

ENGL 2024A From the Blazing World to The Hunger Games, Girls, Women, Utopia, and Dystopia

**Class time:** W 11:30-1:30, F 11:30-12:30  
**Instructor:** D. Grace  
**Office:** UH 337  
**Office Hours:** TBA

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### Course Description

The relationship between women and utopia/dystopia can be traced from Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*, and extends to tomorrow. This course will explore the history of feminist utopian/dystopian fiction, including works by Cavendish, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Joanna Russ, Ursula K. Le Guin, Marge Piercy, Margaret Atwood, and Suzanne Collins.

*Antirequisite(s):* [English 2877F/G](#).

### Required Texts

Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World*, Broadview  
Charlotte Perkins Gilman *Herland*, Broadview  
Joanna Russ *The Female Man*, Beacon Press  
Ursula K. Le Guin *The Dispossessed*, Harper Voyager  
Marge Piercy *Woman on the Edge of Time*, Ballantine  
Margaret Atwood *The Handmaid's Tale*, Vintage  
Suzanne Collins *The Hunger Games*, Scholastic

### Evaluation Methods

Class Participation	10%
Quizzes (approximately 5)	10%
Short Essay	10%
Seminar	20%
Journal	15%
Final Exam	35%

## Course Outcomes

By the end of the course, the successful student will

1. Have a grounding in the roots, history and development of utopian and dystopian literature as a genre (inquiry and analysis competency);
2. Have a basic understanding of the feminist theory that informs the texts studied (inquiry and analysis competency);
3. Recognize and understand the conventions of utopian and dystopian (inquiry and analysis competency);
4. Develop a knowledge and understanding of several classic and contemporary works of feminist utopian and dystopian literature (inquiry and analysis competency);
5. Be able to express that knowledge and understanding in different ways, such as in responding to quiz and test questions, analyzing specific passages, and writing essays (communications competency; inquiry and analysis competency; critical thinking competency);
6. Be able to communicate their ideas clearly and effectively in written form, using correct grammar and logical essay structure (communications competency);
7. Understand and be able to apply literary terms and concepts to the texts studied (critical thinking competency; inquiry and analysis competency);
8. Be able to develop and express their own ideas and interpretations of the texts studied (communication competency; inquiry and analysis competency);
9. Understand how feminist utopian and dystopian literature helps to reveal and critique social and political values (social awareness and engagement competency; valuing competency; self awareness and development competency).

## CLASS POLICIES: ENGLISH 2024A

### **Literary Studies**

Literature is by its nature exploratory. It pushes against conventions, assumptions, limits, and even good taste. Literary texts may be culturally, morally, politically, racially, socially, religiously, ideologically, and/or linguistically or otherwise offensive to some. In taking this course, you agree to expose yourself to material that you may find offensive and agree to read all required work and do all required assignments, even if the materials involved are offensive to you. It is understood that literary analysis and evaluation can include consideration of what is offensive and why, within the context of reasoned discussion and civil debate.

### **General Requirements**

You may from time to time during the course receive direction to avail yourselves of University services and resources, or to engage in activities and pursuits outside the confines of the university, as part of the requirements for this course. Failure to follow such direction will be taken into account and may have a detrimental impact on your grade. It is understood that such requirements will be directly relevant to the materials being studied or to your progress as a student and that such directions will not be unduly onerous or burdensome.

### **Academic Accommodation**

See the attached document on Brescia policies for the rules governing academic accommodation for illness. Situations not covered by that policy (e.g. assignments worth less than 10%, or assignments handed in late or not submitted without academic accommodation) are covered as appropriate below.

### **Attendance**

The academic calendar states that frequent absence from class can lead to students being “debarred from writing the final examination.” In other words, you may fail a course for missing classes. I take attendance, and I take absenteeism into account when calculating final grades. Students arriving after or leaving before I have taken attendance will be marked absent for that day; attending class means attending the whole class. Attendance is expected.

