UTOPIANISM AND ITS CRITICS
GATEWAY 100
Fall 2014

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Utopian thinkers like Thomas More and Charlotte Perkins Gilman imagine the good life and build a world to foster it. For utopians, the best of all possible worlds sets the limits for the right—what the state will designate legal and illegal. Liberal thinkers like Thomas Hobbes and John Rawls take the opposite approach. They imagine the worst of all possible worlds and build a state to control it. In this class we discuss, debate and judge the merits of political, philosophical and literary works written by utopians and their liberal critics.

COURSE SCHEDULE
Introduction:
8-25 Topic: The perils of leveling down
Assignment: Reading social satire
Reading: Kurt Vonnegut, “Harrison Bergeron,” 7-13 (in course pack)
Exercise: Bring to class a list of observations about equality highlighted by Vonnegut’s story

8-27 Topic: Equality of opportunity versus equality of results
Assignment: Using definitions and distinctions to make claims
Reading: Richard Ellis, American Political Cultures, 43-62 (in course pack)
Exercise: Identify the key distinctions Ellis uses to structure his argument

9-1 Topic: Resolved: The competitive view of equality strengthens society
Assignment: Evaluating claims
Reading: Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, 9-23; 411-427 (in course pack)
Milton Freedman, Capitalism and Freedom, 1-21 (in course pack)
Exercise: Bring to class a list of claims supporting the competitive view and objections against it

9-3 Topic: Resolved: The competitive view of equality weakens society
Assignment: Evaluating objections
Reading: Christopher Hayes, Twilight of the Elites, 217-240 (in course pack)
Richard Ellis, American Political Cultures, 3-27 (in course pack)
Exercise: Bring to class a list of claims supporting the communitarian view and objections against it

9-8 Topic: Class debate: Should America adopt a competitive or communitarian view of equality?
Assignment: Using evidence to support claims, objections, and rejoinders
Reading: Charles Murray, Coming Apart, 278-306 (in course pack)
Jonathan Kozol, Savage Inequalities, 206-233 (in course pack)
Exercise: Using claims and objections to persuade

9-10 Draft of essay #1 due in class
Peer review of essay and discussion of thesis revision

9-12 Friday conferences

9-15 Essay #1 due (persuasive essay)
9-15  Topic:  The first utopia  
Assignment: Developing ideas about a text  
Reading: More, *Utopia*, 57-88  
Exercise: Bring a list of three questions for class discussion of the reading

9-17  Topic:  What conception of equality does More uphold in *Utopia*?  
Assignment: Reading with a question in mind  
Reading: More, *Utopia*, 88-122  
Exercise: Bring a list of passages that bear on the equality question

9-22  Topic:  Does Moore endorse his brave new egalitarian world?  
Assignment: Developing a new perspective on a text  
Reading: Chambers, “The Rational Heathens,” 17-32 (moodle page)  
Exercise: Bring a thesis statement and evidence from the text to support it

9-24  Draft of essay #2 due in class  
Peer review of essay and discussion of thesis revision

9-26  Friday conferences

9-29  Essay #2 due (interpretive essay)

9-29  Topic:  An American utopia  
Assignment: Reading for clues  
Reading: Perkins, *Herland*, 1-52  
Exercise: Bring a list of questions for class discussion of the reading

10-1  Topic:  The distinction between sex and gender  
Assignment: Developing a thesis  
Reading: Perkins, *Herland*, 53-102  
Exercise: Bring a list of key passages to discuss

10-6  Topic:  What conception of equality does Gilman uphold in *Herland*?  
Assignment: Analyzing a text  
Reading: Perkins, *Herland*, 103-124  
Exercise: Bring a thesis statement

10-8  Topic:  Improving sentence structure; developing a thesis  
Assignment: Rewriting to improve style and grace  
Reading: Williams, *Style*, 16-65 (moodle)  
Exercise: Bring examples of your written and re-written sentences to class

10-8  SPECIAL CLASS EVENT: Lucca Grill dinner 5pm / *Iron Jawed Angels* 6 PM in Ames Library Beckman

10-10  Fall Break Day

10-13  Draft of essay #3 due in class  
Peer review of essay and discussion

10-15  Topic:  Real revision  
Assignment: Learning to revise your thesis  
Reading: Bruce Ballenger, *The Curious Writer*, 617-656 (moodle)  
Exercise: Bring your original and revised thesis statements to class
10-20 **Essay #3 due (interpretative essay)**

10-20 **Topic:** Creating your own utopia  
**Assignment:** The utopian/dystopian story  
**Reading:** Ursula Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas,” 275-284 (moodle)  
**Exercise:** Free writing your utopia

