As a freshman signature course, meets (ID) core curriculum requirement.

**Required Texts:**
- *Oryx and Crake*, Margaret Atwood, Anchor, 9780385721677
- *Looking Backward*, Edward Bellamy, Penguin Classics, 9780140390186
- *The Parable of the Sower*, Octavia Butler, Grand Central Publishing, 9780446675505
- *The Hunger Games*, Suzanne Collins, Scholastic Press, 9780439023528
- *Herland and Selected Stories*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Signet Classics, 9780451525628

Additional readings will be made available on-line.

**Course Description:**
Recently, dystopian literature seems to be everywhere. This course will examine the generic features and adaptations that account for the genre’s revival, comparing recent literary dystopias to classic mid-twentieth-century models such by Orwell and Huxley. We’ll consider how dystopias function as social criticism and identify the limitations of the genre, as well as explore and evaluate the cultural shift from utopian to dystopian imagination that occurred the early twentieth-century. Students will end the semester completing a project in which they research, plan and model a fictional dystopian novel.

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.

**Signature Course Mission:**
The Signature Courses at the University of Texas at Austin are intended to help students develop college-level skills in research, writing, speaking, and discussion through an approach that is interdisciplinary, collaborative, experiential and contemporary. The Signature Course Essentials are course components that stress Information Literacy, Writing, and Oral Communication. Signature Courses also offer introductions to some special events and resources at UT such as the University Lecture Series, Texas Performing Arts events, and the Harry Ransom Center Library.

To meet these goals, our class assignments incorporate research, revision, and oral presentation, and some of our discussions will be based on campus performances, lectures and site visits that introduce you to resources and the cultural life of the University of Texas-Austin. Your attendance at these events is thus a required part of your class participation. Please check the syllabus for special evening events and let me know ASAP if your schedule will not allow your attendance so that we can develop appropriate make-up assignments.

**Course Assignments:**
Response papers. 10% of final course grade (5% each). 500-750 word responses to the reading. These informal writing assignments due early in the semester require you to articulate your thoughts about the readings and explore ideas for longer paper assignments.

Group Discussion Leaders. 10% of final course grade. You will be assigned to a group for class presentations early next week. Each group must plan and lead a 45 minute class session, using any format it chooses. Some formats might be sitting in a circle and working through discussion questions or exercises, breaking up into small groups, or staging a debate. Other more creative ideas are encouraged as long as your class session is designed to thoughtfully engage the material and/or the issues it raises. While presenting outside research and materials might be part of this presentation, the real purpose of the session is to spark an active and productive discussion, not to deliver information. Presentations will be graded on: 1) level of organization and coherence, 2) quality of critical issues raised, and 3) enthusiasm and interest generated for the class session. Keep in mind that a group presentation should be one integrated class session, not several different mini-presentations. Dividing work is fine in the early planning stages, but to be successful you'll need a few meetings to put together what you've found into an organized and coherent format that fits into the allotted time frame.

Literary analysis paper. 20% of final course grade. (Includes proposal/draft/peer review/revision). This is a 1500-2000 word essay that states and supports an arguable interpretative thesis about a literary work we have read for the class. The topic is open, but students will write proposals and receive feedback to choose an effective thesis. The draft, peer review, and revision stages are all required as essential parts of the process model required for Writing Flag credit.

Information Literacy Warm-Up. 5% of final grade. Margaret Atwood has said that “deep background” for her dystopian novel Oryx and Crake “was inadvertently supplied by many magazines and newspapers and non-fiction science writers encountered over the years” (Acknowledgements, Oryx and Crake, 376). Locate a source of popular journalism or science writing that you think could have provided this kind of background for the novel. Complete the “information literacy” worksheet for the source, and be prepared to summarize and discuss the source and its intersection with Atwood’s novel in a five-minute presentation. (Note: we'll use this assignment as a way to practice the research skills required for the final creative project, described below.)

Genre report (group project). 20% of final course grade. In groups of three, make a 20-minute presentation on a set of thematically or generically linked dystopian or utopian texts (novels, films, short stories). By texts, I mean films, television series, novels, graphic novels, short stories, or other narrative genres. By set, I mean texts that have a strong and compelling common thread that will allow for comparison. For example, your group could examine YA dystopian novels, anti-technology dystopias, ecological dystopias, mid-century anti-communist dystopias, etc. Your set could be texts that deal with a similar theme or social issue, or all texts from the same time period (the same year or decade, for example), or all representing different time periods, or representing different ideological perspectives, or other criteria. A starting point for finding these texts is the open access doc where we’ve been listing relevant titles all semester. Once you agree upon a set, each group member independently studies one item and then all work together to discuss and make a coherent, unified presentation that makes introduces the texts, makes comparisons to our course reading and among items in the set, and considers questions of generic evolution and variation. A slide presentation using powerpoint or other presentation applications is required.