### **Assignments**

The due date for the essay is included on the course schedule. Assignment topics will be provided in advance of the due date. The date for the in-class test is also provided on the class schedule. Consequently, you are expected to be aware of deadlines and to observe them; few excuses for lateness are acceptable. The pressure of other work is not an acceptable excuse for lateness, as the point of giving you your deadlines in advance is to allow you to plan your schedule accordingly. **Late assignments will be accepted but will be penalized 2% per day, including weekends.** Apologizing for lateness or asking if you can submit the essay a day or two late will in no way affect this policy. **Essays MUST be written to conform to the MLA guidelines for research papers. Failure to**

**conform to the MLA guidelines will be penalized.** Essays must have their pages held together by a paper clip or staple; loose sheets will not be accepted. Do not submit essays in duotangs, binders, or any kind of folder. All essays submitted on time will be returned promptly (usually within three weeks of submission) and will include, on return, written annotations throughout and a general commentary following the essay. Late essays will be returned eventually; in addition to having grades deducted, late papers will receive little or no written commentary. Where research requirements are specified, failure to observe them will be penalized; it is incumbent on you to begin work sufficiently in advance of the due date to meet the assignment requirements.

### **Submission of Work**

Submit work to me IN PERSON or through the essay dropbox by the Dean's office for placement in my mailbox, which guarantees that the date of submission will be recorded. Essays placed under my office door are considered received when I find them, NOT when they are dated by the student. For example, an essay due on Wednesday and placed under my door on Friday might not be found until Monday. I consider that essay as submitted the day I found it--that is, five days late, not two days late. It is your responsibility to get your essay in on time. When you submit written work, you should keep a copy, so that you have it should something happen to your original (I have never lost a student paper, but work may go astray in other ways).

### **Quizzes**

Quizzes will be given periodically, approximately every two weeks, without advance warning. There will be no make-up quizzes for missed deadlines or missed classes. Your lowest quiz score will not count.

### **Seminars**

**Presentation:** Seminars **MUST** be presented on the day scheduled. Keeping on schedule is challenging enough without having to juggle seminar presentations. You should be prepared to lead the class for at least 20 minutes in an exploration of your subject, but how you do so is up to you. You may make a formal presentation; you may require participation by asking questions, designing some kind of interactive exercise, having students act out short scenes, or in other ways; you may use visual aids such as video clips, overheads, or handouts (if you get me materials in advance of class, I can make copies); you may present a skit, etc. In short, the format for the presentation is open, as long as the presentation addresses the topic in a useful and interesting way. It should be anchored to the novel and address specifics, but it can be exploratory rather than conclusive, as long as you have clear ideas about what you are doing and where you are going.

**Follow-up:** Within seven days of your presentation (see me for exceptions such as end of term, before Reading Week, etc.), you must submit a written self-evaluation in which you summarize (at least; you may provide the actual text of what you said, if you take that approach) what you did, provide a commentary on why you chose the approach you did, and provide a commentary on how you think the presentation went (did you achieve your ends? what worked? what did not? what would you do differently next time? etc.). Include a works cited list detailing any secondary sources used for the presentation (including visual resources such as film clips). The written report need not take the form of a formal essay or conform to MLA guidelines, except

insofar as it provides a works cited list. This report should be approximately 1000 words (approximately 3 typed pages).

## **Journal**

One of your assignments for this course is a journal. I want you to document your experience reading any **THREE** novels for this course, with at least one from among the first three and one from among the final three. You can select any three novels you wish. Your journal will be due one week after we finish discussion of the final of your three novels (see me for exceptions such as end of term/end of course). For each of the three novels you select, record your progress and responses as you work through the book. Ideally, each time you work on the book, you should make a journal entry, but at a minimum, do two entries per week during your reading and during the weeks in which we discuss your novels in class. Entries need not be long, but **CAN** be as long as you wish (within limits—e.g. don't write twenty-five entries of 1,000 words each!). At a minimum, each entry should be two to three paragraphs, if you are writing only two per week, but may be shorter if you are making more frequent updates. Journal entries need not be written in formal English but should be grammatically correct (more or less), employ correct spelling, and so on. There is no minimum length requirement (though between five and ten pages is probably a reasonable goal), but your journal should be **NO LONGER THAN** twenty typed, double-spaced pages.

