

# *Ecotopias*

## *ID1 Course Syllabus*

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### *Contents*

<i>Course Description</i>	1
<i>Rationale</i>	1
<i>Goals</i>	1
<i>Instructor Information</i>	2
<i>Meeting Times and Location</i>	2
<i>Course Resources</i>	3
<i>Writing Resources</i>	3
<i>Library Resources</i>	3
<i>Important Dates</i>	4
<i>Learning Diversity Accommodations</i>	4
<i>Course Improvement</i>	4
<i>Grading</i>	4
<i>Proposed Reading &amp; Seminar Schedule</i>	8

### *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.edu<sup>1</sup>

*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.

<sup>1</sup> 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](mailto: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.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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.

<sup>3</sup> 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 7.

### *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	5%
#4	The Modern Genre	5	October 20	15%
#5	Infotopia	2	October 25	5%
#6	Anti-Utopia	5	November 17	15%
#7	Utopia/Dystopia	8	December 1	20%
#8	Critical Ecotopia	8	December 6	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.

All papers will be submitted as hard-copies on the class due date. *Late assignments will not be accepted.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Why is this? Are there valid reasons?

### *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:<sup>5</sup>

- 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.<sup>6</sup>

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.

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.

<sup>5</sup> What might be forms of evidence that would be associated with each grading category?

<sup>6</sup> 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 <sup>+</sup>	≥ 98%	–
A	≥ 93%	< 98%
A <sup>–</sup>	≥ 90%	< 93%
B <sup>+</sup>	≥ 87%	< 90%
B	≥ 83%	< 87%
B <sup>–</sup>	≥ 80%	< 83%
C <sup>+</sup>	≥ 77%	< 80%
C	≥ 73%	< 77%
C <sup>–</sup>	≥ 70%	< 73%
D	≥ 60%	< 70%
F	≥ 0%	< 60%

*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.<sup>7</sup>

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

*Proposed Reading & Seminar Schedule*

**Week 1: My Ecotopia**

*Tuesday, August 30* No Class – Convocation

*Thursday, September 1* No readings

**Week 2: Visualizing Ecotopia**

*Tuesday, September 6* Reading:

- Schaer, R, G. Claeys, L Tower Sargent. 2000. Utopia. The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World. The New York Public Library/Oxford University Press.

**Paper #1 Due in Class**

*Thursday, September 8* Reading:

- Kelley et al. 2015. Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought. Preceeding of the National Academy of Science 112(11):3241–3246.

**Paper #2 Due in Class**

**Week 3: Ecotopia Explored**

*Tuesday, September 13* —Reading:

- Callenbach, E. 1975. Ecotopia: The Notebooks and Reports of William Weston.

*Thursday, September 15* Reading:

- Parsons, . 2013. Bioregionalism and Watershed Consciousness. IN Environmental Anthropology Engaging Ecotopia. Eds. Lockyer and Veteto.
- Berg, P. 2013. Growing a Life-Place Politics. IN Environmental Anthropology Engaging Ecotopia. Eds. Lockyer and Veteto.

**Week 4: Ecotopia and Resilience**

*Tuesday, September 20* Reading:

- Formmer, B. 2011. Climate change and the resilience society: utopia or realistic option for German regions? Natural Hazards 58:85-101.



*Thursday, September 22* Reading:

- More. 1516. On the Best Kind of a Republic and About the New Island of Utopia. Preamble.

***Week 5: More's Utopia***

Tuesday, September 27: No Class — Reading Groups

Reading:

- More. 1516. On the Best Kind of a Republic and About the New Island of Utopia. Part I.

Thursday, September 29 — No Class — Reading Groups

Reading:

- More. 1516. On the Best Kind of a Republic and About the New Island of Utopia. Part II.

***Week 6: Environmental Health and Risks***

*Tuesday, October 4—Readings:*

- Fox. 1993. Utopia. An Elusive Vision. Chapter 3. Critical Reception.
- Logan. 19XX. The Meaning of More's Utopia. Europe.

Thursday, October 6

Readings:

- Gilman. 1915. Herland. A Lost Feminist Utopian Novel

***Week 7: Moore Ecotopias***

*Tuesday, October 11* Select on of the following Readings:

- Piercy, M. 1976. Woman on the Edge of Time. Fawcett. ISBN: 9780449210826.
- Le Guin, U. 19XX Dispossessed. Harper Collins. ISBN: 9780061054884.

*Thursday, October 13*

- TBD

***Week 8: Information Sciences – A Question of Utopia***

*Fall Recess — Tuesday, October 18*

*Thursday, October 20*

- Eve MP. 2016. The Open-Source Everything Manifesto: Transparency, Truth, and Trust by Robert David Steele. *Utopian Studies* 27(1):121-124.

Paper # Due in Class

***Week 9: Anti-Utopia***

*Tuesday, October 25*

- Srinivasan. 2002. Policy Brief Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. Stanford University.
- Kallis 2015. Imaginaries of Hope: The Utopianism of Degrowth
- Smart. 20XX. Made in America: The Unsustainable All-consuming Global Free-market “Utopia”.

*Thursday, October 27*

- TBD

***Week 10: The Tension***

*Seminar — Tuesday, November 1*

- tbd

*Thursday, November 3*

- tbd

***Week 11: The Tension***

*Tuesday, November 8*

- tbd

*Thursday, November 10*

- test

***Week 12: Critical Utopia***

*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*