

ENGL 3302/CRN 13837
Literature and Film: Dystopian Narratives
Hudspeth Hall 100
T/H 12-1.20pm

Instructor: Dr. Marion Christina Rohrleitner
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Office hours: T/H 10.30-11.30am and 1.30-3pm (in person) and by appointment (best via zoom)

Course description:

Literature and film are two distinct, yet related and highly complementary, art forms which equally depend on plot, dialogue, imagery, characterization, narrative perspective, and the creation of an imagined universe. In this course we will read, think, talk, and write about 20th and 21st century dystopian fiction as well as some adaptations of such novels for the screen. We will learn about complex manifestations of dystopian worlds in literature and film, practice various genres of writing about dystopian worlds in novels and feature films (i.e. film reviews, analyses of camera angle, mise-en-scène, editing, and soundtrack), and engage with the similarities and differences of scholarship in literary and film studies. To this end, we will build a basic vocabulary of literary and film analysis. We will also address different adaptation theories and discuss the challenges and possibilities of viewing adaptation as a form of translation. Our thematic focus in this class will be on dystopian narratives, ranging from representations of various totalitarian regimes (communist, fascist, and theocratic) to manifestations of post-apocalyptic environments, from accounts of the social and political impact of infertility to narratives about the blurring boundaries between human and machine in stories about clones, androids, and cyborgs. We will also address the connection between the popularity of dystopian narratives in specific historical contexts and highlight the remarkable rise in dystopian narratives by and about BIPOC, which both challenge earlier assumptions about the genre and make significant and innovative contributions to it.

Required texts (Note that I require paper copies!)

George Orwell. *Nineteen-Eighty Four* (1949)
Margaret Atwood. *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985)
Philip K. Dick. *The Man in the High Castle* (1962)
Kazuo Ishiguro. *Never Let Me Go* (2005)
Cormac McCarthy. *The Road* (2006)
Tochi Onyebuchi. *Riot Baby* (2020)

Required films

1984 (Dir. Michael Radford, UK, 1984, 110 min.)
The Handmaid's Tale (Dir. Volker Schlöndorff, US/Germany, 1990, 109 min.)
Never Let Me Go (Dir. Mark Romanek, UK, 2020, 103 min.)
The Road (Dir. John Hillcoat, US, 2009, 111 min.)
Blade Runner (Dir. Ridley Scott, US, 1982, 112 min.)
Sleep Dealer (Dir. Alex Rivera, US/Mexico, 2008, 90 min.)

You are expected to watch the assigned films **on your own time**, like the way you do all of the assigned readings before class. I will let you know which streaming services offer the films for the best rates. You may either rent or purchase these films there or at another site, just like you purchase or rent your books. You may also borrow selected DVDs from me.

Course requirements:

Readings

This is a reading, writing, active viewing, and thinking intensive course. Students are expected to do all the required readings before the class in which they are due and bring the discussed text and copies of any assigned secondary sources (articles, reviews, etc.) to class. As a fair warning: Be prepared to read six novels and watch six full-length feature films over the course of the semester. If you cannot make a significant time commitment, this may not be the right class for you – but I promise it will be worth your time!

Attendance and active participation

25%

Regular attendance and active participation in class discussion are essential to your success in this course.

Attendance

Every student may **miss three classes** without giving me an explanation and without suffering any repercussions (i.e. I neither need, nor necessarily want, to know why you were not able to come to class – you are all adults and I trust you make smart decisions). Choose your freebies wisely and plan ahead; it might be wise not to use up all freebies in the first two weeks, since emergencies with family, cars, and health may happen later in the semester. It is your responsibility to catch up on missed work and turn in assignments, such as response paragraphs, on time, even and especially after you missed a class. Missing a fourth class will result in a deduction of 50 points. If you miss a fifth class, I will drop you for excessive absence, regardless of the circumstances. If you anticipate any emergencies during any point of the semester that will force you to miss more than three classes, or have CASS accommodations, please make sure to set up an appointment with me in the first week of classes, so we can find a workable solution.

Active Participation

In class: By active participation I mean coming to each class on time, with your books and printouts or electronic copies of additional assigned texts in hand and with concrete questions or comments about the assigned readings and films, volunteering questions and responses to both me and your classmates in discussion, actively engaging in group work, and being active listeners to my lectures and your classmates' comments. You can earn up to 200 points for active participation in class discussions throughout the semester.