What should you record?

1. Initial impressions/thoughts, perhaps even prior to beginning (e.g. "One look at the cover and the thickness of this book, and I knew I was in trouble. . .").
2. Responses as you read. How does the book make you feel? Is making you feel anything even part of the book's agenda, or does it have other aims? Can you not wait to find out what happens next? Do you hate the characters? Consider what about the book makes you respond as you do. (The style? The characterization? The imagery? Etc.)
3. Ways in which the book, in your estimation, either does or does not fit within the generic parameters we have been considering in class. Does it stress certain conventions and ignore others? If so, why do you think this might be?
4. *Changes* (if any) to your response as you read (e.g. "I was bored by this book until x happened, but then. . ." or, "Initially, I was puzzled about what was going on, but as the narrative developed," etc.) Consider what about the book might lead to these changing responses. (Structure? Change in narrative point of view? Authorial intervention? Revelation of deferred information? Etc.)
5. Thoughts about how this book relates to others we have studied so far (especially when you are dealing with books later in the course), or to the others you have journalled about, or even to others you have read in other contexts (e.g. "Suzanne Collins deals very differently with the teen protagonist than does Veronica Roth"—with some thoughts on the implications of this difference).
6. What (if anything) about your response to the book changes during our class discussions of that book?

7. Anything else that strikes you as germane or relevant during the reading process. (e.g. you see a television commercial that references the book somehow, or you have a personal experience that echoes events in the book, etc.)

## **Examinations**

The midterm test will be written in class. Final examinations are held during the examination period and are scheduled through the Registrar's office. You are expected to acquaint yourself with the examination schedule when it is posted and to attend the examination. If you miss an examination, you will receive a grade of 0 on it. Consider the examination period as part of your academic year; do not make plans to be unavailable until you know your examination schedule. Remember: you must pass both the examination and term work to pass the course.

## **Academic Standards**

As a university student, you are expected to meet certain requirements in your work. First, you are expected to use the English language clearly and correctly (see the calendar for University policies on English language proficiency). Grammatical errors or infelicities in your writing will have a significant impact on your grade. You are expected to use formal language, not colloquial language. Second, as a student in an English course, you are expected to follow MLA guidelines for essay writing; matters of format will be referred to as the "mechanics" of writing in class and in comments on essays. If MLA format is unfamiliar to you, please feel free to consult with me about it. Third, you are expected to have a thesis and to build an argument that will provide reasonable evidence and analysis sufficient to convince the skeptical reader of the validity of your position. You are not expected to summarize the plot of the work you are discussing, to repeat what we have done in class, or to toe a particular line. Overall, there are three broad areas in which you must show competence: grammar, mechanics, and analysis. A guide to how work is evaluated follows.

- A: To earn an "A" you must handle the mechanics of essay writing perfectly or nearly so; work must conform to MLA requirements and must be grammatically correct (or nearly so), clear, formal, and elegant. "A" work has a well-defined thesis, is carefully and clearly structured, makes excellent use of evidence from primary and secondary sources (when such are required), and provides an argument that goes significantly beyond the information provided in class: you cannot earn an "A" by telling me what I have told you.
  
- B: To earn a "B" you must write well, making few grammatical errors; you may slip occasionally, but infrequently. Major errors, such as sentence fragments, dangling participles, misplaced modifiers, etc., are not acceptable and will pull your grade down to, at best, low "B" range. "B" work will be fairly well-organized and argued but will probably miss some important aspect of its case. Overall, it will make good use of evidence from the primary text, and perhaps from secondary materials, but will not fully capitalize on the best material available to prove its case. It will be less adventurous than "A" work, closer in theme and content to the "safe" material (e.g. perspectives explored in class or readily available in the bulk of the critical material).

