

| CAPILANO UNIVERSITY COURSE OUTLINES | | | |
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| TERM: | SPRING 2015 | COURSE NO: | POLITICAL STUDIES 315 |
| INSTRUCTOR: | TBA | COURSE NAME: | UTOPIAS, DYSTOPIAS, AND POLITICAL THOUGHT. |
| OFFICE: | TBA | LOCAL: | TBA |
| E-MAIL: | TBA | SECTION NO(S): | CREDITS: 3 |

COURSE FORMAT:

Three hours of class time, plus an additional hour delivered through on-line or other activities for a 15 week semester, which includes two weeks for final exams.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

45 credits of 100 level or higher coursework.

Note: Political Studies 100, 110 or 111 recommended, but not required.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

At least since the days of Plato in the Western Tradition, and Confucius in the East, political thinkers have imagined better (and in some case worse) worlds for us to work towards (or avoid). In this course, students will explore the range of this utopian and dystopian thought throughout the history of ideas, with the goal of understanding the strength and limits of visioning future worlds as a means of addressing the political, economic, and social challenges within which the literature and/or films were created. By doing so, students will also explore the challenges we face today, and the potential utopian and dystopian elements of the current political, economic and social solutions offered by such ideologies as free market capitalism, liberal democracy, democratic socialism, Marxism, feminism, and deep ecology.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students who complete this course will be able to meet the following outcomes through exams, research papers, and oral presentations:

- Exhibit an understanding of the history of utopian and dystopian thought, primarily in the Western tradition.
- Explain the links between utopian and dystopian thought and the key themes of political discourse including (but not limited to): legitimacy; authority; rights and responsibilities; individual rights and group rights; the origin of and limits to the institutions of the state; the state of nature, the social contract, and civil society; ideologies; theories of democracy; individualism vs. conformity; human nature; normative and empirical theories; order; and, of course, the nature of power.
- Identify the utility and limits of using utopian and dystopian thought as a tool for social transformation as we address our present political, economic, and social challenges.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Claeys, Gregory, et. al (eds). *The Utopian Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 1999.

Students will also select one of the utopian/dystopian novels listed in Weeks 9-12 below and present a seminar on their book in response to the movie watched that week.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

A list of recommended/supplementary readings will be posted on Moodle in the first week of the course.

COURSE CONTENT:

This is a tentative schedule of the topics in this course

- Week 1: Introduction to Course: Defining our terms
- Week 2: Utopias, Dystopias, and Political thought
- Week 3: “Pre-*Utopia*” Utopias: Confucius, Plato, St. Augustine
- Week 4: Thomas More’s *Utopia* and Bacon’s *New Atlantis*
- Week 5: Classical Liberal Utopias and Dystopias: Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau
- Week 6: Adam Smith and Karl Polanyi: free market utopia or dystopia?
- Week 7: 19th Century Socialist Utopias: William Morris’ *News from Nowhere* and Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward*
- Week 8: Marx’s Vision of a Communist Future
- Week 9: Totalitarian Dystopias Student-Run Seminar:
 - Screening of *V For Vendetta*
 - Student seminars on Huxley’s *Brave New World*, Zamyatin’s *We*, or Orwell’s *1984*
- Week 10: Feminist Utopias and Dystopias Student-Run Seminar
 - Screening of *The Handmaid’s Tale*
 - Student seminars on Gilman’s *Herland*, Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed*, or Lessing’s *the Marriages Between Zones Three, Four and Five*.
- Week 11: Ecotopias and Ecodystopias Student-Run Seminars
 - Screening of *Soylent Green*
 - Student seminars on Callenbach’s *Ecotopia*, Robinson’s *Pacific Edge*, or Starhawk’s *The Fifth Sacred Thing*.
- Week 12: Minimalist State-based Utopias and Dystopias Student-Run Seminars
 - Screening of *Blade Runner*
 - Student Seminars on Ann Rand’s *Atlas Shrugged*, Heinlein’s *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, or Huxley’s *Island*
- Week 13: The Future of Utopian Thought
- Weeks 14-15: Final Exam Period

4th HOUR ACTIVITIES:

Students will attend film screenings and complete Moodle discussions as part of their 4th hour activities.

