

**FYS144: Young Adult Dystopian Literature**  
**CentreTerm 2016**

Dr. Shayna Sheinfeld  
Course time: 9:20–12:20 MTWRF  
Course location: OLIN 122  
Office: Crouse 438  
Office hours: MTWRF 1:30–2:30 and by appointment  
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**Course Description:**

Dystopian literature has increased in popularity in the last two decades, especially with young adults (e.g. Hunger Games, Divergent, Maze Runner). While these narratives flame the imagination of the youth with terrifying—and often realistic—depictions of society, their message is more complex. One function of this literature is to serve as a critique to social problems through the medium of fiction. Through numerous novels (and cinematic portrayals of this genre), we will explore dystopian worlds, examine some of their proposed social problems, and use this literary analysis to explore issues we face in contemporary society. There will be a service-learning component to this course.

**Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this course, a diligent student will be able to:

- Engage in close and critical analysis of fictional dystopian narratives and movies
- Identify and analyze broad themes and social critiques presented in young adult dystopian literature
- Identify and critically engage with contemporary social problems found in the news and in social media
- Find community service opportunities that engage with the student’s own concerns in our society
- Lead discussions and orally/visually present material in a creative manner

**Assigned Reading:**

- *Feed* by MT Anderson
- *Genesis* by Bernard Beckett
- *Unwind* by Neal Shusterman
- *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy
- Various articles available on Moodle and/or handed out in class

**Course Requirements:**

Attendance and Participation	10%
Reading Quizzes	15%
Reflection Papers (4 x 5%)	20%
Presentations (4 x 5%)	20%
Final Project Presentation	15%
Final Project (Written Portion)	20%

**Attendance and Participation:**

Attendance and participation are a necessary part of learning in this course. Participation will be marked based on engagement during class, participation in class discussions, periodic short assignments, and interactive lectures.

You are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings. CentreTerm is an intensive learning experience and missing even one class will set you behind. Thus, more than one class absence will result in at least a 5% reduction in your overall course grade. Absences will only be “excused” when official documentation is provided. Official documentation includes written confirmation of a medical condition from a physician and permission from the college to participate in college sanctioned events. If you need to miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to obtain relevant notes and class information.

**Reading Quizzes:**

There will be a reading quiz for each day that we have class and that we read from one of our novels. The quizzes may cover any of the material in the novels assigned for that class session as well as any additional readings/articles.

**Reflection Papers:**

You will be asked to write a total of four (4) reflection papers. Three of the reflections will be based on our field trips and readings and the last will be based on the novel *Feed* and your winter break activity narrative that you submitted to me before class began. Prompts will be posted to Moodle.

**Presentations**

You will be responsible for four short presentations during the CentreTerm session (not including your final project presentation). Details and rubrics for these assignments will be posted to Moodle.:

1. Utopia—this group presentation will include an ideal society that your group has created.
2. Book discussion—In groups of three, you will be responsible for leading discussion on the reading assigned for the day.
3. Social Problem—you will present individually on a contemporary social problem of your choice. You will conduct research to evaluate the history, scope, and details of your understanding of the problem.
4. Potential Solution—you will present individually on a potential solution to some aspect of a social problem. This solution is not meant to be comprehensive; instead you will focus on some small aspect of a social problem and what an *individual* could do to help address the problem.

**Final Project:**

The final project will be a culmination of the various activities, assignments, field trips, and readings that we have engaged with during CentreTerm. It will thus be a comprehensive project. Either individually or in a team of 2, students will identify a contemporary societal problem (what), discuss its implications in society and why it is important to address (why), and mark a course of action for addressing at least one aspect of the problem *on an individual level* (how).

The problem and proposed solution will first be presented to the class through a dystopian narrative—a fictional story created by the individual or team, after which the problem and potential solution should be discussed with the class. Guidelines and a rubric will be posted on Moodle by the beginning of the second week of class.

1. Written portion (20%). This portion of the final will consist of two distinct parts:
  - a. Research paper on your societal issue, its implications, and how you plan to address it. This section should have full citations and should be written at an academic level.
  - b. Young Adult Dystopian story that addresses your issue. Note that the default for this portion is a written narrative; however, if you plan to create a video or perform a play, with approval from me you may submit a script or some other form of written preparation. The audience for this story should be young adults.
2. Presentation portion (15%): This portion will be no more than 30 minutes and will present the following:
  - a. Your dystopian story. Be creative! Think about a fun/interactive way to engage your audience (young adults). The sky is the limits in terms of your presentation. You may read, perform, act, dance, sing, make a video, have interactive elements, use puppets, bring food, etc. (Note that if you plan to create a video or audio and would like additional help, you need to see me as early as possible so we can work with CTL to make sure you have the resources, although smart phones make the use of audio/video easier than ever now.)
  - b. The explanation of the narrative. This portion may be interactive as well. Begin with questions about your dystopian story, and see if the audience (in this case, your classmates and professor) can determine the problem you were addressing. You should then present your research and findings to the class.

### **Additional Information:**

#### **Reading Expectations:**

I expect that you will have read all the assigned materials for a given day before coming to class. All readings that do not come from the assigned books will be posted on our course Moodle site. Completing the assigned readings before class will allow you to participate knowledgeably in class discussion and will also help you effectively complete your written work. Consider the following questions as you read:

- What is the basic plot of the narrative? Who are the main characters?
- What issues or concerns are being addressed through the narrative? These may or may not be overt or obvious concerns.
- How does this society relate to contemporary society? Is it similar? Different? If so, how?
- Are there any assumptions underlying the narrative? If so, what are they?
- How does this reading connect to other course materials and discussions, and to your lived experience?
- (For articles) What is the author's thesis or main argument?