- C: "C" work will probably suffer from numerous writing problems, both grammatical and mechanical, which will probably affect clarity. The structure of the argument will probably be unclear, due to an insufficient introduction, an illogical linking of arguments, or a loose linking of points. When your argument consists of a sequence of points treated more as a list than as a coherent structure, you are likely working in the "C" range. "C" work tends not to use evidence well, either because it integrates evidence poorly into the essay, because it misinterprets the evidence in some way, or because it does not use any direct evidence at all. The thesis in "C" work will probably be overly general, vague, or simplistic; the argument will be similar.
- D: "D" work will be weak grammatically and mechanically. Numerous major and minor grammatical errors will occur. Clarity will be a problem in the essay. Evidence, if used at all, will be poorly integrated and poorly evaluated, though it may be of some relevance to the topic. The argument will be poorly structured and/or unclear; links between ideas will not be evident, and the ideas themselves may not seem related to the central topic. Important arguments will be missed, as will important evidence; the interpretation may be based in a misreading of the text under discussion.
- F: "F" work will suffer from severe writing limitations. What is meant will often be difficult or impossible to determine. The mechanics will be nonexistent, or so poorly handled as to be incoherent. The thesis will be vague to the point of banality, or simply wrong. Evidence will not appear or will be misused significantly; "F" work will show a fundamental lack of understanding of the topic and/or work under discussion. The argument will probably be poorly structured; elements of it will seem to be irrelevant to the topic. Significant evidence will be missed, or misused if it appears. Significant errors will probably occur with evidence use, including the misquotation or even misrepresentation of your text. Clear conclusions will be lacking, or will be so self-evident as to be meaningless (e.g. "Therefore, if Offred had not been rescued, he would never have left the Commander's house").

## 1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation.

Academic accommodation for illness will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Minor ailments typically treated by over-the-counter medications will not normally be accommodated.

Students must submit their documentation along with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities. In cases where there might be an extended absence or serious issue, students should submit their documentation promptly and consult their Academic Advisor for advice during their recovery period. Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office/Academic Advisor in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty

Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are **not** grounds for academic accommodation.

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required** if a student is seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. A SMC can be downloaded from: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf) . The student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations documentation stating simply that the student "was seen for a medical reason" or "was ill" is **not** adequate to support a request for academic accommodation.

The full policy on requesting accommodation due to illness can be viewed at: [http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page\\_12](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12)

## 2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal challenge that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds are not normally considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website, <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/> or the list of official sessional dates in the Academic Calendar, see the Sessional Dates tab at <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/index.cfm?SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=> ). You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping



one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

### 3. ABSENCES

**Short Absences:** If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

**Extended Absences:** If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate and warranted.

It is important to note that the Academic Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory ([http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=5&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading\\_68](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=5&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_68) ).

### 4. SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at: [http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page\\_20](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_20) .

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students in the Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Academic Dean's Office, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

#### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### **Computer-marked Tests/exams:**

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

## **5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS**

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal is to be sent to the School Chair. If the response of the Chair is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she may then submit a written appeal to the Office of the Dean. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Dean, she may appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA), if there are sufficient grounds for the appeal. For information on academic appeals you can consult your Academic Advisor or see the Student Academic Appeals – Undergraduate in the Academic Calendar  
[http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page\\_14](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_14).

Note that final course marks are not official until the Academic Dean has reviewed and signed the final grade report for the course. If course marks deviate from acceptable and appropriate standards, the Academic Dean may require grades to be adjusted to align them with accepted grading practices.

## **6. PREREQUISITES**

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from the Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisite(s).

## **7. SUPPORT**

### **Support Services**

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/> . The website for the Student Development Centre at Western is <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/> .

### **Mental Health and Wellness**

Students may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to your learning, such as increased anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, feeling down or lost, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. Services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about mental health and wellness at Brescia at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/mental-health-wellness/> . Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness at Western, [http://uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/index.html](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html), for information about how to obtain help for yourself or others.

### **Sexual Violence**

All members of the Brescia University College community have a right to work and study in an environment that is free from any form of sexual violence. Brescia University College recognizes that the prevention of, and response to, Sexual Violence is of particular importance in the university environment. Sexual Violence is strictly prohibited and unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Brescia is committed to preventing Sexual Violence and creating a safe space for anyone in the Brescia community who has experienced Sexual Violence.

If you or someone you know has experienced any form of Sexual Violence, you may access resources at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/sexual-violence/>.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.