Final research/creative project 30% (Includes proposal/annotated bibliography/ draft revision). For this final project, you will research, describe, and write a sample segment of your own dystopian novel. Your research must be documented in the form of an annotated bibliography that draws on popular journalism, scientific, or academic writing about the social or scientific trends that your novel explores.
The annotated bibliography must contain bibliographic records and 500 word summaries of at least five relevant items. Your precis (3 pages) will describe your concept, make comparisons between your story and the utopian or dystopian genre as a whole, and explain the role of your background research in the project. Your sample (7-10 pages of creative work) should exhibit and develop the features and ideas that you state in the precis.

Class participation. 10% of final course grade. Active participation and consistent preparation for class are necessary for full participation credit. Being prepared for class means carefully completing all reading, taking notes to help you remember your thoughts and observations, and bringing books and readings to class. (Please print out all PDF electronic reading assignments or bring and appropriately use a laptop or tablet (no phones) to view electronic documents in class.) You must also submit any written homework that is assigned. Because it is frustrating for students when others have not done the reading, I may occasionally give pop quizzes on the reading that will count towards your participation grade. Repeated absences will lower your class participation grade. Missing more than two class sessions will begin to negatively impact your class participation grade by lowering it a third of a point per absence over two until you reach six absences in total, which automatically lowers the participation grade to a D. Because coming to class late is disruptive and slows down the rest of the class, repeatedly lateness will also detract from a participation grade.

Course Schedule

8/24 W Introductions
8/26 Octavia Butler Parable of the Sower (1993)
8/29 Butler, Parable of the Sower, “Neoliberalism”
8/31 Butler, Parable of the Sower, Moylan Scraps of the Untainted Sky xi-xxv definitions. Group 1 discussion leaders
10/2 Mike Davis, “Fortress LA” from City of Quartz (1990). Journal response due

9/5 Holiday
9/7 C.F. Pow, “Urban Dystopia and Epistemologies of Hope”
9/9 George Orwell, 1984, Ch 1-8 (read on-line). Group 2 discussion leaders.

9/12 Aldous Huxley, Brave New World, Chapter 1-3 (read on-line)
9/14 No class meeting. Evening Event: Attend Mike Daisey “Story of a Gun,” Texas Performing Arts, 8:00pm, McCullough Theatre UTP17

9/19 Margaret Atwood, Oryx and Crake. Evening Event: Attend a lecture from ULS on 9/19 or 9/20. 7-8:15PM Bass Concert Hall
9/21 Undergraduate Lecture Series: In-class discussion/exercise based on lecture content
9/23 Atwood, Oryx and Crake.

9/26 Atwood, Oryx and Crake; Marc Slouka, “Dehumanized: When Math and Science Rule the School” Group 4 discussion leaders
9/28 Literary analysis 1 Proposals due.
9/30 Library Session for Information Literacy Warm Up.

10/3 Literary analysis paper draft due, peer reviews
10/5 Information Literacy Warm Up due. (Oryx and Crake Show and Tell).
10/7 No class, group conferences this week.

10/12 Suzanne Collins, The Hunger Games; Laura Miller “Fresh Hell: What’s Behind the Boom in Dystopian Literature for Young Readers?”
10/14 Collins, *The Hunger Games*; Jonathan Alexander and Rebecca Black, “The Darker Side of the Sorting Hat: Representations of Educational Testing in Dystopian Young Adult Fiction.” **Group 5 discussion leaders**

10/17 Collins, *The Hunger Games*, Amy Sturgis “Not Your Parents Dystopias”

10/19 No class, Evening Event: Attend screening of *Snowpiercer (location and time TBA)* or rent and watch on your own

10/21 Discuss *Snowpiercer*. Thomas Halper and Douglas Muzzio, “Hobbes in the City: Dystopias in American Movies”

10/24 **Genre reports**

10/26 **Genre reports**

10/28 Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward*; Abrash “Marxism Americanized”


11/2 Meeting in Henry Ransom Center

11/4 Bellamy, *Looking Backward*

11/7 **Proposals for Creative Research Project due; peer review**

11/9 Library day

11/11 *Herland*; Revised proposals due (if required)

11/14 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland*

11/16 Gilman *Herland*; Zeigler “Feminist Eugenics”

11/18 Imagining Utopias: Group work

11/21 **Annotated bibliographies draft due**

11/23 Holiday

11/25 Holiday

11/28 **Draft of Creative project and precis due. Group conferences this week.**

11/30 Group conferences

12/1 Group conferences

12/5 **Revisions of final project due**, Course conclusion

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**UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**Religious holy days:** A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

**Students with Disabilities:** You will need to provide documentation to the Dean of Student’s Office so the most appropriate accommodations can be determined. Specialized services are available on campus through Services for Students with Disabilities (SSB 4.104, 471-6259). Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ ssd/.
Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Judicial Services web site at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/.

Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students: All students should be familiar with the University’s official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student’s responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html.

University of Texas Core Values and Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. As a student of the University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.