Online: Every Thursday afternoon I will post questions on the readings and/or films assigned for the following Tuesday on blackboard (BB) in the assignment section. I expect you to post a **total of 5 submissions** over the course of the semester. Articulate your submissions in a concise (200-300 words) but thoughtful way and always **incorporate at least one direct citation** into your response via parenthetical documentation.

These 5 submissions consist of

1. one paragraph about your expectations for the course and prior experience with dystopian narratives (due on BB by 10.30am on September 3)
2. two responses and one question (due on Tuesdays by 10.30am)
These need to be spread out over the course of the semester, so you post **a response or question for each of the three units**. This encourages you to manage your time well and gives you the opportunity to create deadlines that best fit your schedule.
3. a thoughtful and specific summary of what you learned in this class (due by 6pm on Dead Day, December 6).

Responses must be submitted online via BB **by 10.30am** the following Tuesday, so I have time to read your submissions prior to our class to have a better understanding of your ideas on the assigned texts and films.

Questions must be submitted online via BB **by noon on Monday**, so your peers have enough time to think and respond to them. In these submissions you apply and hone your literary and film analysis skills in preparation for your final project. You can earn up to 60 points for each successful submission, which must directly respond to the question posed via close readings and evidence from the primary text. Please do not submit these assignments as an attachment but copy and paste your work in the provided space on BB. If you

do not have access to the internet at home, plan and do this work on campus. The quality and number of these response papers factor into your participation grade and prepare you for class discussion. No late submissions accepted!

Note: You may of course always submit your questions and responses early if you want or need to keep your weekends work-free. Responses and questions must not be submitted retroactively and are always due before we discuss the assigned section on which you articulate your question.

Quizzes

15%

Instead of administering midterm and final exams, I will administer three quizzes over the course of the semester, each exam covering one unit. These quizzes make sure you read and view the assigned materials, are familiar with central themes, basic terms of literary and film analysis, and are actively engaged with the key debates in class. If you have CASS accommodations, you will take these quizzes in my office during an agreed time. More detailed information will follow.

Film Review

20%

To allow you to practice your writing skills across the curriculum I ask you to submit a professional, journalistic-style review of a feature film, TV show/episode, or documentary that is thematically connected to our class and engages with dystopian themes. Ideally, the review will be about a dystopian film based on a novel or short story, but this is not required. The review must not be on any of the assigned films – I will provide you with an extensive list of suggestions in the second week of classes, but also welcome your ideas. You will model your film review after film reviews in outlets such as *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *National Review*, or *The Nation*, closely following the length, layout, focus etc. of your model. Submit a link to the source after which you model your review together with you own. The deadline for your review depends on which film you choose and to which primary text (novel or film) it is closely connected. The reviews are due as a word.docx attachment on BB by noon the **Friday** of the week in which we last discuss the primary text to which your film is connected. Please feel free to discuss your ideas with me early on during office hours.

Project Proposal and Annotated Bibliography

10%

Your assignment consists of two parts, to be submitted as one word.docx

1. A **proposal** consisting of two paragraphs in which you clearly state whether you chose to do a research paper or the creative option, which specific text/film you are focusing on, what your tentative thesis/argument is about the film adaptation of your chosen dystopian narrative, or what your argument about the specific representation of dystopia is in your selected primary text (novel, short story, film). You will showcase how your essay contributes to existing scholarly conversations about the text of your choice or adds to the existing body of dystopian narratives. Ideally, focus on one of the key terms and/or key debates and offer a new and different and/or dissenting view.

2. An **annotated bibliography** featuring at least 3 scholarly articles taken from JSTOR and/or MLA/EBSCO. I will post a sample project proposal and annotated bibliography on BB 2 weeks before the deadline. Your project proposal and annotated bibliography are due as **one document** as a word.docx attachment on BB by **noon on Wednesday, December 4**. You are also required to bring 3 hardcopies of your proposal to our last class day, so you can workshop your work with your peers. The purpose of this exercise is to increase accountability and responsibility for your scholarly work and to share your work with and receive feedback from a larger and well-informed public of peers. I strongly encourage you to come by for office hours to discuss your ideas and sources with me prior to submitting your proposal to maximize effectiveness. I will provide constructive feedback as quickly as possible, but no later than Friday at noon.

Final Project

30%

For your final project in this class, you can choose from two options:

Option A: A **research paper** on one (or possibly more) of the texts and films assigned in this class in which you articulate an original argument about cinematic depictions of dystopian worlds that engages theories of adaptation theory and demonstrates your skills as a scholar of literature and film. Your paper will be 8-10 pages long (Times New Roman font size 12, double spaced), excluding the works cited list, which forms the last page of your document. You are required to use at least 4 scholarly sources taken from academic journals focusing on 1) dystopian narratives and 2) film studies. More details will be posted 2 weeks on BB before the deadline.

