Introduction

What constitutes an ideal world? The word utopia, taken from Sir Thomas Moore’s 1516 text of the same name, describes one such type of imagined ideal community in which social issues such as poverty, violence, and disease are largely eliminated. In contrast, dystopias present us with imagined societies characterized by despotic regimes, ecological catastrophe, and widespread disease. With works such as The Hunger Games series, the TV version of The Handmaid’s Tale, and so many more, dystopian fiction is currently experiencing quite the revival. Yet dystopias do not merely exist within fiction, they are a very real part of our world. It could even be argued that the popularity of dystopian fiction today is indicative of an increasing anxiety regarding the myriad potential dystopias that lurk just beyond the horizon. Within this course, we will examine popular dystopian fiction and film of the 20th and 21st centuries and connect the themes we encounter with real-world issues. In doing so, we will consider the ways in which dystopian worlds contend with a vast array of themes and topics, including inter/national politics, ethics, society-building, war and violence, environmental concerns, and issues of race and gender.

UWS Goals

The University Writing Seminar introduces you to the power of writing as a means of communication and as a process of thinking and understanding. You will formulate meaningful arguments, support them with observations and evidence, and convey them clearly and persuasively. You will gain the tools to be a successful and confident writer in any discipline and become an active participant in critical conversations across the University and beyond. Most importantly, these skills will prepare you to engage as an informed citizen in a global society.

UWS Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Understand writing as a recursive process of thinking and communication
- Articulate elements of effective writing and integrate them into their own work
- Participate in critical conversations by responding to openings, problems, or contradictions in existing scholarship
- Assess their own and others’ writing with respect to audience and purpose
- Generate original questions and pursue independent research
- Identify and evaluate sources and use them responsibly
Required Course Texts

All required readings/films for this course will be available on our LATTE page.

Course Requirements

**Essay 1**: The close reading essay. In this assignment you will formulate an argument about the meaning of dystopia based on one of the short stories we will read.

**Essay 2**: The lens essay. For this essay, you will analyze the film *Mad Max: Fury Road* through the lens of a theoretical essay by either Laura Mulvey or Greg Garrard and make a claim about how concepts from the essay help to shape your understanding of *Mad Max: Fury Road*.

**Essay 3**: The researched argument. For this assignment you identify a prominent issue or event that is potentially dystopic and make an argument about how this issue has arisen and been allowed to persist using outside research to support your argument.

**Portfolio**: At the end of the semester you will assemble all of your work (including pre-draft assignments, rough drafts, final drafts, and peer review sheets) in an electronic folder and email it to me, together with a letter describing how your understanding of yourself as a writer has changed over the course of the semester. **This means that you need to save electronically all your writing from the semester.**

**Drafting**

Four steps lead up to the final draft of each essay:

- **Pre-draft assignments.** Each essay will be preceded by two or three pre-draft assignments—short pieces of writing designed to help you develop ideas. Please submit a copy of each pre-draft in the designated assignment slot on our LATTE page before class (i.e., before 5:00 pm) on the day that they are due. Additionally, you will need to bring a hard copy into class on the days that we have peer review (see schedule below for exact dates). These assignments will receive either a check or a note telling you to redo the work and will count as part of your overall grade. You can re-submit any work until the end of the unit.

- **First drafts.** You are required to turn in a first draft of each paper. These drafts are important opportunities for you to receive feedback from me and your classmates in peer review. I do not expect these drafts to be polished, but I do expect them to be complete—otherwise we cannot give you useful advice.

- **Peer Review.** After the first draft of each paper is due you will form a group with two of your classmates and read each other’s drafts. In class you will give your partners feedback. I will collect your peer review letters and they will count as part of your grade. These activities increase your sense of audience awareness and give you an opportunity to reflect on the concepts we have discussed in class.

