Dr. Benjamin Goldberg big@usf.edu

**TR 11:00am-12:15pm @ SOC 285** Office Hours: via Zoom / in person

(email for appointments!)

**HUM 4261/AMS 6254:UTOPIA AND SCIENCE FICTION**

This is a course that explores the idea of *utopia—*a perfect place and society—through works of science fiction. In this course we will address not only the meaning of utopia, but explore how it has been conceived, attempted, thought about, and represented in literature and film. We will find that in order to talk about utopias, we must also discuss and understand the idea of *dystopia:* the opposite of a utopia, a place and society that is full of suffering. Finally, we will be concerned not only with fictional representations, but about the ideas of utopia in real life.

**Course Objectives**

Students completing this course should be able to:

1. Think critically about the meaning and history of utopias
2. Understand the various ways in which utopias have been represented and explored in film and literature.
3. Critically analyze, interpret, and discuss various kinds of texts.
4. Write clearly and persuasively through both contextualization and close reading/interpretation of texts.

**Required Readings**

The Dispossessed – Ursula K. Le Guin

The Player of Games – Iain M. Banks

All other readings will be available in PDF on Canvas.

**Films**

*Each student will be able to screen these films for free.*

1984 – dir. Michael Radford (link will be sent via email)

Brazil – dir. Terry Gilliam (MUST BE VIEWED BEFORE 1/31/23)

@ <https://digitalcampus.swankmp.net/usf272137/play/399e60cc12f5ece7?referrer=direct>

Black Panther – dir. Ryan Coogler (link will be sent via email)

**Student Success**

1. ***Make sure to follow along each module***. Each module contains videos, readings, and audio recordings relating to the theme of each unit. Each student must read, listen, and watch these. If you have any issues accessing this material, please don’t hesitate to get in touch!
2. ***Make sure to stay in touch!*** If you are confused, or have ANY questions, please don’t hesitate to get in touch! Please email me at [big@usf.edu](mailto:big@usf.edu) or contact me via Canvas email. I will reply ASAP! There are also many resources if you need help with technology, disability issues, or any other academic issue. Here are some helpful links:
   1. Disability Services: <http://www.usf.edu/student-affairs/student-disabilities-services/>
   2. CANVAS help:
      1. Quickstart Guide: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-2036>
      2. Student Video Guide: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-3891>
      3. Student Guide: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-4121>
   3. Technical Problems: For technical questions and support, contact the IT Help Desk at (813) 974-1222 or [help@usf.edu](mailto:help@usf.edu).
      1. To resolve your issue quicker, please include the following information:
      2. Course ID if the problem occurred within a course.
      3. What you were trying to do when the problem occurred.
      4. The exact wording of any error you received.
   4. Academic Support Services: <http://www.usf.edu/student-success/undergrads/>
   5. The Library has many helpful resources as well: <http://www.lib.usf.edu/>
   6. LinkedIn Learning has a suite of learning tutorials for a variety of software applications and topics.
      1. To access, login to MyUSF and go to the Learning and Teaching Tools menu.
      2. Select Online Training (LinkedIn Learning).

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is the foundation of the University of South Florida’s commitment to the academic honesty and personal integrity of its university community. Academic integrity is grounded in certain fundamental values, which include honesty, respect, and fairness. Broadly defined, academic honesty is the completion of all academic endeavors and claims of scholarly knowledge as representative of one’s own efforts. The process for faculty reporting of academic misconduct, as well as the student’s options for appeal, are outlined in detail in [**USF Regulation 3.027**](https://usf.app.box.com/v/usfregulation3027).

**Academic Grievance Procedure**

The purpose of these procedures is to provide all undergraduate and graduate students taking courses at the University of South Florida an opportunity for objective review of facts and events pertinent to the cause of the academic grievance. An “academic grievance” is a claim that a specific academic decision or action that affects that student’s academic record or status has violated published policies and procedures, or has been applied to the grievant in a manner different from that used for other students.

**Disability Access**

Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Students Accessibility Services (SAS) (SVC 1133) in order to receive academic accommodations. SAS encourages students to notify instructors of accommodation needs at least five (5) business days prior to needing the accommodation. A letter from SAS must accompany this request.

**Disruption to Academic Progress**

Disruptive students in the academic setting hinder the educational process. Disruption of the academic process ([**USF Regulation 3.025**](https://usf.app.box.com/v/usfregulation3025)) is defined as the act, words, or general conduct of a student in a classroom or other academic environment which in the reasonable estimation of the instructor: (a) directs attention away from the academic matters at hand, such as noisy distractions, persistent, disrespectful or abusive interruption of lecture, exam, academic discussion, or general University operations, or (b) presents a danger to the health, safety, or well-being of self or other persons.