Option B: A **creative project** that allows you to put what you have learned about dystopian narratives and adaptation into practice. If you choose this option, you can either create a short film that adapts a dystopian short story or a chapter from a dystopian novel, you can write a screenplay that adapts a dystopian novel or short story for film, or you can create a storyboard for such an adaptation, or you can come up with your own dystopian screenplay. You may use any of the assigned texts from our class or come up with your own text. Be sure to see me early to discuss your ideas and your approach with me. Your creative project must be accompanied by 3 pages of scholarly reflection on your creative process of adapting a literary text to film that uses at least 2 scholarly sources. More details will be posted 2 weeks on BB before the deadline.

The firm deadline for submission of your final project is 6pm on Tuesday, **December 10**.

Grade breakdown:

Attendance and Participation: 500 points =25%

Quizzes: 300 points=15%

Film review: 400 points = 20%

Project Proposal and Annotated Bib: 200 points =10%

Research paper: 600 points=30%

Total: 2000 points

A= 1800-2000 (90-100%)

B= 1600-1799 (80-89.9%)

C= 1400-1599 (70-79.9%)

D = 1200-1399 (60-69.9%)

F = 0-1199 (0-59.9%)

Accommodations policy:

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will first need to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) in the East Union Bldg., Room 106, within the first two weeks of classes. Students who become pregnant may also request reasonable accommodations, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy. Accommodations that constitute undue hardship are not reasonable. To make a request, please register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS).

The Center for Accommodations and Support Services can be reached in the following ways:

Web: <http://www.utep.edu/cass>

E-Mail: cass@utep.edu

Phone: (915) 747-5148 voice or

TTY Fax: (915) 747-8712

I am happy to make any reasonable accommodations for students with challenges and limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities, pregnancy, etc. Please see me before or after class in the first two weeks, or make an appointment, to discuss any special needs you might have so that I may assist you in the best way possible. Thank you.

Note: If your accommodations include the right to record our class, I will require you to sign a legally binding agreement that you will not share these recordings with anyone outside of our class.

Title IX:

Please note that in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy I am obligated to report any instance of sexual harassment or abuse to the university's title IX office. If you experience or witness such an event and choose to confide in me, I am by law not allowed to keep this information confidential.

Scholastic Integrity and Plagiarism:

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOOP). It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as one's own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution \(OSCCR\)](#) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

Plagiarism is an offense against academic honesty and any instance of plagiarism will immediately be handed over to the Dean of Students without exception, who will decide on your penalty. Be aware that I take all instances of plagiarism very seriously. Each plagiarized assignment will automatically receive 0 points. I do not accept revisions or late submissions, or assignments that do not meet the minimum length requirement of original work, therefore you will fail each plagiarized assignment. Every time you use someone else's ideas or words in your papers you must reference the source. **This includes AI.** This is true for both direct quotes and paraphrasing. The same rules that apply to print sources also apply to web-based sources. If you have any questions or uncertainties, contact me well before your paper is due. I also strongly encourage you to consult the following useful website for further information: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/2/>.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as [ChatGPT](#) or [DALL-E](#), is **not allowed** for writing assignments in this class. Each student is expected to use critical and creative thinking skills as well as writing skills to complete tasks and not rely on computer-generated ideas and wording. **You may use AI to brainstorm, but NOT to compose any writing or uncritically use ideas.** Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR).

Email

It is your responsibility to activate your UTEP webmail and blackboard accounts within the first week of classes. It is generally a good idea to check your email once a day; this is even more crucial if we should have to move our class online at any moment during the semester. If you do not have internet access at home, plan and check your blackboard when on campus. Responding to emails sent by your professor in a timely manner (usually within 24 hours during the week) is good professional practice and will be part of your participation grade. When sending an email, remember to always put a relevant subject in the subject line, to address me in an appropriate way, and to sign your emails with your full name, so I know who you are and in which context you are writing me. This is a professional setting, and I expect everyone to act and write accordingly. Please note that **I do not read or respond to emails on the weekend.** I will also only send emails during the weekend in case of an emergency. Thank you!