10-22 **SPECIAL CLASS EVENT:** William Morris convocation Ames Library 11-1PM

10-22 **Topic:** Another genre of utopianism  
**Assignment:** A Utopian essay  
**Reading:** William Morris, “Useful Work versus Useless Toil,” 117-136 (in course pack)  
**Exercise:** Bring your opening paragraph to class

10-27 **Topic:** Using dialogue to develop ideas  
**Assignment:** Selections from Morris  
**Reading:** William Morris, *News from Nowhere*, (selections) 256-268 (in course pack)  
**Exercise:** Bring a pre-draft of your utopia to class

10-29 **Draft of essay #4 due in class**  
Peer review and discussion

11-3 **Essay #4 due 4 PM CLA 251 (speculative essay)**

11-3 **Topic:** Human rights: utopian because states don’t enforce universals (but they might someday!)  
**Assignment:** Reading to develop ideas  
**Reading:** Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 1-43  
**Exercise:** Bring a list of human rights contradictions class

11-5 **SPECIAL CLASS AT AMES LIBRARY INSTRUCTION LAB**  
**Topic:** An introduction to library research  
**Reading:** Ames Library web site: http://libguides.iwu.edu/sweet  
**Assignment:** Gathering facts, using sources  
**Exercise:** Find sources arguing that human rights frame is problematic

11-10 **Topic:** The birth of the human rights project in WW II  
**Assignment:** Reading with a question in mind  
**Reading:** Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 44-83  
**Exercise:** Bring a one sentence statement of why human rights are utopian to class

11-12 **Topic:** Are utopian ideas inherently self-contradictory?  
**Assignment:** Using secondary literature to shape a research topic  
**Reading:** Leszek Kolakowski, “The Death of Utopia Reconsidered” (in course pack)  
**Exercise:** Bring a list of contradictions in human rights you would like to research

11-17 **Topic:** The human rights revolution of the 1970s  
**Assignment:** Using questions to refine a research question  
**Reading:** Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 120-175  
**Exercise:** Bring a list of questions for class discussion of the reading
11-19  SPECIAL CLASS AT AMES LIBRARY INSTRUCTION LAB WITH CHRIS SWEET
Topic:  Using the library to do research
Assignment: Bring your narrowed research question to this session
Exercise:  Finding sources for your analysis

11-21  Friday conference on your research question

11-24  Draft of research paper due in class
Peer review and discussion of writing up research

11-27/12-1  Thanksgiving break

12-1  Topic: Research papers: combining persuasive, interpretive, and imaginative essays
Assignment: Working to add depth to your argument
Reading: The Allyn & Bacon Handbook, 581-626 (moodle)
Exercise: Discussion of plagiarism and other pitfalls of original research

12-3  Topic: APA formatting for a bibliography
Assignment: Creating a bibliography for your research paper
Exercise: Bring your research paper sources (at least three) to class in APA format and include a paragraph summary of each source and your assessment of how it addresses your thesis

12-8  READING DAY

12-11  Research paper due by 5 PM CLA 251

CLASS READING
The following texts should be purchased at the IWU Bookstore:


The following texts will be part of our course pack. I will hand out the course packs before the first day of class. Each student enrolled in our gateway will be charged for one copy.

Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.

The following texts are available on my Moodle page at the Ames Library webpage. Password is ‘ideals’ all lower case.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**
The grade in this course is based on 5 papers (including drafts) (85%), and class participation (15%). The precise weight of each requirement is listed below.

- Essay #1: 10%
- Essay #2: 20%
- Essay #3: 20%
- Essay #4: 10%
- Research paper: 25% (5% for APA format/three source summaries/reaction due 12/3)
- Class discussion: 15%

The class schedule contains many “assignments” that are required as part of the class participation grade. I will not collect assignments but it is important that you do them. For those who are looking for guidance: summaries should be analytical outlines of the argument(s) presented in the passages from the text assigned. Lists should include at least three items and include page numbers for all textual references. Free writing exercises do not have to be typed.

At anytime before the last class, students may hand in re-writes of the first three essays. However, re-writes must show evidence of a thorough revision; simply responding to comments and correcting grammar and spelling is not real revision. Re-write grades will be averaged equally with the essay grade to produce a final composite grade.

I will keep a regular attendance record. After more than three absences, I shall begin deducting points from your class discussion grade. It is essential that you attend this class regularly. In addition, deadlines are strict since they often are keyed to the class sessions. Assignments will be posted on my homepage—see the address below.

**COURSE GOALS**
To develop good habits at all stages of the writing process.
To learn how to use writing to think and strengthen ideas.
To learn how to revise writing and to establish the practice of rewriting.
To learn how to write creatively and to defend a claim clearly.
To learn to appreciate debate and enjoy contention.
To learn to use intellectual reflection to focus the process of self-development.

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