**Food and Housing Insecurity**

We recognize that student facing financial difficulty in securing a stable place to live and/or in affording sufficient groceries may be at risk of these financial issues affecting their performance in classes. Students with these needs are urged to contact Feed-A-Bull ([**feedabull@usf.edu**](mailto:FeedABull@usf.edu?subject=) or [**their website**](https://www.usf.edu/student-affairs/student-health-services/services/feed-a-bull-food-pantry.aspx)), or Student Outreach and Support ([**socat@usf.edu**](mailto:socat@usf.edu?subject=) or [**their website**](https://www.usf.edu/student-affairs/student-outreach-support/)).

**Religious Observances**

All students have a right to expect that the University will reasonably accommodate their religious observances, practices and beliefs ([**USF Policy 10-045**](https://usf.app.box.com/v/usfpolicy10-045)). The University of South Florida, through its faculty, will make every attempt to schedule required classes and examinations in view of customarily observed religious holidays of those religious groups or communities comprising USF’s constituency. Students are expected to attend classes and take examinations as determined by the university. No student shall be compelled to attend class or sit for an examination at a day or time prohibited by his or her religious belief. However, students should review the course requirements and meeting days and times to avoid foreseeable conflicts, as excessive absences in a given term may prevent a student from completing the academic requirements of a specific course. Students are expected to notify their instructors at the beginning of each academic term if they intend to be absent for a class or announced examination, in accordance with this Policy.

**Sexual Misconduct / Sexual Harassment**

USF is committed to providing an environment free from sex discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence ([**USF Policy 0-004**](https://usf.app.box.com/v/usfpolicy0-004)). The USF Center for Victim Advocacy is a confidential resource where you can talk about incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based crimes including sexual assault, stalking, and domestic/relationship violence. This confidential resource can help you without having to report your situation to either the [**Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities**](https://www.usf.edu/student-affairs/student-rights-responsibilities/) (OSSR) or the [**Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity**](https://www.usf.edu/diversity/) (DIEO), unless you request that they make a report. Please be aware that in compliance with Title IX and under the USF Policy, educators must report incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based crimes including sexual assault, stalking, and domestic/relationship violence. If you disclose any of these situations in class, in papers, or personally to an educator, he or she is required to report it to OSSR or DIEO for investigation. Contact the USF [**Center for Victim Advocacy**](https://www.usf.edu/student-affairs/victim-advocacy/): 813-974-5757.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USF to suspend normal operations. During this time, USF may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include, but are not limited to: Learning Management System, online conferencing, email messaging, and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor the Learning Management System for each class for course-specific communication, and the main USF, College, and Department websites, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information ([**USF Policy 6-010**](https://usf.app.box.com/v/usfpolicy6-010)). For additional guidance on emergency protective actions and hazards that affect the University, please visit [**www.usf.edu/em**](https://www.usf.edu/administrative-services/emergency-management/)

**Grades**

100-95% A <94-90% A- <90-87% B+ <87-84% B <84-80% B-

<80-77% C+ <77-74% C <74-70% C- <70-67% D+ <67-64% D

<64-60% D- < 60% F

*Attendance and Participation (20%)*

Everyone must attend and participate in class.

*Close Reading/Interpretation Papers (2 papers, total 40%)*

Length: No more than 5 pages (double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt)

Everyone must write two close readings of one (or a few) scenes from one of the books (either *The Dispossessed* or *The Player of Games*) and from one of the movies(either *Brazil or Black Panther*). Alternate topics are also possible BUT THESE MUST BE APPROVED BY THE INSTRUCTOR!

What is a close reading? A close reading is a careful, detailed analysis of some part of a text—be it a scene from a movie, or a few passages from a novel. The reading analyzes the text not just in terms of what it says explicitly (eg, the words on the page and adjectives used, the colors and sets of a film, bits of dialogue or interaction, etc), but in terms of what it implies, what it might say about the meaning of the novel or film, or of life, what it assumes about the world, and so on.

A close reading makes sure to interpret not just what is explicit—the content of dialogue, the actions of the characters—but also what is implicit—the description or representation of clothing, scenery, sound, or the choices of specific words and phrases. Close readings often interpret scenes symbolically, in terms of the analogies and metaphors used, the references to other literature or films made, and in terms of how we might read ‘in between the lines.’

