

Ecotopias

ID1 Course Syllabus

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Course Description

We begin a journey to explore possible futures for this human-dominated world. From creation myths to visions of apocalypse, we cast our hopes and fears into stories that reflect the long and complex relationship between humans and the natural world. We will examine variety of ecological utopias and dystopias and consider how they use (or misuse) scientific knowledge and cultural fears using a wide range of sources, which include utopian narratives, visual arts, science fiction film, and concrete attempts to create in utopian communities. Our sources include fictional works (e.g. More's *Utopia*, Gilman's *Herland*), film (e.g. *On the Beach*, *The Day After Tomorrow*, *Children of Men*, and *The Hunger Games*), various intentional community descriptions (e.g. communes, kibbutz). By drawing on these sources, we will evaluate we might imagine the relationship between "us," "them," and "the world," and how this triangle of actors continues to shape contemporary thought about our ecological context.

Rationale

The Utopia genre has a long history in western culture, but with each new period and generation, these ideas have been conceptualized in new ways—in part to address a new appreciation of some sort of social ill. By understanding the relationships between utopia/dystopia “geographies” and the reality as we perceive it, we might be able to decipher if there are some common threads, hopes, and assumptions that might be used to inform how we think of our shared future as humans.

Goals

ID1 emphasizes helping you become active participants in your own educations, encouraging you to think critically, to use writing as a way to aid in that thinking, and to learn from the perspectives and experiences of others. By the end of the semester, I hope you will have developed an idea that you own. Faculty do not lecture or give exams, and student discussions are the center of most class meetings.

Course Learning Outcomes This course teaches critical thinking and much of the evidence is based on your writing and participation in the course. The following course learning outcomes are the skills that we will focus on for the course: Pomona students should be able to engage the work and ideas of others; to articulate nuanced, reflective positions and present them in a sustained, persuasive manner to a specific imagined audience.

To this end, I have translated these outcomes and aligned them with an assessment rubric, so by the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Write an effective academic essay that has the following characteristics:
 - A well-defined and intentionally stated thesis;
 - logical structure that builds coherent arguments;
 - sufficient, appropriate, and interesting evidence to support each argument;
 - direct engagement of counter arguments;
 - source material that is analyzed in an original and insightful manner;
 - external sources which are used effectively;
 - consistent use of a sophisticated and academic style; and
 - follow the conventions in academic writing in terms of mechanics;
2. Contribute to seminars with knowledgeable and accurate use of texts, where claims are justified with clear arguments and use of

- evidence; and
3. Provide effective and constructive peer review.

Instructor Information

Instructor: Professor Marc Los Huertos

Office: Seeley G. Mudd, Room 130A

Office Hours: Monday 10:00-11:00 AM; Thursday 1:00-2:00 PM; or by arrangement.

Email: marc.loshuertos@pomona.edu¹

Phone: 909-607-7787 (in person meetings are best.)

Meeting Times and Location

The seminar will occur Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00-12:15 PM in Lincoln 1135.

Course Resources

Required Texts:

- More, T. 1999. *Utopia*. Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 9780872203761.
- Piercy, M. 1976. *Woman on the Edge of Time*. Fawcett. ISBN: 9780449210826.
- Callenbach, E. 1975. *Ecotopia*. Bantam Books. ISBN: 9780553348477.
- Gilman, CP. 1998. *Herland* Dover. ISBN: 9780486404295.
- Le Guin, U. *Dispossessed*. Harper Collins. ISBN: 9780061054884.
- Schaer, R. et al. 2000. *Utopia, Search in Western Society*. The New Your Public Library/Oxford University Press. 386p. (out of print, on 2 hour reserve at the library).

Recommended Resources (Buying or Borrowing)

Writing Resources

In lieu of a required standard grammar and style handbook, students are encouraged to become familiar with the extensive online resources available through the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL): <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>. Links to the Purdue OWL have been installed on our course Sakai site.

We will use a range of resources to develop our writing skills. These include an in-house writing assistant (Ki'Amber Thompson, XXX@pomona.edu) who will be working with you throughout the semester on your writing for this course.

¹ Please reserve the use of email to focus on logistic questions or concerns. In the last few years email has become an untenable method of communicating course content questions. Please use my office hours to address course content questions. In addition, do not turn in assignments via email.

