

ENC 1145: Writing About Science Fiction Utopias

Section: 3337

Time: Tuesday, periods 8–9
Thursday, period 9

Room: CBD 212

Instructor: Derrick King

Email: Dk987@ufl.edu

Office: Turlington 4409

Office Hours: Thursday, period 8 and by appointment.



Must redefine utopia. It isn't the perfect end-product of our wishes, define it so and it deserves the scorn of those who sneer when they hear the word. No. Utopia is the process for making a better world, the name for one path history can take, a dynamic, tumultuous, agonizing process with no end. Struggle forever.
(From *Pacific Edge*)

Course Description

This course will explore some of American science fiction's most important attempts to imagine a better world. We will not approach the idea of "Utopia" as a blueprint for a perfect society we might emulate, but rather as an ongoing process of imagining the present and future that eludes our attempts to pin them down. Utopian texts do not predict our *future*—they open our imagination to possible futures while giving us new ways of thinking about and responding to

the present. We will therefore explore Utopian fiction as a hopeful intervention into a variety of present-day anxieties and problems, including rapid technological advancement, ecological crisis, unemployment, and inequalities of all kinds.

Throughout the course we will develop methods for reading, discussing, and writing about Utopian science fiction as a distinct literary form, requiring distinct practices of critical reflection. Our readings will focus on science fiction Utopias written in America from the late 19th century to the present day, including texts by Edward Bellamy, Kim Stanley Robinson, Joanna Russ, Ursula K Le Guin, Samuel Delany, Nicola Griffith and Octavia Butler.

This course is designed to provide 6000 words toward the Writing Requirement. A major focus of the course will be writing instruction: students will learn how to organize their thoughts, make clear arguments, and use evidence drawn from literary texts to demonstrate these arguments. We will also address the unique challenges presented by science fiction texts for literary analysis. Assignments will include short response papers (1–2 pages each), longer literary analyses (4–6 pages each), in-class responses, and reading quizzes.

Required Texts:

Edward Bellamy- *Looking Backwards* (Signet Classics, 2009) ISBN: 0451531167

Kim Stanley Robinson- *The Pacific Edge* (Orb Books, 1995) ISBN: 0312890389

Joanna Russ- *The Female Man* (Bluestreak, 2000) ISBN: 0807062995

Ursula K Le Guin- *The Dispossessed* (Harper 1994) ISBN: 0061054887

Samuel Delany- *Trouble on Triton* (Wesleyan, 1996) ISBN: 081956298X

Nicola Griffith- *Ammonite* (Del Ray, 1992) ISBN: 0345378911

Octavia Butler- *Parable of the Talents* (Grand Central, 2000) ISBN: 0446675784

Additional items will be made available to you on Course Reserves through the Smathers Library website: <https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/ares/>

Assignments- (all due dates listed under course schedule):

Points

100 Literary Analysis 1

100 Literary Analysis 2

150 Literary Analysis 3

200 Literary Analysis 4

250 5 Reading Responses (50 points each)

100 Reading Quizzes

100 Participation

1000 Total Points Possible

4 Literary Analyses (assignment sheets for these essays will be distributed during the course):

1. Close reading (1000 words)
2. Synthesis of two texts (1200 words)
3. Using a theoretical framework (1500 words)
4. Using secondary sources (1500 words)

5 Reading Responses (500 Words Each):

Five times during the semester I will require that you turn in a short response essay to that day's reading (dates are listed below under Course Schedule). I want your reading responses to be *critical* responses to the readings rather than summaries. You may use these essays to raise questions about the readings, evaluate your reactions to the text, or think through potential interpretive arguments. While these are not formal essays, I do expect you to adhere to the guidelines of academic writing we will discuss in class.

Unannounced Reading Quizzes

I will periodically begin class with a short reading quiz to make sure you did the reading. These quizzes will be randomly distributed throughout the semester, so you should always be prepared.

Participation

Participation is a crucial part of success in this class. Students will be expected to work in small groups and participate in group discussions. Be prepared to answer questions about the course material, make comments and ask your own questions to the class. Participation points will be given to those students who actively engage with the discussion and create useful contributions to the class through their comments and questions. **To receive full credit for participation, students are expected to contribute meaningfully to class discussion at least once each class period.**

Course Schedule (Tentative)

Note: you will be expected to have read all the texts listed on each day prior to that day's discussion.