### **Late Policy:**

All assignments are due at the start of class on the date specified on the syllabus unless otherwise noted. Late written assignments will be penalized by one full letter grade (10%) for each day the assignment is late, unless you contact me **BEFORE** the due date and documentation of the illness or emergency is provided. Late presentations will not be permitted unless official documentation of illness or emergency is provided **BEFORE** the due date.

### **Group Work:**

During Centre Term there is more group work than there may be during the regular semester. **This means that you will need to go out of your way to make yourself available *outside of the classroom* to work with your group mates.** If there is one particular member of the group who is not pulling their weight, it is each individual member's responsibility to contact me either through e-mail or during office hours so that I am aware of these issues.

### **Electronics Policy:**

Laptops and tablets are not allowed in class, except when noted. If you have purchased digital copies of your texts, or when we are discussing readings that you can access only through your electronics, you are welcome to use them as long as you inform me. There will be specific times in class when you may want to use electronics (e.g. group work, research)— You are welcome to access your electronics at these times. *I will note when you are welcome to use your electronics.* When electronics are permitted, I ask that you respect your fellow classmates as well as your professor and any guests by *not* using them to access materials unrelated to the class. Even if I cannot see it, it is a distraction for those sitting around you. *Please use good judgment and be respectful.* If you need accommodations, please speak with me. **Cell phones are not permitted for any purpose.**



*"I'm the Ghost of Christmas Future, but it's an alternate timeline where the apes take over."*

**Academic Honesty:** Students are required to observe the honor code. Plagiarism—any attempt by a student to represent the work of another as one's own—will not be tolerated. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, all of the following: copying the answers of another student on an examination, copying or substantially restating the work of another person or persons in any oral or written work without citing the appropriate source, and collaboration with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution. All instances of plagiarism will be dealt with according to university policy, no matter how minor.

**Learning Challenges:** Students who may need additional assistance due to learning differences or learning challenges are expected to see me as early as possible in the semester. I am willing to make accommodations whenever possible, but only if proper documentation has been provided *and you see me in advance*. If you need accommodations but are not certain how to find them, I can assist you by helping you reach the College’s coordinators for disabilities, Dr. Mary Gulley (x5223) who will prepare a signed Accommodation Notice. Note that in any course the instructor must sign the back of the Accommodation Notice before any necessary accommodations can take effect.

**I am committed to making our classroom an inclusive and supportive learning environment for people of all ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.**

<b>COURSE OUTLINE</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
T Jan 5	Introduction; Defining Utopia and Dystopia	* <i>The Giver</i> , 1–90 *Booker, “On Dystopia,” (moodle)	*Reading Quiz #1
W Jan 6	Utopia; Defining Young Adult and Literature	* <i>The Giver</i> , 90–225 (finish) * “Oregon was Founded as a Racist Utopia” (moodle)	*Reading Quiz #2 *Utopia Project Presentation
R Jan 7	Monastery as Utopia	* <i>Unwind</i> , 1–117 *Spend time exploring <a href="http://www.monks.org/">http://www.monks.org/</a> (linked on moodle)	Field Trip: Abbey of Gethsemani (Trappist, KY)
F Jan 8	Utopia; <i>The Giver</i> movie	* <i>Unwind</i> , 119–195 *Thomas Merton, <i>Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander</i> , 153–156 (moodle)	*Reading Quiz #3
M Jan 11	Identifying Social Issues, <i>The Giver</i> movie	* <i>Unwind</i> , finish	*Reading Quiz #4
T Jan 12	Social Issues I; Author/Book Context	* <i>Feed</i> , 1–104	*Reading Quiz #5 *Gethsemani Reflection Due
W Jan 13	Social Issues II; Author/Book Context, cont.	* <i>Feed</i> , 105–203	*Reading Quiz #6
R Jan 14	Social Issues in Action	* <i>Feed</i> , finish	Field Trip: The Hope Center and BrokeSpoke (Lexington)
F Jan 15	Social Issues III; What’s Religion have to do with YADL?	*Gooding, “Our Posthuman Adolescence: Dystopia, Information Technologies, and the Construction of Subjectivity in M.T.	*Reading Quiz #7 *Winter Break/ <i>Feed</i> Reflection Due

		Anderson's Feed," (moodle)	
M Jan 18	What do we do about social issues?	* <i>Genesis</i> , 1–79	*Reading Quiz #8 *Lexington Reflection Due
T Jan 19	What do we do, cont.	* <i>Genesis</i> , finish	*Reading Quiz #9
W Jan 20	What do we do, cont. <i>Divergent</i> , movie.	* <i>The Road</i> , 1–101	Founders Day
R Jan 21		* <i>The Road</i> , 102–204	Field Trip: Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM); (Louisville)
F Jan 22	Refugees; Guest Speaker	* <i>The Road</i> , finish	*Reading Quiz #10
S Jan 23			*KRM Reflection Due, 5pm via e-mail.
M Jan 25	Final Project Presentations		
T Jan 26	Final Project Presentations		

\*Note that additional *short* reading assignments may be announced in class.