In addition to our own in-house writing assistant, the Pomona College Writing Center (on the ground floor of Smith Campus Center across from the Living Room) offers students free, one-on-one consultations at any stage of the writing process from generating a thesis and structuring an argument to fine-tuning a draft. They also work with students on all aspects of oral presentations.

Pomona students majoring in subjects including Economics, Computer Science, English, and History will work with you on an assignment from any discipline. Consultations are available by appointment, which you can make online: <http://writing.pomona.edu>.

The Writing Center also offers drop-in hours Sundays through Thursdays from 8â€”10 p.m.

Library Resources

We also have a class website designed by the our class Librarian: Jessica Greene. She can be reached by email: jessica_greene@cuc.claremont.edu or by phone, 909-607-3892.

The website URL is <http://libguides.libraries.claremont.edu/ID1-Utopia>.

Important Dates

Last day to drop the course is *Thursday, October 20*. Be sure to check with me before the drop date if you are concerned about passing the course. There is no final and no class during finals week.

Learning Diversity Accommodations

Pomona College welcomes and accommodates students with disabilities as part of campus diversity and to ensure legal compliance. Students with disabilities should notify me in person or by email if they need accommodations. ALSO, see <http://www.pomona.edu/administration/dean-of-students/disability-accommodations/learning-disabilities.aspx> for more information.²

² Why are accommodations an important component of education?

Course Improvement

Project-based course require attention to the process and being willing to make adjustments in the project management. In contrasts to courses that have activities with pre-determined outcomes, this effort (workload) required will vary dramatically from week to week and between year to year. Please keep this in mind as the course develops and it will be up to your teams to develop a time management sys-

tem. In addition, be sure to schedule times that you meet with me to discuss and reflect on the progress of the course so I can facilitate effective use of your time.³

And even more generally, suggestions for improvement are welcome and is often key to the success of this type of course. Concerns about the course can be brought to my attention at any time.

³ Describe effective ways to communicate issues about the course?

Grading

This is a seminar style course. Thus, the course relies on engagement with the texts and active participation for each seminar meeting and writing. There are no written examinations in ID 1 and all written materials are due in class by the last day of classes, December XX.

Allocation of Points

The letter grade in the course will be based on classroom participation (20%) and the four papers. Grading is weighted as follows:

Essay	Brief Description	Max. Length	Due Date	Weight
#1	My Ecotopia	2	September 5	N/NP
#2	Parallel Visions	2	September 8	N/NP
#3	Entering a Conversation	5	September 23	10%
#4	The Modern Genre	5	October XX	20%
#5	Infotopia	2	October 22	10%
#6	Anti-Utopia	5	November 3	20%
#7	Utopia/Dystopia	8	November 20	25%
#8	Critical Ecotopia	8	December XX	15%
	Course facilitation			5%
	Course participation			20%

Participation

Effective participation in the course requires that you come to class prepared, having completed the reading, and ready to contribute to and learn from your peers. If you do not arrive prepared, the instructor may ask you to leave to improve the seminar content and reduce distractions. For primary source readings, you will be complete an active reading checklist to promote reading comprehension, which will be included in your participation grade as “completed” or “incomplete.”

The instructor reserves the right to lower the final grade because of poor class attendance and/or lack of preparedness. If you are unable to attend class, consult the instructor before the date of absence.

Grading projects requires a more sophisticated approach than a course with exams – and each time, I get better at it. But it’s not a

simple process and we will work together to ensure that we develop a grading system that is both fair AND flexible to ensure we feel properly rewarded (i.e. compensated).

Assignments will be submitted in electronic format or as links via Sakai. *Late assignments will not be accepted.*⁴

⁴ Why is this? Are there valid reasons?

Since the course is project-based, we may need to adjust grading proportions to reflect the course's progress. Of course, I will always consult you about such changes.

Because lecture and lab are integrated in this course, students will receive the same grade for the lecture and lab portions of the course. Students will have the opportunity to work towards the learning outcomes by working alone or in collaboration depending on the assignment.

Letter Grades

I hold students to high expectations in this course, but provide as much support as possible for you to succeed. After several years of teaching, I articulate what the grading structure means:⁵

⁵ What might be forms of evidence that would be associated with each grading category?

