

LL280 LIBERAL ARTS IN ACTION
Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four:
Diverging Dystopias

Spring 2018

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Day/Time: Mondays 3/26 – 6/4, 2018, 5:45 - 9 PM

Location: Loop campus, room TBD

Course Description

The Liberal Arts in Action course directs students to analyze an engaging topic – in this case, the two preeminent dystopian fictions of the last 100 years, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* and George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* -- from multiple perspectives in the liberal arts. Students strengthen their problem-solving skills by drawing upon the ideas and methods of three different liberal arts disciplines. The learning activities clarify how the liberal arts can be put into action to ponder and address problems. The course strengthens students’ development of critical thinking and academic writing across the curriculum. Students also will learn about resources that will be useful for their academic success at DePaul.

On January 25, 2017, the *New York Times* published an article, “George Orwell’s ‘1984’ Is Suddenly a Bestseller,” which reported that Orwell’s classic novel had suddenly seen an enormous spike in sales, as had other dystopian novels, including *Brave New World*. Indeed, the adjective “Orwellian,” a reference to the way language can be twisted into pretzel logic by the powers that be, has become a commonplace of contemporary discourse and, as anyone familiar with *The Hunger Games* can tell you, dystopian fiction – a dystopia is an imagined “bad” society, the shadow of utopia, an imagined “good” society -- has been big in young adult literature for a number of years. But *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Brave New World* stand, by a strong consensus, as the *definitive* dystopian novels of the last hundred-some years. This is at least in part due to the fact that both novels are so well written – such riveting pieces of literary art; but it is also due to the perceived prophetic power the novels seem to share, although each posits a different kind of grim future for humankind. This course will engage closely with these two masterworks (and related subtopics) from three liberal arts perspectives. We will consider them from the perspective of artistic interpretation, the perspective of philosophy and ethics, and the perspective of social analysis -- the organizational possibilities of communities and societies. We will find, among other things, that the two books are often mentioned together, along with the question of which provides the more apt description of our current situation. We will also find, I think, that studying the contextual background of the two novels – in fields such as, say,

genetic engineering, neuro-pharmacology, and destructive obedience – educates us about topics of historical and contemporary concern such as eugenics, utilitarianism and the manipulation of “the masses” through propaganda. Finally, I think we will find that a close study of all this prods us to think deeply and helpfully about who we are now as society and where we are going.

Faculty bio:

John Kimsey received his Ph.D. in English Literature from the University of Illinois at Chicago and is an Associate Professor in DePaul’s School for New Learning (SNL). He teaches and writes about modern literature, popular culture and intersections between the two and has also worked extensively as a professional musician. His writings have appeared in scholarly journals such as *The Space Between: Literature & Culture, 1914-1945*, *Popular Music & Society*, *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, *The Journal of Popular Music Studies* and *The Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community*, as well as academic anthologies such as *Reading the Beatles: Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism and the Fab Four* (SUNY Press, 2006), and *The Cambridge Companion to the Beatles* (Cambridge U Press, 2009). His song cycle, *Twisted Roots*, has been described by jazz composer/historian Ben Sidran as “an ingenious way to integrate social and political concerns into a musical architecture”. In 2014, he received DePaul’s Excellence in Teaching Award. He is currently working on a book on Popular Music Studies for the University of Massachusetts Press.

Required texts:

The following required texts are available for purchase at the Loop Campus bookstore (Barnes & Noble) and other booksellers:

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. Harper Perennial, 2006. ISBN 978-0-06-085052-4 [Note: Huxley’s novel comes in many editions. Be sure to acquire this edition and not another. An electronic version – as long as it’s this Harper Perennial edition – is acceptable, if you prefer that to a hard copy]

Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel*. Berkley/Harcourt Brace, 2016. ISBN 978-0-452-28423-4 [Note: Orwell’s novel comes in many editions. Be sure to acquire this edition and not another. An electronic version – as long as it’s this Berkley/Harcourt Brace edition – is acceptable, if you prefer that to a hard copy]

Readings Posted on Electronic Reserve:

Several readings for this course are posted at the DePaul University Library website as Electronic Reserves in the Ares system. Just go to library.depaul.edu and click on the Services tab in the banner across the top. The second item in the dropdown menu is Course Reserves Services. Click on that it will take you to the Course Reserves Services page. On the right you’ll see a heading that says Access Our Reserves and below that, a blue box saying “Log in to Ares Course Reserves.” That will take you to the login page for the Ares system. Log in using your Campus Connect User ID and password. You will then get a page listing the courses in which you’re enrolled that have readings posted in Ares. Click on the title of this course and the list of our electronic reserve readings will be displayed.

