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This course meets on Wednesdays from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. in PPHAC 301.

Office hours: Tuesdays, 2:45 to 3:45 p.m.; Wednesdays 11:00 a.m. to noon, and also by appointment.

UTOPIAS, DYSTOPIAS AND MANIFESTOS: THE IMAGINATION OF POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES

Moravian College/Political Science 355 (U2)/Fall 2013

Wednesdays/ 1:00-3:00 p.m./PPHAC 338

From Merriam Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary*, tenth edition:

utopia n [Utopia, imaginary and ideal country in Utopia (1516) by Sir Thomas More, fr. Gk an indefinitely remote place 2 *often cap*: a government and social conditions 3: an impractical scheme for social government

dystopia n [NL, fr. dys+topia (as in utopia)] (ca. 1950) 1: an imaginary place where people lead dehumanized and often fearful lives 2: ANTI-UTOPIA 2 — **dystopian**

manifesto n, pl -tos or -toes [It, denunciation, manifest, fr. *manifestare* to manifest, fr. L, fr. *manifestus*] (1647): a written statement declaring publicly the intentions, motives or views of its issuer.

Considerations of alternatives are often dismissed as utopian. This dismissal suggests that such visions are both needed and feared as all utopias convey a critical perspective on present ideas and practices. Sometimes expressing criticism is safer in the form of a utopia, a story about a place that does not exist (u-topos: no place), or at least not yet (no time). Conversely, manifestos are perceived as more threatening because they signal a prelude to action aimed at rocking the boat. In either case, an author inserts a vision into a world that others may perceive as smoothly or inevitably transitioning from past to future. Such visions multiply the available accounts of what is possible or desirable. Or, in the case of dystopias (the imagination of worst possible societies), we may become aware of dangerous tendencies in the present. To envision alternatives is to gain a critical distance from familiar and taken-for-granted worldviews such that new thoughts and new actions become possible. In this sense, we will investigate the distinction between “serious” and utopian political thought in order to consider the political significance of writing itself. The point of this course is not to be simply a reader of utopias, dystopias, and manifestos but to participate in these genres by writing. Writing an original political vision (in the genre of your choice) is the organizing goal and final project for this course. The central text in this course is yours.

Texts available for purchase at the Moravian College Bookstore:

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (Everyman's Library, 2006)

Donald E. Pitzer, editor, *America's Communal Utopias* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1997)

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Verso, 1998)

Thomas More, *Utopia* (Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Judith Shulevitz, *The Sabbath World: Glimpses of Another Order of Time* (Random House, 2010)

Wednesday, August 28	1 p.m. Introduction 2 p.m. Guided tour of Moravian History Museum
Wednesday, September 4	2 p.m. guided tour of Moravian Archives, Dr. Paul Peuker
Wednesday, September 11	Donald E. Pitzer, <i>America's Communal Utopias</i> (1997)
Wednesday, September 18	<i>America's Communal Utopias</i> , continued
Wednesday, September 25	Thomas More, <i>Utopia</i> (1516)
Friday, September 27	Paper due to Mrs. Elaine Deitch in Comenius 206 by noon.
Wednesday, October 2	<i>Utopia</i> , continued Frederick Jameson, "The Politics of Utopia" (2004)
Wednesday, October 9	Tommaso Campanella, <i>City of the Sun</i> (1602)
Wednesday, October 16	Judith Shulevitz, <i>The Sabbath World: Glimpses of Another Order of Time</i> (2010)
Friday, October 18	Vision outline due to Mrs. Deitch in Comenius 206 by noon.
Wednesday, October 23	<i>The Sabbath World: Glimpses of Another Order of Time</i> , continued
Wednesday, October 30	Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (1848)
Wednesday, November 6	<i>The Communist Manifesto</i> , continued
Wednesday, November 13	Margaret Atwood, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (1985)
Friday, November 15	Vision draft due to Mrs. Deitch in Comenius 206 by noon.
Wednesday, November 20	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , continued
Wednesday, November 27	No class. Thanksgiving break.
Wednesday, December 4	Last class: student course evaluations, vision

	presentations
Wednesday, December 11	Final revised vision due to Mrs. Deitch in Comenius 206 by noon

Date	Assignment	%
Friday, September 27	Paper	15%
Friday, October 18	Vision outline	15%
Friday, November 15	Vision draft	15%
Wednesday, December 11	Final vision	25%
Ongoing	Engagement	30%

What does an engagement grade represent?

A. Critical, innovative and careful reading of all assignments; substantial notes or written

preparation for discussion; frequent text-based contributions; contribution of discussion-shaping questions; engagement of the arguments of others; support of positive discussion dynamics.

B. Complete and careful readings; consistent notes or written preparation for discussion; lively, substantial, and argumentative text-based contributions; contribution of independent questions; engagement of the arguments of others.

C. Superficial but complete readings; minimal notes or written preparation for discussion; regular (at least once per meeting) discussion participation.

D. Incomplete or missing readings; lack of notes or written preparation for discussion; mostly passive presence.

F. Persistent vegetative state or low-level trance.

General Course Information

Please put your cellphone away before you enter the classroom.

Our purpose is dialogue, critical thinking, and thoughtful writing. Please protect the classroom as a space of learning. If you are a parent or a caretaker and thus need to be accessible at all times, please let me know.

1) I invite you to visit my office hours and to contact me via e-mail. Please be in touch with any questions and concerns. I am happy to help you with academic and institutional challenges that may come up during your first year. It is my pleasure to welcome you to Moravian College and to support your learning process.

2) Be diligent in your studies and attend class. Undocumented absences beyond the first will harm your engagement grade at the rate of 5% of your total course grade (per absence).

3) Drinks are fine, but food or gum impedes your ability to participate in our discussion and is therefore not appropriate.

4) Expect to work four to five hours on average outside of class per week. The workload varies, and the texts can be challenging. Give yourself plenty of time to read, reread, review, and take notes on texts. Our interest is developing a vocabulary of time concepts and a toolkit of questions and arguments about how we negotiate time. In this spirit, you will need to schedule sufficient time for writing exercises as well.

5) I strongly discourage late assignments, except in appropriately documented emergencies. For the sake of equity, please do not ask for special treatment. Late work is penalized at 30 % of the assignment grade on the four-point scale.

6) Plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment or the course. Please see Moravian College Student Handbook for an account of academic honesty. See <http://www.moravian.edu/studentlife/handbook/academic2.htm>

7) Do you need an accommodation for a disability? Please contact Elaine Mara, assistant director of learning services for academic and disability support at 1307 Main Street, or by calling (610) 861-1510. Accommodations require authorization from the Academic Support Center.

8) This syllabus is subject to change.