

**FIRST YEAR SEMINAR COURSE PROPOSAL**  
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Use this form to submit **FSEM 100 topics** courses for review **or any other existing course** that you wish to have designated to meet the first year seminar requirement.

<b>COURSE NUMBER:</b>	<b>FSEM 100</b>		
<b>COURSE TITLE:</b>	<b>CITIES OF NIGHTMARE</b>		
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Andréa Livi Smith	<b>DATE:</b>	9-5-08
<i>This course proposal has the department's approval. (Put a check in the box to the right.)</i>			

**NOTE:** Click on the link for “first year seminar” at [www.jtmorello.org/gened](http://www.jtmorello.org/gened) to see the criteria used to evaluate courses proposed to meet the first year seminar requirement. See the report entitled “General Education Curriculum as Approved by the Faculty Senate” for additional details.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION.** In the space below, provide a one to two sentence description of this class. The description will be entered in Banner, and will also be used in other publications about the first year seminar program (such as the “Eagle Essentials” booklet).

This course explores the urban design in dystopian novels and films. With grounding in urban design concepts, students will explore how dystopian cities look and feel, what they imply about social fears in the past, and what they might look like in the future.

**RATIONALE.** Using only the space provided in the box below, **briefly** state why this course should be approved as a first year seminar course.

A critical component of urban planning, urban design in large part dictates how our cities look and feel, as well as influencing the importance given to the conservation of historic resources. Utopian ideas and designs have long been a subject of research for planners, architects, historians, and preservationists. The other side of the coin – dystopias – is rarely if ever the subject of inquiry. This is unfortunate, as dystopian ideas and designs have as much to teach us as their utopian counterparts. The concepts of dystopian environments tells us a great deal about the social, economic, and political context in which they were created and the fears of their creators. This course will delve into the urban designs of seminal dystopian narratives in order to learn about the time period in which they were created and their relevance today. This will include a thorough grounding in urban design history and theory. Overall, the course will cover a topic rarely included in typical curricula, make use of primary and secondary sources, and give students a chance to express themselves in speech, writing and creative endeavors.

**SYLLABUS.** Attach a course syllabus.

**SUBMIT** this form and attached syllabus **electronically as one document** to Warren Rochelle ([wrochell@umw.edu](mailto:wrochell@umw.edu)) or Maya Mathur ([mmathur@umw.edu](mailto:mmathur@umw.edu)). All submissions must be in electronic form.

UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON - DEPT. OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
**CITIES OF NIGHTMARE** FSEM 100-Q  
Spring 2009 - T/R 9:30-10:45 am - Combs Hall 236



Instructor:

Dr. Andréa Livi Smith  
alsmith@umw.edu  
(540) 654-1316

Office Hours (Combs 134):

M&W 11:00 - 12:30  
T&R 12:30 - 1:30  
Or by appointment

**COURSE OUTLINE**

This course explores the urban design in dystopian novels and films. A critical component of urban planning, urban design in large part dictates how or cities look and feel, as well as influencing the importance given to the conservation of historic resources.

With an emphasis on discussion, critical analysis, and creative response, this class will explore the following questions: What makes the cities in Blade Runner, 1984, Brave New World, or Metropolis such places of despair? How can we use each image of the city to understand the historical context in which they were produced? How can urban dystopias be used to improve our understanding of the built environment and historic preservation today, and improve it in the future? This course will delve into the urban designs of seminal dystopian narratives in order to learn about the time period in which they were created and their relevance today. This will include a substantial grounding in urban design history and theory, with use of works by planners, designers, and sociologists.

## READINGS & FILMS

### Novels:

Atwood, Margaret (1985) *The Handmaid's Tale*  
Huxley, Aldous (1932) *Brave New World*  
Orwell, George (1949) *Nineteen Eighty-Four*  
Stephenson, Neil (1992) *Snow Crash*  
Zamyatin, Yevgeny (1921) *We*

### Textbooks & Reference Text:

Legates, R. & Stout, F, Eds. (2003) *City Reader*, Third Edition. Routledge.  
Campbell, S. & Fainstein, S. , Eds. (1996) *Readings in Planning Theory*. Blackwell.  
More, T. (1516) *Utopia*

### Films:

Blade Runner (1982) Dir: Ridley Scott  
Brazil (1985) Dir: Terry Gilliam  
City of Lost Children (1995) Dir: J.P. Jeunet & Marc Caro  
Gattaca (1997) Dir: Andrew Niccol  
Logan's Run (1976) Dir: Michael Anderson  
Metropolis (1927) Dir: Fritz Lang  
The Truman Show (1998) Dir: Peter Weir

Screenings of films will take place at times and dates TBD. Students are highly encouraged to attend the screenings (and to that end will be supplied with popcorn & beverages in order to make the screenings more enjoyable). Students unable to attend one or more screenings are responsible for watching each film before the relevant class discussion.