Extra Credit:

Students may submit up to three extra credit assignments on BB. Each assignment can earn a maximum of 20 points and needs to be submitted on BB up to a week after the relevant event (i.e. lecture, film screening, gallery opening, etc.) took place. I will offer a plethora of opportunities for extra credit over the course of the semester, both on and off campus

Syllabus¹

Tuesday, August 27	Welcome and introduction to class: expectations and assignments Utopia/Dystopia? Why read dystopian narratives now?
Thursday, August 29	Elements and examples of dystopian narratives. *Jill Lepore. "A Golden Age for Dystopian Fiction." <i>The New Yorker</i> Some basics of film analysis. * <i>Tunnelen</i> (Dir. André Øvredal, Norway, 2016)
Unit One: Totalitarianism, Theocracy, and Alternative History	
Tuesday, September 3	<i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> (Part I, 1-92)
Thursday, September 5	<i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> (Part II, 93-158, up to chapter ix)
Tuesday, September 10	<i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> (Part II ctd, 159-266)
Thursday, September 12	<i>1984</i> (Dir. Michael Radford, UK, 1984) *Linda Costanzo Cahir. "The Nature of Film Translation: Literal, Traditional, and Radical." *Russel Gray. "Taking <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> Back to the Future"
Tuesday, September 17	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (3-140, chapters 1-23)
Thursday, September 19	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (143-195, chapters 24-30) Excerpts from the Hulu adaptation
Tuesday, September 24	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (199-311, chapters 31-46 and "Historical Notes") * Linda Hutcheon. From <i>A Theory of Adaptation</i>
Thursday, September 26	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> (Dir. Volker Schlöndorff, US/Germany, 1990) *Margaret Atwood. "What <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> Means in the Age of Trump"
Tuesday, October 1	<i>The Man in the High Castle</i> (1-136, chapters 1-8) Visit by Dr. Ylce Irizarry
Thursday, October 3	<i>The Man in the High Castle</i> (137-194, chapters 9-11)
Tuesday, October 8	<i>The Man in the High Castle</i> (195-274, chapters 12-15) Karl van Wyk. "Philip K. Dick's <i>The Man in the High Castle</i> : The Cold War and the Suspension of and in Time"
Thursday, October 10	<i>The Man in the High Castle</i> (excerpts from the HBO adaptation)

¹ Subject to change.

Unit Two: Science Gone Wrong- Biotechnology, Androids, Environmental Apocalypse

Tuesday, October 15	<i>Never Let Me Go</i> (Part 1: 1-111) Quiz #1
Thursday, October 17	No class. I am attending the ASAP conference in NYC. Read ahead for next week (novel and article)
Tuesday, October 22	<i>Never Let Me Go</i> (Part II and Part III: 115-245)
Thursday, October 24	<i>Never Let Me Go</i> (Part III ctd: 246-288) <i>Never Let Me Go</i> (Dir. Mark Romanek, UK, 2010) *Mark Fisher. "Precarious Dystopias"
Tuesday, October 29	<i>Blade Runner</i> (Dir. Ridley Scott, US, 1982)
Thursday, October 31	<i>Blade Runner</i> *Douglas Williams. "Ideology as Dystopia"
Tuesday, November 5	<i>The Road</i> (3-203)
Thursday, November 7	<i>The Road</i> (203-287) *Hannah Stark. "All These Things He Saw and Did Not See"
Tuesday, November 12	<i>The Road</i> (Dir. John Hillcoat, US, 2009) Quiz #2

Unit Three: The Future is Now - BIPOC experiences

Thursday, November 14	*Samuel R. Delaney. "Racism and Science Fiction" *Octavia Butler. "Lost Races of <i>Science Fiction</i> "
Tuesday, November 19	<i>Riot Baby</i> (1-130)
Thursday, November 21	<i>Riot Baby</i> (131-173)
Tuesday, November 26	"Monstro" *Maia Gil'Adi. " <i>Fukú</i> , Postapocalyptic Haunting, and Science-Fiction Embodiment in Junot Díaz's 'Monstro.'"
Thursday, November 28	Indigenous Peoples' Day/Thanksgiving. No Class.
Tuesday, December 3	<i>Sleep Dealer</i> (Dir. Alex Rivera, US/Mexico, 2008)
Wednesday, December 4	Project Proposals and Annotated Bibliographies are due on BB by noon
Thursday, December 5	Quiz#3 Review and Workshopping Paper Proposals and Annotated Bibliographies
Friday, December 6	Dead Day; Final online submission on BB due by 6pm
Tuesday, December 10	Final projects are due as word.docx attachments on BB by 6pm.