

## **American Utopias, HISU 693-01, Spring 2001**

Students in this course will have the opportunity to explore the radical religious, social, and political visions that inspired, and continue to encourage, American Utopian experimentation. Readings, discussions, and lectures examine both these ideas and the actual histories of individual American utopias. Throughout the course we will also attempt to assess the relative influence of the utopian example on mainstream society and culture.

Excellent preparation for class discussion is essential to doing well in this class. There are very few meetings so it should be difficult to attend the few sessions we have. Readings are designed to be interesting and constitute the primary labor of students in the class. There may be a brief quiz at the beginning of class on the reading for each week and students will be asked to evaluate their class participation each class.

Two unexcused absences (lacking doctor's note) will result in a maximum score of a B in the class. Every absence after this point will result in further reductions of 5 points in the final grade.

Books for the course are available at the bookstore and a packet is also available at Metro copy on Calhoun street. Bring all readings for each class with you for each class meeting.

All students are required to write a paper on a utopian theme of their choice. Examples of themes include gender, spiritual practices, charismatic leadership, economic redistribution, class, nature, technology, planning, architecture, land so on (one theme per student, reserve early!). Students must integrate readings from at least 10 reading assignments in their papers. No outside research is required; in fact, I strongly discourage using anything but class readings and lectures for the project. A first draft is required for all papers and late papers will not be accepted for either the first or final drafts.

40% Class Participation  
30% final  
30% Paper

### Required Texts

Course Packets from Metro Copy  
Sir Thomas More, Utopia  
Edward Bellamy, Looking backward  
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Herland  
Henry David Thoreau, Walden  
Tom Wolfe, The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test  
B. F. Skinner, Walden Two

Week 1, January 22

**Introduction and the European Roots of Utopia**

Sir Thomas More, Utopia, Book II  
Rosabeth Kanter, Commitment and Community, Selections (Reader)

Week 2, January 29

**Colonial Utopias**

John Winthrop's "City on a Hill" (Reader)  
Kenneth Lockridge, A New England Town,

Week 3, February 5

**The Industrial/Urban Revolution and Transcendental Utopias**

Henry David Thoreau, Walden, 107-233  
Joel Myerson, The Brook Farm Book, Selections (Reader)

Week 4, February 12

**Charles Fourier, Robert Owen, Etienne Cabet and American Utopias**

Carl Guarneri, The Utopian Alternative, Selections (Reader)  
Edward Spann, Brotherly Tomorrows, Selections (Reader)

Week 5, February 19

**Spiritual Utopians: Shakers, Oneidans, Hutterites, and Mormons**

Dolores Hayden, Seven American Utopias, Selections (Reader)  
Mark Twain, Roughing it, Selections (Reader)  
Oneida Community, An Autobiography, Selections (Reader)  
The Hutterites, an audio program, [www.theconnection.org/archive/2000/11/1130b.shtml](http://www.theconnection.org/archive/2000/11/1130b.shtml)

Week 6, March 5

**Woman's Sphere, Feminist Utopias, Women in Utopia**

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Herland (whole Book)

Week 7, March 12

**The Gilded Age and its Utopian Critics: Henry George, Daniel Burnham, and Edward Bellamy**

Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward (whole Book)

Week 8, March 19

**The Western Utopian Environment**

Kevin Starr, Americans and the California Dream, Selections (Reader)  
Robert Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, Selections (Reader)  
"Isis Unveiled"( Reader)

Week 9, March 26

**The Sinister Metropolis: The Garden City Tradition, Broadacre City, Modernism, Arcosanti**

Clarence Stein, Toward New Towns for America, Selections (Reader)  
Robert Fishman, Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century, Selections (Reader)  
Peter Blake, No Place Like Utopia, Selections (Reader)  
Michael Sorkin, Exquisite Corpse, Selections (Reader)

Week 10, April 2

**Utopia on Holiday: Chautauqua, Weslyn Grove, Artist Colonies, Disneyland, and Seaside**

Ellen Weiss, City in the Woods, Selections (Reader)  
Mabel Dodge Luhan, Edge of Taos Desert, Selections (Reader)  
Tony Cohan, On Mexican Time, Selections (Reader)  
Stephen Fjellmlan, Vinyl Leaves, Selections (Reader)

Week 11, April 9

**Liberated Individuals, Strict disciplines: Utopia at Mid-Century**

B.F. Skinner, walden Two, 1-148  
Rosabeth Kanter, Commitment and Community, Selections (Reader)  
Helen and Scott Nearing, The Good Life, Selections (Reader)

Week 12, April 16

**Exuberant Utopia: The Counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s**

Tom Wolfe, The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test, Selections TBA  
Rosabeth Kanter, Commitment and Community, Selections (Reader)  
Laurence Vesey, The Communal Experience, Selections (Reader)

Week 13, April 23

**Suburbia/Modern America as Utopia**

Robert Fishman, Bourgeois Utopias, Selections (Reader)  
Jean Baudrillard, America, Selections (Reader)

Nicholas Dagen Bloom, Ph.D.  
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