Learning Outcomes

This course consists of multiple sections with distinctive learning outcomes. Students enroll in

specific sections to develop respective learning outcomes as follows.

Liberal Arts in Action (LA1) (Section 904, 6 credits)

This section satisfies the Liberal Arts in Action requirement of the Liberal Learning core curriculum of the School for New Learning's Professional Studies majors. Students who successfully complete this section will be able to *compare typical questions, methods of inquiry and kinds of evidence in the liberal arts*. Specifically, students will be able to

- identify, compare and contrast the questions, methods of inquiry and kinds of evidence that characterize three liberal arts approaches to knowing; and
- compare and contrast the uses of writing in each of these approaches.

Interpreting the Arts (A1X) (Section 901, 2 credits)

Can analyze a dystopian fiction (or one of its chief features) in terms of form, content or socio-historical context.

1. Focuses on *Brave New World* or *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a dystopian fiction.
2. Analyzes the selected text (or one of its chief features) in terms of form, content or socio-historical context

Reflection & Meaning (A3X) (Section 902, 2 credits)

Can ponder and analyze a dystopian fiction (or one of its chief features) in terms of its ethical or spiritual implications.

1. Focuses on *Brave New World* or *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a dystopian fiction.
2. Ponders and analyzes the selected text (or one of its chief features) in terms of its ethical or spiritual implications.

Communities & Societies (H1X) (Section 903, 2 credits)

Can ponder and analyze the implications for individuals and groups of the social order depicted and dramatized by a dystopian fiction.

1. Identifies and describes the social order depicted and dramatized by *Brave World* or *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.
2. Ponders and analyzes the implications for individuals and groups of the social order in question.

Ethics in the Contemporary World (A4) (2 credits)

Can analyze a problem using two different ethical systems.

1. Identifies and describes an ethical issue or problem.
2. Describes the distinctive assumptions of two ethical systems.
3. Analyzes the problem by comparing and contrasting how these two different systems would apply to that particular ethical issue or problem.

Negotiated Competencies (with college approval)

For students in competency-based programs at the School for New Learning, other competency requirements aligning with the course content and faculty's expertise may be fulfilled by special petition. To petition for a negotiated competence, consult with your instructor and faculty mentor and submit the [online form](#); see <https://snl.depaul.edu/student-resources/undergraduateresources/Pages/forms.aspx>.

Crosscutting Competencies

In addition to the section-specific outcomes, all students will develop crosscutting competencies including: *inquiring, reflecting, connecting, deciding, communicating, and engaging.*

Learning Experience

A variety of learning strategies will be employed, including classroom lectures and discussions; print readings; journals of the readings; film screenings; role plays; and short papers.

Evidence students will submit:

Class participation. Students are expected to do the assigned reading for each class session before the class session begins. They are also encouraged to demonstrate that they have done so by participating in class discussion. In addition, students will submit the following pieces of written work:

Journal entries. Each week (excepting weeks 1, 6, 10 and 11), students will submit a journal entry (about 1.5-2 typed, double-spaced pages in length or around 400-500 words) addressing questions provided each week by the instructor. This will make for a total of 7 journal entries by course's end.

In addition:

--SNL students registered in one of the Bachelor of Arts in Professional Studies programs (6 credits) will, by the end of the course, submit two short papers (each about 700 words or about 6 typed, double-spaced pages long) addressing each of the three liberal arts perspectives highlighted in the course. They will submit one such paper at Midterm time (week 6) and another such paper at Finals time (week 11). This totals up to two short papers by the end of the course. For information on paper topics, see below.

--SNL students registered for two competences (4 credits) will, by the end of the course, submit two short papers (each about 500 words or about 4 typed, double-spaced pages long) addressing each of the competences for which they're signed up. They will submit one such paper at Midterm time (week 6) and another such paper at Finals time (week 11). This totals up to two short papers by the end of the course. For information on paper topics, see below.

--SNL students registered in for one competence (2 credits) will submit one short paper addressing that competence at either midterm time (week 6) or finals time (week 11); the choice is up to the student. This totals up to one short paper by the end of the course. For information on paper topics, see below.

Re topics for papers: Students will choose topics from an array of essay questions prepared by the instructor. The instructor will provide one array of such questions for the midterm paper and a second array of such questions for the final paper. The instructor will see to it that the essay questions are attuned to the needs of students. SNL students will be provided with questions attuned to specific SNL program requirements. Also, it's always possible for a student to write on a topic of her/his own choosing, providing the instructor approves it.

