

UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

ENG502 LITERATURE AND UTOPIA IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND (7.5 ECTS)  
COURSE OUTLINE - FALL SEMESTER 2018/19  
TUESDAY / FRIDAY, 10:30-12:00, ROOM 003 (ΧΩΔ01)

**Instructor:** Dr. Stella Achilleos

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**Office Hours:** Tuesday / Friday, 9:00-10:30 and 13:30-14:00 (B101 in ΧΩΔ02)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course aims to examine the emergence and development of the genre of utopia in early modern England. The course will start by exploring some of the classical precursors of the genre, focusing especially on Plato's *The Republic*. We will then concentrate on a wide range of utopian texts produced in England from the sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries, starting with Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) - a formative text the title of which gave its name to the genre - and finishing with Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). Our reading will involve the interrogation of a number of issues relating to the genre of utopia in the early modern period, such as: the relations between utopian writing, travel narratives and the broader context of travel and exploration in the early modern world; utopia, history and the extent to which utopian texts may be said to function as critique of dominant ideologies; the questions of social organization, government and law in relation to the concept of the ideal society; the question of population and colonization; utopia, violence and biopolitics; utopia, science, education, and religion; utopia and reformist or radical politics; utopia and questions of gender.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students are expected to be able to demonstrate their familiarity with texts under study and to develop the ability to analyze them within the social, political, and historical context of the early modern period. Further, students are expected to be able to engage critically with the wide range of issues raised by the texts.

### TEXTBOOKS

- *Three Early Modern Utopias: Utopia, New Atlantis, and The Isle of Pines*, ed. by Susan Bruce, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999; reissued, 2008)
- Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. by Claude Rawson and Ian Higgins, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Other primary material and selected secondary material will be made available to students during the course of the semester. Students will also be given a list of secondary material placed on reserve in the library. Further, they are encouraged to explore books on regular loan, as well as journals articles (many of which may be accessed electronically through the library).

### ASSESSMENT

- Midterm exam (take-home paper): 30%
- Final examination (take-home paper): 50%
- Presentation and presentation report: 10%
- Participation and attendance: 10%

## Schedule of readings, lectures, exams and deadlines

### Week:

1. Sept.4/7 Introduction to the course

#### Readings:

- Selection of texts from *The Utopia Reader*, ed. Gregory Claeys and Lyman Tower Sargent (New York and London: New York University Press, 1999).  
- J. C. Davis, "Utopia and the ideal society: in search of a definition," in *Utopia and the Ideal Society: A Study of English Utopian Writing 1516-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 11-40.

2. Sept.11/14 Plato, extracts from *The Republic*

3. Sept.18/21 More, *Utopia*

4. Sept.25/28 More, *Utopia*

#### Secondary Reading on More's Utopia

- Quentin Skinner, "Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* and the language of Renaissance Humanism," in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 79-98.  
- Richard Halpern, "Rational Kernel, Mystical Shell: Reification and Desire in Thomas More's *Utopia*," in *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 136-175.

5. Oct.2/5 Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis*

6. Oct.9 Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis*

#### Secondary Reading on New Atlantis

- Denise Albanese, "The *New Atlantis* and the Uses of Utopia," *English Literary History* 57 (1990): 503-28.  
- David Colclough, "Ethics and Politics in the *New Atlantis*," in *Francis Bacon's New Atlantis: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Bronwen Price (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 60-81.

Oct.12 Gerrard Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*

7. Oct.16/19 Gerrard Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*

Secondary Reading on *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*

- Robert Appelbaum, "Winstanley the Digger," in *Literature and Utopian Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 153-71.
- James Holstun, "The Diggers' *Hortus Inconclusus*," in *Ehud's Dagger: Class Struggle in the English Revolution* (London and New York: Verso, 2000), pp. 367-433.

October 19: Deadline to hand in midterm essay

8. Oct.23/26 Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World*

9. Oct.30/Nov.2 Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World*

Secondary Reading on *The Blazing World*:

- Carrie Hintz, "'But One Opinion': Fear of Dissent in Cavendish's *New Blazing World*", *Utopian Studies* 7.1 (1996): 25-37.
- Ellayne Fowler, "Margaret Cavendish and the ideal commonwealth", *Utopian Studies* 7.1 (1996): 38-48.

10. Nov.6/9 Henry Neville, *The Isle of Pines*

11. Nov.13/16 Henry Neville, *The Isle of Pines*

Secondary Reading on *The Isle of Pines*:

- Amy Boesky, "Nation, Miscegenation: Membering Utopia in Henry Neville's *Isle of Pines*," in *Founding Fictions: Utopias in Early Modern England* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1996), pp. 141-161.

12. Nov.20/23 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

13. Nov.27/30 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

Secondary Reading on *Gulliver's Travels*

- John B. Radner, "The Fall and Decline: *Gulliver's Travels* and the Failure of Utopia," *Utopian Studies* 3.2 (1992): 50-74.

**FINAL EXAM PERIOD: 7-21 December 2018**

Please note that this is a tentative schedule which may have to vary slightly based on the needs of the particular class.

## **CLASS POLICIES**

You are required to work systematically so as to keep pace with the material assigned for each session. Your active participation in class discussions is essential, so you need to make sure that you always read the relevant material before coming to class. Systematic failure to come to class prepared or contribute to discussions may have a negative impact on your final grade.

You are expected to attend all classes except in case of illness or any other exceptional circumstances. In that case, you need to inform me. Please keep in mind that missed in-class evaluation cannot be made up unless you present a valid medical certificate or other formal document justifying your absence.

All written work needs to be handed in by the deadline and no extensions will be given except in special circumstances. Assignments or exams handed in late will not be accepted.

Finally, you must come to class on time and always bring your textbook with you.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Please keep in mind that any form of academic dishonesty (such as cheating in exams or plagiarism) is a very serious offence and will be penalized according to departmental regulations. Students who commit such offences may risk failing the entire course.

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work (language and/or thoughts) as one's own original work.

All written work - whether produced in class or at home - needs to be the student's own work. In order to avoid plagiarism, you should always make sure that any sources used in your work (whether copied directly, summarized or paraphrased) are clearly acknowledged. You are expected to be familiar with the MLA citation format and to use that to cite your sources whenever that is required.