EVALUATION PROFILE:

Students will be evaluated on the student learning outcomes in the following manner. (Additional details on these assignments, including due dates, will be supplied the first week of class on Moodle.): Weekly quizzes on the readings (15%); a 2500-3000 word Research Paper analysing the socio-political context in which their novel was written, the novel’s impact on Western Political thought generally, and its applicability to addressing modern socio-political challenges we face today (35%); a 15 minute seminar introducing the class to the themes of their novel in response to the themes raised in the film viewed prior to their seminar (20%); a final take home, essay exam asking the student to pull together themes from the literature and films studied throughout the semester, including their own novel and at least one other novel discussed in the seminars (30%).

EVALUATION PROFILE SUMMARY:

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|---|------|
| Reading Quizzes: | 15% |
| 2500-3000 word Research Paper on novel* | 35% |
| Seminar | 20% |
| Final Exam | 30% |
| TOTAL | 100% |

GRADING PROFILE:

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| A+ = 90 - 100% | B+ = 77 - 79% | C+ = 67 - 69% | D = 50 - 59% |
| A = 85 - 89 | B = 73 - 76 | C = 63 - 66 | F = 0 - 49 |
| A- = 80 - 84 | B- = 70 - 72 | C- = 60 - 62 | |

When grading the non-objective questions on the exams, the following scale is used, assigning pluses or minuses for gradations within these general groupings:

A - Excellent Work. The summaries and critiques are exemplary, showing a complete grasp of the material. The student has offered an original solution to the problem posed. A highly sophisticated example of first class scholarship and research.

B - Above Average Work. The summaries and critiques are very well done, showing a firm grasp of the material. The student presents a highly competent solution to the problem posed. A very good example of thoughtful scholarship and careful research.

C - Average Work. The summaries and critiques are complete and the problem has been adequately dealt with, although with little originality. The level of the scholarship and research is both competent and average for a university student.

D - Below Average Work. The summaries and critiques are presented in an incomplete, if not careless format. The level of scholarship and research is minimal for a university-level assignment.

F - Failure. The student has failed to meet even the minimum level of scholarship and research required for a university-level assignment.

OPERATIONAL DETAILS:

Capilano University has policies on Academic Appeals (including appeal of final grades), Student Conduct, Cheating and Plagiarism, Academic Probation and other educational issues. These and other policies are available on the University website.

Attendance: Students are encouraged to participate in class discussion as one method of clarifying their understanding of the concepts raised. Active participation has been demonstrated to raise the grades of students on exams.

Missed Exams:

Make-up exams will only be granted under certifiably extenuating circumstances. The instructor must be contacted in advance of the class if the make-up is to be granted. This must be done in person.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments **will not** be accepted except under certifiable extenuating circumstances. Without certifiably extenuating circumstances, students will receive an F for the assignment if it is not handed in at the beginning of the class. The instructor must be contacted in advance of the class, by phone or in person, if an extension is to be granted, again only in the case of certifiably extenuating circumstances. Sending an e-mail does not constitute notification; it must be done in person. The instructor also recommends that you print the assignment off the night before it is due in case you have difficulty with your printer, as such an excuse is not considered a certifiably extenuating circumstance.

Cheating/Plagiarism:

Know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Any form of plagiarism -- including quoting either directly or by paraphrasing the ideas of another writer without acknowledging such, or "borrowing" a paper from a friend or buying one from an entrepreneur -- will result in an "F" for the paper and possibly the course. Students should make themselves aware of the university's policy on plagiarism as well. Plagiarism is a serious action which has serious consequences.

Incomplete Grades:

Incompletes will not be given, except in certifiably extenuating circumstances. Again, contact the instructor as soon as possible if such circumstances arise.

English Usage:

A university-level use of English is expected of all take home written work. All take-home work must be typed and be presented in a professional manner.

Electronic Devices:

No personal electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, calculators, electronic dictionaries, etc...) may be used during an examination without prior approval from the instructor. During an exam, turn off all cell phones and pagers and remove them from the desk.

Emergency Procedures:

Please read the emergency procedures posted on the wall of the classroom.