In sum, the evidence requirements for the course are: class participation; journals; and two short papers . Point-wise, the breakdown is as follows:

Class participation	10
Journal	30 (6 journals x 5 points)
Short paper (Midterm)	30
Short paper (Final)	30

Criteria for Assessment:

Journal entries

A single journal entry is worth a maximum of 5 points, with 5 points indicating excellent work; 3 points indicating average work; and 1 point indicating work that is seriously lacking.

Short papers

Assessment Rubric for Short Papers

A designates work of high quality. An A paper (27-30 pts)

develops an argument cogently and creatively across the length of an essay;

reflects thorough understanding of and engagement with pertinent texts (audiovisual and/or print) and the issues at hand;

draws insightful connections and/or generates thoughtful questions concerning the topic and the specified materials;

cites sources consistently in appropriate citation style;

is virtually free of grammar lapses.

B designates work of good quality. A B paper (24-26 pts)

develops an argument effectively across the length of an essay;

reflects adequate understanding of and engagement with pertinent texts (audiovisual and/or print) and the issues at hand;

draws clear connections and/or generates apt questions concerning the topic and the specified materials

cites sources consistently in appropriate citation style;

is mostly free of grammar lapses.

C designates work which minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment. A C paper (21-23 pts pts)

develops some ideas but does so in a superficial or simplistic manner;

reflects limited understanding of or engagement with pertinent texts audiovisual or print)

and the issues at hand;

draws connections, some of which are unclear, and/or raises questions, some which are inapt, concerning the topic and the specified materials;

cites sources inconsistently and/or occasionally uses appropriate citation style;

contains several grammar lapses.

D designates work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment. A D paper (18-20 pts)

shows little development of ideas;

reflects little or no understanding of pertinent texts (audiovisual and/or print) and the issues at hand;

does not draw clear connections or raise coherent questions concerning the topic and the specified materials;

does not cite sources appropriately;

contains numerous grammar lapses.

Such work is expected to conform to college-level standards of mechanics and presentation.

In assessing such work, your instructor strives to be clear, flexible, forthright and empathetic.

Course Grading Scale:

The grading scale is based on 100 percent of the required assignments. Thus:

A = 95 to 100 A- = 91 to 94 B+ = 88 to 90

B = 85 to 87 B- = 81 to 84 C+ = 77 to 80

C = 73 to 76 C- = 69 to 72 D+ = 65 to 68

D = 61 to 64 F = 60 or below

Policy on Attendance:

You are expected to attend all class sessions. If you miss a class, it is incumbent on you to check with the instructor or a fellow student about any information or handouts you may have missed. Students who miss more than two class sessions will not have met the requirement for a passing grade.

Policy on Late Submissions

Written assignments that are submitted late will receive reduced points. Written assignments that are more than a week late will receive zero points.

Policy on Pass/Fail Grades:

It is assumed you are taking the course for a letter grade (A, B, C, etc.). However, it is possible to take the course on a Pass/Fail basis if you wish to do so. If you do wish to take the course on a Pass/Fail basis, you must inform the instructor of your wish to do so by the beginning of Week Three.

Policy on Academic Integrity:

This course abides by the university's strictures against plagiarism and its policies on Academic Integrity as described in the DePaul Student handbook. All work done for this course must observe the Guidelines for Academic Integrity as outlined in the *Code of Student Responsibility* (in the *DePaul Student Handbook*). The code's Plagiarism Policy reads as follows:

Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's; copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with proper acknowledgement; submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else; and the paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgment.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If an instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion. Actions taken by the instructor do not preclude the college or the university taking further punitive action including dismissal from the university.

Policy on Incompletes:

It is expected that students will complete course assignments by specified due dates within the quarter. In circumstances that the instructor determines to be exceptional, when the student is unable to complete required coursework by the established due dates, the student may request that a grade of Incomplete (IN) be issued. This request must be made formally, in writing, by completion of IN Request Form that the student signs. The form specifies the final date by which all outstanding coursework must be completed. Failure to submit outstanding work by the specified due date will result in a grade change from IN to W or FX for each enrolled competence, along with serious academic and/or financial consequences. After the final submission deadline, the student will have no further opportunities to submit work for a passing grade.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Note: The symbol [E] after a reading below indicates that the reading is posted on Electronic Reserve at the DePaul Library website in the Ares system. Just go to library.depaul.edu and click on the Services tab in the banner across the top. The second item in the dropdown menu is Course Reserves Services. Click on that it will take you to the Course Reserves Services page.

On the right you'll see a heading that says Access Our Reserves and below that, a blue box saying "Log in to Ares Course Reserves." That will take you to the login page for the Ares system. Log in using your Campus Connect User ID and password. You will then get a page listing the courses in which you're enrolled that have readings posted in Ares. Click on the title of this course and the list of our electronic reserve readings will be displayed.