- **Conferences.** Each student will have three twenty-minute conferences with me over the course of the semester, one to discuss each first draft. Attendance is required; missing a conference is the equivalent of missing a class. Sign-up sheets will be distributed in class.
Class participation
Your consistent participation in class sessions constitutes a significant portion of your grade and is the most critical component of a successful course. Class participation includes:

- Your prompt, prepared, alert, consistent attendance
- The completion of reading assignments by the dates listed in the syllabus
- Your thoughtful contributions to class discussions

Writing Center
The University Writing Center, located on Goldfarb 232 on the Goldfarb mezzanine of the library, provides free one-on-one help with your essays. You are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this service. Writing Center tutors are well trained and will work with you in 45 minute sessions that you can schedule online: (www.brandeis.edu/programs/writing/writingcenter/index.html). Students who take advantage of this service will receive a form during their tutorial that will entitle them to a 24-hour extension on either the draft or revision of their essay. Essays will be due electronically by 11:55 PM on the following day. Only one extension is allowed per essay.

First Year Experience
UWS is the centerpiece of the First Year Experience (FYE), which introduces students to the rich intellectual life of the university. As part of the UWS, students will attend one Critical Conversation between faculty from different departments. The goals of the Critical Conversations are to build first year cohort identity and introduce students to Brandeis’ scholarly discourse and the variety of ways in which our faculty engage with the world and each other. Each seminar will also assign a brief experiential learning activity to expand the boundaries of the conventional classroom. Every student must attend one Experiential Learning event throughout the semester (a list detailing upcoming events will be posted to LATTE and regularly updated) and write a 1-1.5 page response describing the speaker and purpose of the event, how the event enriches the intellectual atmosphere of the university, and reflecting on your personal experience of the event.

Grades
Close reading essay: 20%
Lens essay: 25%
Researched argument: 35%
Class participation (includes research presentations and FYE): 10%
Portfolio (includes LATTE posts, pre-drafts, and peer reviews): 10%

Formatting
Please submit all essays to LATTE in a Word document (no pdfs! No pages!) and to your peers in a google doc. Essays must use 1-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman font. Essays must have a title and be double-spaced. Pre-drafts that are submitted in hard copy must be typed and stapled. For every written piece of work please have your name, my name, course number, and date at the top of the page (left-aligned). In addition, please include your last name and the page number in the upper right of the document header. For example:
Late Work, Extensions, and Minimum Page Requirements
I am usually willing to offer extensions, given legitimate reasons. If you are afraid your work will not be completed in time, please contact me more than 24 hours before the due date and arrange for an extension. Otherwise, late work, including first submissions, will lead to a reduction of third of a grade per day (B+→B→B− and so on) on the final paper. If a paper is due electronically at 11:55 PM and you submit it at 11:56 PM, it is late. In addition, final papers that do not meet minimum page requirements will receive a third of a grade reduction for each page that the paper falls short.

Attendance
Attending class is essential for you to get the most from this course; in-class discussions are critical for your learning. Therefore, please do not miss class unless you have an emergency. If you miss more than three classes, each additional absence will result in the lowering of your final grade for the course by a 1/3 of a grade. Please contact me in the event of an emergency that prevents you from attending class. Seven or more absences will result in a failing grade.

Laptops
Laptops are allowed in this class. I trust that you will use them for note-taking and accessing the readings only. Please do not take advantage of that trust.

Email Etiquette
When you write to me or another professor or professional, please include a greeting (e.g., “Hi Professor,” “Hello Ms. Wilbanks,” “Dear Carissa,” etc.), full sentences, proper punctuation, and your name at the bottom of the email. Always include a brief note with an attachment. This is really good practice for when you enter the world beyond college.

Academic Honesty
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually in section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook.
Instances of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Department of Student Rights and Community Standards. Potential sanctions include failure on the essay, failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about my expectations, please ask.

**Accommodations**
Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you are a student who needs accommodations as outlined in an accommodations letter, please talk with me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as you can. I want to support you.

**Textbooks**
If you are having difficulty purchasing course materials, please make an appointment with your Student Financial Services or Academic Services advisor to discuss possible funding options and/or textbook alternatives.

