORS EXCELLENCE LECTURE

Week 12
Nov. 12  Discussion: Utopian socialism
  Readings: Charles Fourier, Design for Utopia (excerpts); Robert Owen, A New View of Society

Nov. 13  HONORS COLLOQUIUM

Week 13
Nov. 19  Lecture: Antebellum utopias, individualism, and communism
  Readings: Josiah Warren, Manifesto; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto
  FIRST DRAFT DUE

Week 14
Nov. 26  Discussion: Theosophy and ‘the master race’
  Readings: Edward Bulwer-Lytton, The Coming Race; Aleister Crowley, The Lost Continent

Week 15
Dec. 3  Discussion: Feminism and ‘the weaker sex’
  Reading: Charlotte Perkins Gillman, Herland

Dec. 5  HONORS FALL GRADUATION ASSEMBLY

Week 16
Dec. 10  Discussion: Darwin and machines
  Reading: Samuel Butler, Erewhon
Spring Semester

Week 1
Jan. 7  Discussion: Socialism and nationalism
        Reading: Edward Bellamy, Looking Backwards: 2000–1887

Week 2
Jan. 14 Discussion: Industrialization and capitalism
        Reading: Jack London, The Iron Heel

Week 3
Jan. 21  Film: Fritz Lang, Metropolis

Week 4
Jan. 28 Discussion: Certainty and control
        Reading: Yevgeny Zamyatin, We

Week 5
Feb. 4  Discussion: Totalitarianism
        Reading: George Orwell, 1984

Week 6
Feb. 11  Film: 1984
         REVISED DRAFT DUE

Week 7
Feb. 18 Discussion: Collectivism and the self
        Readings: Ayn Rand, Anthem

Week 8
Feb. 25 Discussion: Religion and dystopia
        Reading: Margaret Atwood, A Handmaid's Tale

Week 9
Mar. 4  Discussion: Psychological engineering
        Reading: B.F. Skinner, Walden Two

Week 10
Mar. 11 Discussion: Social engineering
        Reading: Aldous Huxley, Brave New World

Mar. 18  SPRING BREAK (University Closed)
Mar. 25  Discussion: Censorship and apathy  
*Reading:* Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*

Mar. 26  S.R.A.I. CONFERENCE

Apr. 1  Discussion: Technology and utopia

Apr. 8  Film: *The Matrix*  
FINAL DRAFT DUE

Apr. 15  Film: *Gattica*

Apr. 22  Final thoughts and discussion

Apr. 24  HONORS AWARDS ASSEMBLY