Week One 3/26

Introducing the course: Good places and bad; The origins of utopian thinking and fiction; The growth of dystopian thinking and fiction today, its function and significance; meeting Huxley and Orwell

Week Two 4/2

Introducing *Brave New World*; What's at stake; The virtues of interdisciplinary studies

Readings:

Huxley, chapters 1-3

Arvidson, "The Virtue of Reverence in Interdisciplinary Studies," pp. 117-120;124-127; 139-141

Sargent, "Good Places and Bad Places" [E] (optional)

Submit: Journal entry on Huxley, chapters 1-3

Week Three 4/9

The Civilized and the Savage; The World State and reproduction; Eugenics; Body Ritual Among the Nacirema

Readings:

Huxley, chapters 4-7

Stierwalt, "Could Artificial Wombs Be A Reality?" [E]

Levine, "The world of eugenics" [E]

Submit: Journal entry on Huxley, chapters 4-7

Week Four 4/16

A Savage in London; Europe's myth of the noble savage; The feelies and feelings

Readings:

Huxley, *Brave New World*, chapters 11-13

Gardner, "Explainer: the Myth of the Noble Savage" [E]

Sanford, "The Shadow" [E]

Kerby, "Utilitarianism: the Greatest Good for the Greatest Number" [E]

Submit: Journal entry on Huxley, chapters 11-13

Week Five 4/23

Agon: The Savage and the Controller; The Price of Happiness; The Lesson of the Moth; Screening of Harris, TED Talk, "Science Can Answer Moral Questions"

Readings:

Huxley, *Brave New World*, chapters 14-18 (conclusion of the novel)

Appleyard, "Eugenics 1: the Right to be Unhappy" [E]

McKnight, "Immanuel Kant and the Categorical Imperative" [E]

Submit: Journal entry on Huxley, chapters 14-18

Week Six 4/30

Appraising *Brave New World*; Huxley and psychedelia; Screening of *George Orwell: A Life in Pictures*

Readings:

Attwood, “Everybody Is Happy Now” [E]

Stevens, “The Door in the Wall” [E]

Lewis, “Our minds can be hijacked’: the tech insiders. . .fear a smartphone dystopia” [E]

Submit: Midterm Paper

Week Seven 5/7

Nineteen Eighty-Four: “Big Brother is Watching You”; The mottoes of the Party; “The sacred principles of Ingsoc”; Newspeak and Orwell’s ideas about language; Winston, O’Brien and Julia

Readings:

Orwell, *One*, chapters I-V

Submit: Journal entry on Orwell, I-IV

Week Eight 5/14

Totalitarianism – what is it? The surveillance state

Readings:

Orwell, *One*, chapters VI-VIII; *Two*, chapters I-III

McMullan, “What does the panopticon mean in the age of digital surveillance?” [E]

Mondal, “Seven Main Features of a Totalitarian State” [E]

Submit: Journal entry on Orwell, I-III

Week Nine 5/21

The Party and the control of sexuality; Perpetual war for perpetual peace: The Book

Screening of excerpt from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (feature film)

Readings:

Orwell, *Two*, chapters I-III; IX

Wikipedia on Reich, “The Mass Psychology of Fascism”

Submit: Journal entry on Orwell, *Two*, chapters I-III; IX

Week Ten 5/28 – NO CLASS; MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY

Week Eleven 6/4

Taking stock -- Huxley and Orwell: Whose vision is more apt for today? How can we prevent these futures from coming to pass?

Readings:

Postman, “My dad predicted Trump in 1985 – it’s not Orwell, it’s *Brave New World*” [E]

Peters, “Justice Breyer Warns of Orwellian Government” [E]

Submit: Final Paper by 6/6

About Journal Entries

For each week in which a journal entry is due, the instructor will distribute a list of five questions attuned to that week's reading. Students are to address those five questions in their journal entry for that particular week. Journal entire should be around 350-500 words (or 1.5-2 pages, typed, double-spaced) in length.

Appendix

For Students Who Need Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter, preferably within the first week of class, and make sure you have contacted:

PLuS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-4239 in the Schmidt Academic Center, room 220 or;

The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-7290, DePaul University Student Center, room 307.

Writing Help

For help with organizing your ideas, grammar, citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, sample SNL assignments and much more, see the [Writing Guide for SNL Students](http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/index.html) at <http://snl.depaul.edu/writing/index.html>. For on-campus and online tutoring, see the [DePaul University Writing Centers](http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/) at <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/>.