

CSEN7029 UTOPIAS, DYSTOPIAS AND THE FUNCTIONS OF FICTIONS
TIMETABLE

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Text</i>
1	Introduction Political/ Philosophical Debate (the emergence of the absolute state)	Philosophical debate and social engineering; Relation of place and narrative voice in the construction of the utopia/dystopia	the discovery of the Americas	Thomas More, <i>Utopia</i> 1518
2	Political/Philosophic al Debate (the rise of Puritanism)	Philosophical debate: the ideal and the practical political state; rejections of certainties; redemption.	the discovery of the Americas	William Shakespeare, <i>The Tempest</i> 1610–11
3	Philosophical discussion from inside the state (debates around reason)	Questions of perspective: outside looking in/inside looking out; reason and the dissipation of desire	The Enlightenment and the focus on rational choice	Samuel Johnson, <i>The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia</i> 1759
4	Exploration, Colonisation & Gender (an alternative history in a woman-only state)	the nature and construction of history and its relation to gender; the problem of desire; the significance of stories	narratives from the New World - European colonisation and the Great War; the construction of gender; the cult of motherhood	Charlotte Perkins Gilman <i>Herland</i> . 1915
5	Technology and the ideal (consumerism and the dissipation of desire	Science, Anti-science and technology Excess & dissipation of desire	eugenics, capitalism, advertising and conditioning; linguistic expression reduced to slogans; insistence on instant gratification	Alduous Huxley, <i>Brave New World</i> 1932

6	Control & redirection of desire (linguistic degradation and denial of pleasure)	Linguistic degeneration and the loss of the ability to reason; translating desire to group hate	Soviet communism, conditioning, propaganda and surveillance. Linguistic degradation by removing the language of expression. Denial of pleasure	George Orwell, <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> , 1949
7	Violence as redirection of desire (linguistic alienation and the mob)	Dehumanisation: Linguistic degeneration and ultraviolence	postwar baby boom and the emergence of youth culture, the 'juvenile delinquent', the growth of teenage 'tribes' in place of class consciousness, behavioural psychology, the creativity or constriction of language (Chomsky on Skinner)	Anthony Burgess, <i>A Clockwork Orange</i> , 1962
8	Control & dissipation of desire (collective ascetism versus libertine indulgence)	Questions of perspective: outside looking in or inside looking out; collective ascetism versus libertine indulgence	early 1970s interest in alternative societies; technology and future worlds; the continuing cold war; post civil rights movement in the US/theoretical developments (such as Guy Debord's situationists; Roland Barthes; Lacan, Kristeva etc); anarchism	Ursula K. Le Guin <i>The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia</i> , 1974
9	Gender, control & redirection of desire (restriction of literacy and denial of pleasure)	Control of literacy and the significance of stories, the question of gender; the problem of desire;	comparative anthropology; ecology, feminism, postmodernism, historiography	Margaret Atwood, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , 1985
10	The loss of history and the need for story (post-apocalyptic degeneration)	Breakdown and redemption: Linguistic degeneration, social disorder and the significance of stories	nuclear apocalypse, postmodern (esp Derrida) interest in language and meaning; metafiction; historiography; ecology,	Russell Hoban, <i>Riddley Walker</i> , 1980

Assessment: 5,000 word essay

Deadline: 10 January, 2018