**Four-Credit Course**
Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

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<th>Date</th>
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| Wed. Aug 28th (Week 1 Day 1) | • Introductions  
                   • Syllabus Overview  
                   • Discussion: Dystopia | **All LATTE assignments should be turned in BEFORE class (before 5:00 pm) on the day they are due, unless stated otherwise** |
| Mon. Sep 2nd (No Class)  | Labor Day                                     | No Class                                                                      |
| Wed. Sep 4th (Week 2 Day 2) | • Intro to Close Reading  
                   • Close Reading Essay Overview & Assignment Sequence  
                   • Discussion: “The Lottery” | • Read: “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson  
                   • Write: LATTE post responding to story |
| Mon. Sep 9th (Week 3 Day 3) | • Thesis Statements  
                   • Discussion: “2 B R Ø 2 B” | • Read: “2 B R Ø 2 B” by Kurt Vonnegut  
                   • Write: LATTE post responding to story |
| Wed. Sep 11th (Week 3 Day 4) | • Motive/Stakes  
                   • Discussion: “‘Repent, Harlequin!’ Said the Ticktock Man” | • Read: “‘Repent, Harlequin!’ Said the Ticktock Man” by Harlan Ellison  
                   • Write: Pre-Draft 1.1 Close Reading a Passage |
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| Mon. Sep 16th (Week 4 Day 5) | • Peer Review of Pre-Draft 1.2  
• Essay Intros/Openers  
• Structuring an Argument  
• Overview of Grading Rubric | • Write: Pre-Draft 1.2 Motive/Thesis (bring hard copies to class) |
| Wed. Sep 18th (Week 4 Day 6)  | • Peer Review of Pre-Draft 1.3  
• Essay Conclusions   | • Write: Pre-Draft 1.3 Outline (bring hard copies to class) |
| Fri. Sep 20th (No Class)  | ***Draft of Close Reading Essay WITH Cover Letter due on LATTE by 11:59 pm*** | Send copies to your peer review group as well (through email or in a google doc) |
| Mon. Sep 23rd (Week 5 Day 7) | • Peer Review  
• Transition to Unit 2: What is a Lens Text? | • Write: Peer Review Letters and comments on their essays (bring hard copies to class) |

***CONFERENCES ON TUESDAY (9/24) AND WEDNESDAY (9/25)***

**Unit 2: Lens Analysis**

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| Wed. Sep 25th (Week 5 Day 8) | • Critically Analyzing a Film/TV  
• Lens Analysis Assignment Sequence  
• Discussion: Mad Max: Fury Road | • Watch: Mad Max: Fury Road |

Sun. Sep 29th (No Class)  | ***Revision of Close Reading Essay with Cover Letter due on LATTE by 11:59 pm*** |  |
| Mon. Sep 30th (No Class) | Rosh Hashanah | No Class |
| Wed. Oct 2nd (Week 6 Day 9) | • Review of Mulvey Reading  
• Discussion: Mad Max: Fury Road and “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” | • Read: “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” by Laura Mulvey  
• Write: Pre-Draft 2.1 Reverse Outline for Mulvey |
<p>| Thurs. Oct 3rd (Week 6 Day 10) (Brandeis Mon.) | • Discussion: Mad Max: Fury Road and “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” continued |  |</p>
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<th>Date</th>
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| Mon. Oct 7th (Week 7 Day 11)                      | • Review of Garrard Reading  
• Discussion: *Mad Max: Fury Road* and “Beginnings: Pollution”  
• Read: “Beginnings: Pollution” from Greg Garrard’s *Ecocriticism*  
• Write: Pre-Draft 2.1 Reverse Outline for Garrard |
| Wed. Oct 9th (No Class)                            | Yom Kippur                                                                                   |
| Mon. Oct 14th (No Class)                           | Indigenous Peoples’ Day / Sukkot                                                           |
| Tues. Oct 15th (Week 8 Day 12) (Brandeis Mon.)     | • Peer Review of Theses and Pre-Draft 2.2  
• Discussion: *Mad Max: Fury Road* and theoretical texts, continued  
• Write: Draft of Thesis (bring hard copies to class)  
• Write: Pre-draft 2.2 Mini Lens Analysis (bring hard copies to class) |
| Wed. Oct 16th (Week 8 Day 13)                       | • Using Evidence Effectively  
• Discuss: Sample Lens Essay  
• Read: *Write Now* Lens Essay “Soldiers on the Street: How Insecurity can Justify Authoritarianism” by Jacob Knauer (pgs. 27-37) |
| Thurs. Oct 17th (No Class)                         | *Pre-Draft 2.3 Outline due on LATTE by 11:59 pm*                                              |
| Sun. Oct 20th (No Class)                           | ***Draft of Lens Analysis Essay with Cover Letter due on LATTE by 11:59 pm*** Send copies to your peer review group as well (through email or in a google doc) |
| Mon. Oct 21st (No Class)                           | Shmini Atzeret                                                                               |
| Wed. Oct 23rd (Week 9 Day 14)                      | • Peer Review  
• Problem Sentences  
• Write: Peer Review Letters and comments on their essays (bring hard copies to class) |
## Unit 3: Research Essay