**Due Dates (****to be turned in through Canvas):**

1. **First Close Reading: 2.25.23** **before midnight!**
2. **Second Close Reading: 4.08.23 before midnight!**

*Final Essay (40%)*

Length: No more than 14 Pages (double spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt)

Everyone must turn in at the end term a research paper on the topic of the course (utopia and science fiction). You must examine a film, television episode, book, or comic, either discussed in class or outside of it, and analyze its conceptualization and representation of utopia and utopian ideas. Your paper should offer a clear, specific interpretation of the film and its use of utopia.

**YOU MUST GET YOUR CHOICE APPROVED BY THE INSTRUCTOR BY THE END OF THE SPRING BREAK, ON OR BEFORE MARCH 20!**

Your essay must include at least two close readings of different passages or scenes from your chosen text, and you must use these scenes to support your overall interpretation and argument. Your paper may take up any (or none) of the issues, ideas, and themes discussed in the course. Your essay must contain at least three outside, secondary sources.

**Due (to be turned in through Canvas): MAY 2 before midnight!**

A picture containing text, book

Description automatically generated

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

***All readings are found online or via Canvas in PDF format. If you have trouble, email me! (***[***big@usf.edu***](mailto:big@usf.edu)***)***

**MODULE 1: Introducing Utopia**

**January 10 – Introduction**

Read the various excerpts at:

<https://www.luminarium.org/renlit/utopiaexcerpts.htm>

**January 12, 17, 19, 24, 26 – What is Utopia**

Read the various excerpts at:

<https://www.luminarium.org/renlit/utopiaexcerpts.htm>

Zarka – The Meaning of Utopia

Levitas – Bloch on Abstract and Concrete Utopia

Kellner – Bloch Utopia Critique

Kellner Ohara – Utopia and Marxism in Bloch

Claes/ Sargent – 20th C from Utopia Reader:

H. G. Wells, A Modern Utopia 312-319

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Herland 319-329

B. F. Skinner, Walden Two 372-390

“Walden Two Revisited” 390-398

“‘Nonesuch,’ excerpted from *Utopia Drive: A Road Trip Through America*’*s Most Radical Idea*.” (Erik Reece, Macmillan, August 2016)

<http://us.macmillan.com/excerpt?isbn=9780374710750>’

<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/08/utopia-erik-reece/494741/>

**MODULE 2: The Dispossessed**

**January 31****, February 3, 7, 9 – The Dispossessed**

Read *The Dispossessed*

Curtis – Skepticism and Utopia

Bierman – Ambiguity in Utopia

Davis – Dynamic and Revolutionary Utopia

Sabia – Individual and Community

Le Guin - Response

**MODULE 3: Dystopian Film,1984, and Brazil**

**February 14, 16, 21 –** **1984**

Claes/ Sargent – 20th C from Utopia Reader:

George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four 398-407

Watch: *1984*, dir. Michael Radford (1984)

(Link to film sent via email)

**February 23: NO CLASS**

**February 28, March 2, 7, 9 – Brazil**

Erikson – Brazil 1984

Watch: *Brazil*, dir. Terry Gilliam (1985)

@ <https://digitalcampus.swankmp.net/usf272137/play/399e60cc12f5ece7?referrer=direct>

Available through 1/31/2023!

**Monday Mar 13 – Sunday Mar 19 – NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)**

**MODULE 4: The Player of Games**

**March 21, 23, 28, 30 – The Player of Games**

Iain M Banks, A FEW NOTES ON THE CULTURE

<http://www.vavatch.co.uk/books/banks/cultnote.htm>

Read *The Player of Games*

Kulbicki – Banks Culture Utopia

Read Chs. 2-4 of The Player of Games

Jacobs – Ambiguous Utopia of Banks

Labuschagne – Deconstructing Utopia in Player of Games

Rumpala – AI and Politics

Lippens- Scientific Peace in Player of Games

Brown – Intervention in Liberal Utopia in Banks

**March 21 – NO CLASS**

**MODULE 5: Utopian Film and Black Panther**

**March 23, 28, 30** **– Utopia and Film**

Tietgen - Political Utopias in Film

Fitting – Taxonomy

Atkinson - Visualization of Utopia

Moylan – Utopia

Utopia (Encyclopedia Entry)

<https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Utopia>

**April 4, 6, 11, 13 – Black Panther**

Watch: *Black Panther*, dir. Ryan Coogler (2018)

Robinson Neumann - Global Perspectives

Singer - Double Consc in BP

Catsam - Response to BP

Agostino - Representation identification definition in BP

**April 18, 20 – Potential Guest Lecture / Catch up**

**April 25, 27 – NO CLASS**

***\*\*\*FINAL ESSAY DUE: MAY 2 2023 BY MIDNIGHT\*\*\****