

Utopias and Dystopias

Political Science 89, section 2
Tuesdays and Thursday, 2:00pm-3:15pm, 112 Murphey
Fall 2011

Political theory is usually taught through non-fictional texts, but this seminar will focus on the political imagination of a variety of thinkers. Utopia and dystopia have old roots but are also contemporary. This seminar will focus on the political ideas and ideals in utopias and dystopias, starting with Thomas More's Utopia (who coined the term). We will read novels, one prose description of a utopia, and watch at least two films. We will investigate what utopias and dystopias tell us about our own society and how and why the genre changed over time.

Instructor:

Professor Jeff Spinner-Halev
370B Hamilton Hall, 962-0411
spinner@email.unc.edu
Office hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-2:30pm; Thursdays, 10:00-11:30

Requirements

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings and should bring the assigned reading to class with them. Class will be run through discussion; I will rarely, if ever, lecture. There will be two exams and two papers, each five pages long. The first exam is worth 15% of the grade; the second exam is worth 25%; each paper is worth 25% of the grade; participation is worth the remaining 10%.

Laptop and Electronics Policy

Laptops and all electronic devices (ipods, cell phones, etc.) are not allowed to be used during class. They should all be turned off and put away during class time.

E-Mail Policy

I sign on to email during the week, but only occasionally on the weekend. Do not expect me to reply to your email immediately, though I will respond within 24 hours during the week, and often quicker than that. I use email for questions that can be answered briefly. If you need to discuss a paper, an exam, or a course reading (or something else), please come see me during my office hours or make an appointment to see me. Email is an excellent way to make an appointment with me.

Readings

More, *Utopia* (Penguin)
Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (Signet)
Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (Bantam)
Zamyatin, *We* (Modern Library)
Gilman, *Herland* (Dover)
Leguin, *The Dispossessed* (EOS)
Owen, *A New View of Society* (available from Sakai)

Sakai can be reached at <https://sakai.unc.edu/portal>. For help on Sakai, you can go to <http://blog.sakai.unc.edu/students/>.

I may make small changes to the syllabus as the semester progresses.

August

- 23 Introduction
- 25 More, *Utopia*, Book 1
- 30 More, *Utopia*, Book 2

September

- 1 Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Part I
- 6 Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Part II
- 8 Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Part III
- 13 Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Part IV
- 15 First Exam; begin Metropolis (film)
- 20 Metropolis (film)
- 22 Metropolis (film), discussion
- 27 Owen, *A New View of Society*, pp. 1-43
- 29 No class

October

- 4 Owen, *A New View of Society*, pp. 44-68; Gilman, *Herland*, pp. 1-31
- 6 Gilman, *Herland*, pp. 32-71
- 11 Gilman, *Herland*, pp. 72-124
- 13 Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, pp. 1-66
- 18 Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, pp. 67-140
- 20 Fall Break
- 25 First Paper Due
- 27 Zamyatin, *We*, 3-70

November

- 1 Zamyatin, *We*, 71-139
- 3 Zamyatin, *We*, 140-203
- 8 Gattaca (film)
- 10 Gattaca (film)
- 15 Second Exam
- 17 Leguin, *The Dispossessed*, 1-90
- 22 Leguin, *The Dispossessed*, 91-191
- 24 Thanksgiving
- 29 Leguin, *The Dispossessed*, 192-387

December

- 1 Leguin, *The Dispossessed*, 308-387
- 6 Conclusion; Final Papers Due

Grading Scale

All grades will be given on a scale of 0 to 100, with each ten points (between 60 and 100) representing a full grade.

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-87
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
F	62 or below

Students and faculty at UNC are governed by the Honor Code, and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student who is caught attempting to represent someone else's work as their own or to cheat in any other manner will be subject to university discipline under the Honor Code.