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<tr>
<td>Mon. Oct 28th</td>
<td>• Intro to Research Essay&lt;br&gt;• Research Essay Assignment Sequence</td>
<td>• Write: LATTE post reflecting on previous research experience (1-2 paragraphs)</td>
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<td>(Week10 Day 15)</td>
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<td>Wed. Oct 30th</td>
<td>• Finding Scholarly Sources&lt;br&gt;• Plagiarism&lt;br&gt;• Citation</td>
<td><em><strong>Revision of Lens Analysis Essay with Cover Letter due on LATTE by 11:59 pm</strong></em></td>
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<td>Mon. Nov 4th</td>
<td>• Discuss: Sample Research Essay&lt;br&gt;• Presentation Handout</td>
<td>• Read: Write Now Research Essay “The Most Dangerous Negro”: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the FBI” by Jacob Silverman (pgs. 51-64)&lt;br&gt;• Write: LATTE post responding to essay (1-2 paragraphs)</td>
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<td>Tues. Nov 5th</td>
<td>Attend Critical Conversation: “Fiddling While Rome Burns” at 5:30 pm in Sherman Hall</td>
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<td>Wed. Nov 6th</td>
<td>• Library Session #1 (Meet at front desk of library at 5:00 pm)</td>
<td>• Complete Library Tutorial on LATTE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. Nov 11th</td>
<td>• Zotero Workshop</td>
<td>• Download Zotero and related links&lt;br&gt;• Write: Pre-Draft 3.1 Research Paper Plan</td>
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<td>(Week12 Day 19)</td>
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<td>Wed. Nov 13th</td>
<td>• Library Session #2</td>
<td>• Research: Find two library books to help with your paper and bring in their call numbers/library locations</td>
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<td>(Week12 Day 20)</td>
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<td>Fri. Nov 15th</td>
<td><em>Pre-Draft 3.2 Annotated Bibliography due to LATTE by 11:59 pm</em></td>
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***CONFERENCES ON MONDAY (11/18) AND TUESDAY (11/19)***
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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Assignment Due</th>
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| **Mon. Nov 18**<sup>th</sup> (Week13 Day 21) | Discuss: Critical Conversation  
Portfolio Instructions | Write: ~1-page response to Critical Conversation |
| **Wed. Nov 20**<sup>th</sup> (Week13 Day 22) | Short Presentations on Research Papers |                                                     |
| **Fri. Nov 22**<sup>nd</sup> (No Class) *Pre-Draft 3.3 Outline due to LATTE by 11:59 pm* | | |
| **Mon. Nov 25**<sup>th</sup> (Week14 Day 23) | Short Presentations on Research Papers |                                                     |
| **Wed. Nov 27**<sup>th</sup> (No Class) Fall Break | | No Class |
| **Sun. Dec 1**<sup>st</sup> (No Class) ***Draft of Research Essay with Cover Letter due on LATTE by 11:59 pm*** | | Send copies to your peer review group as well (through email or in a google doc) |
| **Mon. Dec 2**<sup>nd</sup> (Week15 Day 24) | Short Presentations on Research Papers |                                                     |
| **Wed. Dec 4**<sup>th</sup> (Week15 Day 25) | Peer Review  
Short Presentations on Research Papers | Write: Peer Review Letters and comments on their essays (bring hard copies to class) |
| **Mon. Dec 9**<sup>th</sup> (Week16 Day 26) | Short Presentations on Research Papers |                                                     |
| **Wed. Dec 11**<sup>th</sup> (No Class) ***Portfolios (in one document) including: Portfolio Cover Letter and Revision of Research Essay w/ Cover Letter, due on LATTE by 11:59 pm*** | | See Portfolio handout for instructions and order of assignments |