- Grade A represents exceptionally high achievement as a result of effort and intellectual initiative. The course learning outcomes were consistently exceeded and the work submitted could be used as models for other students to follow.
- Grade B represents a high achievement as a result of ability and intellectual initiative. The course learning outcomes were consistently exceeded but the work submitted could not be used as models for other students to follow.
- Grade C represents the minimum required achievement to meet the learning outcomes on a consistent basis.
- Grade D represents the minimum passing grade and the performance includes consistently unmet learning outcomes.
- Grade F represents unsatisfactory performance as a consistent failure to meet the learning outcomes and indicates failure in the course.

Doing well in the course requires effort, and I try to make the path to success as transparent as possible. However, if you feel like you are struggling, please contact me as soon as possible, and we can see how to proceed. If you find that you are unable to complete assignments on-time, consider dropping the course as a last resort. Last day to drop the course is **October 20, 2016**.

Extra Credit No extra credit will be made available in this course. Your success in the class is based on the assigned assessments.⁶

Based on the total points in the course, the cutoffs percentages below are used to assign final grades. Please note that I will not use D+, D-, F+, F- as a final grade in this course.

⁶ Describe some reasons that might justify extra credit. Describe reasons why extra credit might be a problem in a classroom.

Letter Grade	Lower Range	Upper Range
A ⁺	≥ 98%	–
A	≥ 93%	< 98%
A [–]	≥ 90%	< 93%
B ⁺	≥ 87%	< 90%
B	≥ 83%	< 87%
B [–]	≥ 80%	< 83%
C ⁺	≥ 77%	< 80%
C	≥ 73%	< 77%
C [–]	≥ 70%	< 73%
D	≥ 60%	< 70%
F	≥ 0%	< 60%

Finally, intellectual integrity plays a central role in your education. In addition, science for environmental policy requires integrity or the science is discounted. You are paying for your education, and what you invest will translate to what you receive from your experience at Pomona College. Unfortunately, some people need more motivation. Cheating and plagiarism do occur in scholarly work. They both engender professional dishonesty. I will hold students to the highest level of professional integrity. Cheating or committing plagiarism will result in the fail this course and be reported to the administration for possible further disciplinary actions as outlined by campus policy.

What is plagiarism? Plagiarism is the use of someone else's material and claiming as your own. In science, it is easy to avoid plagiarism by simply rephrasing and citing the author who has the authority to make the claims we need for our arguments. So, we will spend some time discussing how to properly cite authors. As a first rule of thumb, do not use any written or web-based resource as scientific evidence unless it is from a peer reviewed article. Most web-based content does not qualify as peer-reviewed content; however, these resources can be used to further your personal understanding or to help you locate scientific evidence. For this course, Web-site references are prohibited sources when turning material in.⁷

⁷ Describe some ways that you might be able to avoid any perception of plagiarism?

Proposed Reading & Seminar Schedule

Week 1: My Ecotopia

Seminar — Tuesday, August 30

- Environmentalists Cause Drought
- ESA as a weapon
- Environmental Monitoring and Sentinels
- First Meeting
- Discussion of Course Design and Syllabus
- History of ESA

Seminar — Thursday, September 1

- Kolbert, E. 2014. The Sixth Extinction: An unnatural history. Prologue-Chapter V.
- Dobson, AP, et al. 1997. Geographic distribution of endangered species in the United States. Science 275(5299):550-553.

Week 2: Freshwater Habitat and Resource Decision Making

Seminar — Tuesday, September 6

- Poff, N. 2003 River flows and water wars: Emerging science for environmental decision making. Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment 1(6):298-306.
- Karr, Interlandi, and Houtman. 2015. Environmental Science. Second Edition. Chapter 15. Water Pollution (pp. 278-297).
- Artiola, J, Pepper, IL, Brusseau, M. 2004. Environmental Monitoring and Characterization. Chapter 9. Monitoring Surface Waters (pp. 141-161).

Seminar — Thursday, September 8

- Martin, T. 2012. Eliciting expert knowledge in conservation science. Conservation Biology 26(1):29-38.
- Kolbert, E. 2014. The Sixth Extinction: An unnatural history. Chapter VI-Chapter XIII.

