UTOPIANISM AND ITS CRITICS
GATEWAY 100
Fall 2015

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 is the goal, and the state exists to put this goal into place. Liberal thinkers like Anthony Burgess and Ursula Le Guin take the opposite approach. They imagine the worst of all possible worlds and use the state to prevent its occurrence. In this course we evaluate the merits of political, philosophical, and literary works written by utopians and consider objections raised by liberal critics. We conclude with an analysis of the human rights tradition, which was created by liberals but has since the 1970s been pursued as “the last utopia.”

COURSE SCHEDULE
Introduction:
8-24 Topic: The perils of leveling down
Assignment: Reading social satire
Reading: Kurt Vonnegut, “Harrison Bergeron,” 7-13 (course pack)
Exercise: Bring to class a list of observations about equality highlighted by Vonnegut’s story

8-26 Topic: The opportunity versus results debate
Assignment: Using definitions and distinctions to make claims
Reading: Richard Ellis, American Political Cultures, 43-62 (course pack)
Exercise: Identify the key distinctions Ellis uses to structure his argument

8-31 Topic: Resolved: The competitive view of equality strengthens society
Assignment: Evaluating claims
Reading: Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, 9-23 (course pack)
Exercise: Bring to class a list of claims supporting the competitive view and objections against it

9-2 Topic: Resolved: The competitive view of equality weakens society
Assignment: Evaluating objections
Reading: Christopher Hayes, Twilight of the Elites, 217-240 (course pack)
Exercise: Bring to class a list of claims supporting the communitarian view and objections against it

9-7 Labor Day no class

9-9 Topic: Class debate: Should America adopt a competitive or communitarian view of equality?
Assignment: Using evidence to support claims, objections, and rejoinders
Reading: Milton Freedman, Capitalism and Freedom, 1-21 (course pack)
Exercise: Using claims and objections to persuade

9-14 Topic: They say, I say
Assignment: Bring one example of a summarized argument to class
Reading: Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, They Say, I Say, 30-51 (Moodle)
Exercise: Inserting your voice into a conversation or debate

9-16 Draft of essay #1 due in class
Peer review of essay and discussion of thesis revision

9-18 Friday conferences
9-21  **Essay #1 due (persuasive essay)**

9-21  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

9-23  Topic:  Equality and control: is equality liberating 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

9-28  Topic:  Does Moore endorse his brave new egalitarian world?  
Assignment:  Developing a new perspective on a text  
Exercise:  Bring a thesis statement and evidence from the text to support it

9-30  *Draft of essay #2 due in class*  
Peer review of essay and discussion of thesis revision

10-2  **Friday conferences**

10-5  **Essay #2 due (interpretive essay)**

10-5  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

10-7  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

10-12  Topic:  Equality and difference feminists in 1915 America  
Assignment:  Using a distinction to build an interpretation and thesis  
Reading:  Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 12-50 (course pack)  
Exercise:  Bring a list of gender equality and gender differences to discuss

10-14  Topic:  Why do the women of *Herland* prefer Van?  
Assignment:  Analyzing a text  
Reading:  Perkins, *Herland*, 103-124  
Exercise:  Bring a thesis statement

10-14  **SPEICAL CLASS EVENT:** Lucca Grill dinner 5pm/ *Iron Jawed Angels* 6 PM in Ames Library Beckman

10-19  *Draft of essay #3 due in class*  
Peer review of essay and discussion

10-21  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
10-26  **Essay #3 due (interpretative essay)**

10-26  **Topic:** Creating your own utopia  
**Assignment:** The utopian/dystopian fable  
**Reading:** Ursula Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas,” 275-284 (course pack)  
**Exercise:** Free writing your utopia

10-28  **Topic:** The Utopian essay  
**Assignment:** Selections from H.G. Wells  
**Reading:** H. G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia*, 31-69 (course pack)  
**Exercise:** Bring three questions to class to discuss Wells’ critique of Utopian freedom

11-2  **Topic:** The Dystopian essay  
**Assignment:** Be ready to discuss the key point you want to make with your story  
**Reading:** Anthony Burgess, “The Clockwork Condition,” 69-76 (course pack)  
**Exercise:** Bring a titled pre-draft of your utopia to class

11-4  *Draft of essay #4 due in class*  
Peer review and discussion

11-6  **Essay #4 due 4 PM CLA 251 (speculative essay)**

11-9  **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*, 1-20  
**Exercise:** Bring a list of words you had to look up to class

11-11  **SPECIAL CLASS AT AMES LIBRARY INSTRUCTION LAB Room 129**  
**Topic:** An introduction to library research  
**Reading:** Ames Library web site: http://libguides.iwu.edu/sweet  
**Assignment:** Gathering facts, using sources  
**Exercise:** Bring a list of problems in human rights enforcement you would like to research

11-16  **Topic:** How state-based natural rights limited human rights  
**Assignment:** Reading with a question in mind  
**Reading:** Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 20-43  
**Exercise:** Bring a summary of why human rights universalism had a stunted growth

11-18  **Topic:** The birth of the human rights project in WW II  
**Assignment:** Using secondary literature to shape a research topic  
**Reading:** Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 44-62  
**Exercise:** Be ready to tell the class what your secondary literature debate (“they say”) is

11-20  Friday conference on your research question

11-23  **Topic:** The UN Security Council: not a human rights enforcement mechanism  
**Assignment:** Using questions to refine a research question  
**Reading:** Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 62-83  
**Exercise:** Bring a list of questions for class discussion of the reading

11-24/11-29  **THANKSGIVING BREAK**
Assignment: Summarizing key facts  
Reading: Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 120-148  
Exercise: Bring a summary of Moyn’s “exhibit” (Amnesty International) to class

12-2  Draft of re-written research question and annotated bibliography of three sources due in class  
Topic: Research articles: 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

12-7  READING DAY

12-11  Research article 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.


The following texts are available on my Moodle page at the Ames Library webpage.

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 article: 25% (5% for APA format/three source summaries/reaction due 12/2)
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.

OFFICE HOURS
Professor James Simeone
Center for the Liberal Arts (CLA) 251
556-3126
TTH 4-5; W 9-11; 1-2; or by appointment
Homepage: www.iwu.edu/~jsimeone
e-mail: jsimeone@iwu.edu

WRITING CENTER
Every gateway student should visit the IWU Writing Center at least once. The better writers will visit more than once. Tutors can be especially helpful when you bring specific issues to their attention and when you bring the class assignment with you. The Writing Center is located in Ames Library Room 105B. The telephone number is 556-3810. Call to schedule an appointment. Be sure to bring a hard copy of your paper and the assignment to your meeting.

AMES LIBRARIAN
The librarian assigned to this class is Karen Schmidt. Her office is Ames 117 and her telephone number is 556-3834. I strongly recommend that you make an appointment with her in mid-November to improve and deepen your research process.