English 4381: Dystopian Literature

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Course Description
Dystopian fiction challenges us to imagine a world that appears Utopian at first—one of order, of technological advancement, of economic prosperity—, but such a world requires sacrifices from its citizens. Upon closer inspection, such a world is, in fact, dystopian—one where citizens are controlled by totalitarian governments, sacrifice the natural environment for the sake of technological advancement, and have limited civil liberties. Through the lens of speculative and science-fiction, we may reflect upon how our own world compares to such dystopias.

Your Semester Grade
Discussion Posts 10%
Research Assignments 10%
Midterm Exam 20%
Seminar Paper 40%
Final Exam 20%

Discussion Posts
Discussion posts are vital because allow us to mimic a face-to-face classroom experience. They allow students and the instructor to exchange ideas and learn from one another. These posts will be due at the end of the week, and although students must post at least one comment per week, with the exception of week eight. Students may post as many times as they wish and respond to as many posts as they like. Although I encourage students to feel free to voice their opinions they relate to the subject being discussed, I expect members of this class this class to respect differences of opinion.
Research Assignments

A seminar paper takes an entire semester to work on, so students need to begin work on the paper as soon as the class begins. Every-other week, students will complete work that will aid them in the research and writing of the paper.

Annotated Bibliography – A list of ten sources with a complete bibliographic citation for a critical work followed by two sentences explaining the overall argument of the critical work.

Tentative and Final Thesis - developing a clear, concise argument takes several attempts, so students will turn in a tentative thesis statement during the first week of class and a final thesis.

Outline – a two page outline that clearly describes the major topics and subtopics that will be discussed in the paper. The outline must be organized and well-developed.

Exams

There are two exams over the course of the semester:

The Midterm Exam Students will answer their choice of 2 of 3 essay questions that cover the readings up to the point of the midterm. Each question is worth 50 points.

The Final Exam Students will answer their choice of 2 of 3 essay questions that cover the readings after the midterm up to the point of the final exam. Each question is worth 50 points.

Seminar Paper

This paper is a longer, individual paper (5-7 pages) over one or more major text(s) we will be evaluating over the semester. Students will use the Research Assignments they work on over the course of the summer session and apply their research to this paper. Students are expected to read, evaluate, and respond to the text(s) critically and deepen their understanding of the text(s). Students must include at least five citations in their paper, and will preferably come from sources in the Annotated Bibliography, but they may be different sources. (see MLA Handbook for guidelines or the OWL at Purdue: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/)

Use of Technology

Assignments must be uploaded on Blackboard as WORD or PDF documents. I will not accept excuses for any technical difficulties students may have with their assignments, which include computers crashing, difficulty uploading papers, Blackboard shutting down, etc.

Student Handbook Statement of Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one’s own class and/or course work, being individually accountable, and demonstrating intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is a personal choice to abide by the standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility.
Because education is a shared effort to achieve learning through the exchange of ideas, students, faculty, and staff have the collective responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. Ethical behavior and independent thought are essential for the highest level of academic achievement, which then must be measured. Academic achievement includes scholarship, teaching, and learning, all of which are shared endeavors. Grades are a device used to quantify the successful accumulation of knowledge through learning. Adhering to the standards of academic integrity ensures grades are earned honestly. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students, faculty, and staff build their educational and professional careers. Students must understand the principles of academic integrity and abide by them in all classes and/or course work at the University. Academic Misconduct violations are outlined in Part I, section B.1 of the Code of Student Conduct. If there are questions of interpretation of academic integrity policies or about what might constitute an academic integrity violation, students are responsible for seeking guidance from the faculty member teaching the course in question.

Operating Policy 10.5 (student accommodation)

Angelo State University is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation. All students at Angelo State University must have the capacity and ambition to undertake, with reasonable accommodation from the faculty and administration, the academic challenges necessary to fulfill the academic requirements for the degree or certification programs which they are pursuing. Operating Policy 10.19 (Holy Day): “Religious holy day” means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code §11.20. A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

Title IX at Angelo State University

The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. Students are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU’s Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at: Michelle Boone,
Inclusion Statement

We will be addressing controversial topics related to underprivileged groups throughout the semester. I support a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honor all identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). Please let me if there is a particular name or pronouns by which you identify. Also, please let me know if anything I or your peers may say in class makes you feel excluded or marginalized. You may come see me in my office, leave me a note, and your concerns will remain anonymous.

Confidential Resources Available to Students:

Office of Title IX Compliance: 325-486-6357
University Health Clinic: 325-942-2171
University Counseling Center: 325-942-2173
ASU Crisis Helpline: 325-486-6345
Schedule of Readings and Assignments
(Tentative and Subject to Change)

Week One
Lectures
Course Introduction and Policies
Lecture on Speculative, Science-Fiction, and Dystopian Literature
Margaret Atwood: *The Handmaid’s Tale*

Assignments (Due by Midnight 6/7)
Post on Discussion Board
Tentative Thesis Statement

Week Two
Lectures
Henry David Thoreau: selection from *Walden*
B.F. Skinner: selection from *Walden Two*
Isac Asimov: selection from *I, Robot*

Assignments (Due by Midnight 6/14)
Post on Discussion Board
Annotated Bibliography

Week Three
Lectures
Cormac McCarthy: *The Road*
Review for Midterm Exam

Assignments (Due by Midnight by 6/21)
Post on Discussion Board

Midterm Exam

**Week Four**

**Lectures**

Joanna Russ: “A Few Things I know About Whileaway”

Ursula K. LeGuin: Selections

**Assignments (Due by Midnight by 6/28)**

Post on Discussion Board by 6/28

Final Thesis and Outline

**Week Five**

**Lectures**

Shirley Jackson: “The Lottery”

Lecture on Students’ Choice

**Assignments (Due by Midnight 7/1)**

Final Exam

Research Paper