Week 3: Habitat Quality

Seminar — Tuesday, September 13

- Straight, S. 2015. Santa Ana River. Orion Magazine 34(1):21-XX.
- Gandy M. 2006. Riparian Anomie: Reflections on the Los Angeles River. Landscape Research 31(2):135-145.

Seminar — Thursday, September 15

- Rózsa, L and Zoltán V. 2015. Co-extinct and critically co-endangered species of parasitic lice, and conservation-induced extinction: should lice be reintroduced to their hosts? *Oryx* 49(1): 107-110.

Week 4: Community Profiling using Molecular Biology Tools

Seminar — Tuesday, September 20

- Kysar, DA. 2010. Regulating from Nowhere: Environmental Law and the Search
- Passalacqua, NG 2015. On the definition of element, chorotype and component in biogeography. *Journal of Biogeography* 42(4)611-6
- Pungetti, G, G Oviedo, and D Hooke. 2012. Chapter 17 Maori and Lizards IN *Sacred Species and Sites: Advances in Biocultural Conservation*. Cambridge University Press, Nature X:XXX

Seminar — Thursday, September 22

- Houck, Oliver A. 1994. Why Do We Protect Endangered Species, and What Does That Say about Whether Restrictions on Private Property to Protect Them Constitute Takings. *Iowa L. Rev.* 80:297.

Week 5: Knowledge Production and Litigation

Seminar — Tuesday, September 27 No Class

Seminar — Thursday, September 29

- A Civil Action

Week 6: Environmental Health and Risks

Seminar — Tuesday, October 4

- Fagan, D. 2013. Toms River. Chapters 1-7 (xi-134 pp).

Seminar — Thursday, October 6

- Davies, K. 2013. The Rise of the U.S. Environmental Health Movement. Chapter 1-3 (pp. 1-62).

Week 7: Environmental Health Hazards

Seminar — Tuesday, October 11

- Fagan, D. 2013. Toms River. Chapters 8-13 (137-248 pp).
- Kriebel, David. 2001. The Precautionary Principle in Environmental Science. *Environmental Health Perspectives* 109:871-876.

Seminar — Thursday, October 13

- TBD

Week 8: Hazards and Class

Fall Recess — Tuesday, October 18

Seminar — Thursday, October 20

- Fagan, D. 2013. Toms River. Chapters 14-19 (pp. 251-360).
- Kriebel, David. 2001. The Precautionary Principle in Environmental Science. *Environmental Health Perspectives* 109:871-876.

Week 9: Risk and Clusters

Seminar — Tuesday, October 25

- Fagan, D. 2013. Toms River. Chapters 20-24 (363-462 pp).
- Wartenberg, D. 2001. Investigating Disease Clusters: Why, When and How? Analysis and Interpretation of Disease Clusters and Ecological Studies. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series A (Statistics in Society)* 164(1):13-22.

Seminar — Thursday, October 27

- TBD

Week 10: Mapping the Environment

Seminar — Tuesday, November 1

- tbd

Seminar — Thursday, November 3

- IPCC Climate Change Evidence
- Skeptic's Case
- Hutton Interview

Week 11: Epistemology and the Environment

Seminar — Tuesday, November 8

- Buttel and Taylor. 1992. How do we know we have global environmental problems. *Geoforum* 23(3):405-416.
- Schneider, S. 2009. The worst-case scenario. *Nature* 458:1104-1105.
- Peterson, TC, Connolley, WM. and Fleck, J. 2008. The Myth of the 1970s Global Cooling Scientific Consensus. *American Meteorological Society*. 9:1325-1337.

Seminar — Thursday, November 10

- test

Week 12: Temperature Records

Seminar — Tuesday, November 15

- test

Seminar — Thursday, November 17

- tbd

Week 13: Tensions

Seminar — Tuesday, November 22

- tbd

Thanksgiving Recess — Thursday, November 24

Week 14: Use and Abuse of Data in Environmental Science

Seminar — Tuesday, November 29

- TBD

Seminar — Thursday, December 1

- TBD

Week 15: Critical Utopia

Seminar — Tuesday, December 6

- Final Paper Workshop

Final Paper Due — Wednesday, December 7