I. Frameworks for Reading and Writing about Science Fiction Utopias

8/26 Introduction; Kim Stanley Robinson, Imre Szeman and Maria Whiteman, "Future Politics"
(Course Reserves)

Writing Workshop 1: Academic Writing

8/28 Tom Moylan, "Dangerous Visions" (Course Reserves); Joana Russ, "When it Changed"
(Course Reserves)

9/2 Sarah Lefanu, "The Dream of Elsewhere: Feminist Utopias" (Course Reserves);
Kodwo Eshun, "Further Considerations on Afrofuturism" (Course Reserves);
José Muñoz, "Queerness as Horizon" (Course Reserves)

9/4 Fredric Jameson, "Progress Versus Utopia, or, Can We Imagine the Future?" (Course
Reserves)

II. Utopia as Process: Two Case Studies

9/9 *Looking Backwards*, Chapters 1-22 (pp. 5-147). Due: Reading Response 1

Writing Workshop 2: Close Readings

9/11 *Looking Backwards*, Finish (pp. 148-End)

9/16 *Pacific Edge*, Chapters 1-5 (pp. 1-146)

9/18 *Pacific Edge*, Chapters 6-7 (pp. 147-215)

9/23 *Pacific Edge*, Finish (216-End). Due: Literary Analysis 1

III. Demanding the Impossible: Science Fiction Utopias in the 1970s

9/25 *The Female Man*, Parts I-III (pp. 1-56)

9/30 *The Female Man*, Parts IV-VII (pp. 57-156) Due: Reading Response 2

Writing Workshop 3: Synthesizing Texts.

10/2 *The Female Man*, Finish (pp. 157-End)

10/7 *The Dispossessed*, Chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-125)

10/9 *The Dispossessed*, Chapters 5-6 (pp. 126-191)

10/14 *The Dispossessed*, Chapters 8-10 (pp. 192-307) Due: Literary Analysis 2

Writing Workshop 4: Using Theoretical Frameworks

10/16 *The Dispossessed*, Finish (pp. 308-End)

10/21 *Trouble on Triton*, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-116) Due: Reading Response 3

10/23 *Trouble on Triton*, Chapters 4-5 (pp. 117-184)

10/28 *Trouble on Triton*, Finish Novel (pp. 185-277)

10/30 *Trouble on Triton*, Appendixes (pp. 278-End)

IV: From Catastrophe to Utopia: Science Fiction in the 1990s

11/4 *Ammonite*, Chapters 1-6 (pp. 1-105) Due: Reading Response 4

Writing Workshop 5: Writing a Researched Argument

11/6 *Ammonite*, Chapters 7-9 (pp. 106-165)

11/11 No Class (Veterans Day)

11/13 *Ammonite*, Chapters 10-14 (pp. 167-271) Due: Literary Analysis 3

11/18 *Ammonite*, Finish (pp. 272-End)

11/20 *Parable of the Talents*, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-60)

11/25 *Parable of the Talents*, Chapters 4-7 (pp. 61-133) Due: Reading Response 5

11/27 No Class (Thanksgiving)

12/2 *Parable of the Talents*, Chapters 8-13 (pp. 134-234)

Writing Workshop 6: Peer Review (Bring two copies of a complete draft of your fourth literary analysis to class)

12/4 *Parable of the Talents*, Chapters 14-19 (pp. 235-347)

12/9 *Parable of the Talents*, Finish (pp. 236-End) Due: Literary Analysis 4

Grading and Course Policies

Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599

Assessment Rubric

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing

	a clear thesis statement and topic sentences.	ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

Absence and Tardy policies

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Attendance is required. If a student misses more than **five** classes during the semester, his or her final grade will drop one half letter grade (50 points) for each additional absence. Double blocks count as two absences. I exempt from this policy only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed.

Please Note: if students are absent, it is their responsibility to make themselves aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

Tardiness: If students enters class after roll has been called, they are late, which disrupts the entire class. Two instances of tardiness count as one absence.

Final Grade Appeals

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Department of English Program Assistant. Grade appeals may result in higher, lower, or unchanged final grade.

Classroom Behavior

Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Many of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. I will not tolerate any rude, coarse, or offensive remarks based upon race, gender, ability, or sexual identity. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

In-Class Work

Assignments are due at the beginning of class at the assigned deadline. Late papers will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse. If you are going to be absent on a date an assignment is due, you need to make arrangements to turn it in early.

Students must be present for all in-class activities to receive credit for them.

Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Statement on Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>

Statement on Academic Honesty

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>

Statement of Composition (C) and Humanities and Writing Credit

This course can satisfy the General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing.

For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-and-math-requirement.aspx>

Statement of Online Course Evaluation Process

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>