## REQUIREMENTS

*Honor Code:* All graded work is bound by the provisions of the Honor Code and must be pledged, signed, and dated.

*Preparation & Participation:* Keeping up with readings and assignments, participating in class, and interacting with your classmates/teammates in a respectful manner will enrich the learning experience for all of us. Participation will count toward a substantial portion of your final grade.

*Attendance & Behavior:* Your attendance is vital both for your learning as well as for lively class discussion. Attendance for all in class exercises or presentations is required; these cannot be made up at a later date. Students are expected to display civil and respectful behavior during class. Cell phones must be silenced in class sessions, and laptops may only be used if used in a non-disrupting manner (no instant messaging, games, or sound). Violators will be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs.

*Graded Coursework:* No passing grade can be achieved in this course without completion of **all** graded assignments, which are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise specified by the instructor. Late submissions will be marked down ten points per day. All assignments must

be typed in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double spaced, with 1” margins all around unless otherwise noted for specific assignments. Pages should be stapled. Spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors will reduce the overall grade on assignments, so please proofread carefully and **do not** rely solely on computer spelling/grammar checkers! I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Center’s assistance prior to submitting assignments.

In **Assignment 1**, students will discuss a dystopian environment of their choice and explain how it is *similar* to a utopia. Students should be sure to refer to urban design concepts as discussed in the readings and in class. Details regarding assignment 1 will be handed out on January 29 and the Assignment will be due on February 19.

In **Assignment 2**, students will describe one particular aspect of the built environment that appears across at least two dystopias (e.g.: lack of transparency, homogenous design, urban decay, lack of transportation options, etc.) Students should make sure to explain how that feature is similar in both dystopias, and relate it to the real world. Was this aspect of the environment a real concern? Has this issue been addressed, or is it still current? Details regarding Assignment 2 will be handed out on February 24 and the assignment will be due on March 12.

**Assignment 3** will be divided in three parts, listed below. Detailed instructions for each step will be given in class. Proposals will be due March 26. The presentations will be given during week 15 and the essay/creative projects will be due on April 28.

*Essay:* Students will describe their own current/future version of a dystopian environment. What does it look and feel like? Students should refer to at least three dystopias, and discuss how their conception of dystopia relates to them. Students are strongly encouraged to be creative and use their own experiences and tastes to elaborate their dystopia. Proposals must be approved before the final project is undertaken.

*Creative Project:* Students will produce a drawing/collage/model from the built environment described in a dystopian novel or one based on individual conceptions of a current/future dystopia. Proposals must be approved before the final project is undertaken.

*Presentation:* Students will present both their conception of a dystopia and their artwork to the class. Emphasis will be on speaking skills.

A mid-semester report of unsatisfactory (U) will be reported if a student has a C- or below in the course at the time reports are submitted.

<b>Graded Course Requirements</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Class Participation	20%
Assignment 1	15%
Assignment 2	15%
Assignment 3: Creative Project	15%
Assignment 3: Essay	20%
Assignment 3: Presentation	15%

#### **Grading Scale**

A	4.00	94-100%
A-	3.70	90-93%
B+	3.30	87-89%
B	3.00	83-86%
B-	2.70	80-82%
C+	2.30	77-79%
C	2.00	73-76%
C-	1.70	70-72%
D+	1.30	67-69%
D	1.00	60-66%
F	0.00	<60%

### Office of Disability Services

The Office of Disability Services has been designated by the University as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you receive services through that office and require accommodations for this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodation needs and bring your accommodation letter with you to the appointment. I will hold any information you share with me in strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise. If you have not made contact with the Office of Disability Services and have accommodation needs, (note taking assistance, extended time for tests, etc.), please contact them at (540) 654-1266.

### CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1	
1/13 T	Class Introduction
1/15 R	What is a Utopia, what is a Dystopia? <i>Readings: More, T. Utopia, Book II</i>
WEEK 2	Screening: Metropolis
1/20 T	Reading Urban Design <i>Readings: LeGates, Kevin Lynch (Part 7)</i>
1/22 R	Metropolis: Urban Design Between the Wars <i>Readings: Campbell, Chapter 2</i>
WEEK 3	
1/27 T	The City of Industry <i>Readings: Zamyatin, Y. We</i>
1/29 R	Modernism & We (I) <i>Readings: LeGates, Le Corbusier (Part 5)</i> <b>Assignment 1 Handed Out</b>
WEEK 4	
2/3 T	Brave New World & Social Stratification (I) <i>Readings: Huxley, A. Brave New World</i>
2/5 R	Brave New World & Social Stratification (II) <i>Readings: Huxley, A. Brave New World</i>
WEEK 5	Screening: Logan's Run
2/10 T	Big Brother (I) <i>Readings: Orwell, G. 1984</i>
2/12 R	Big Brother (II) <i>Readings: Orwell, G. 1984</i>
WEEK 6	Screening: Blade Runner
2/17 T	Modernism & the Mall <i>Readings: LeGates, Frank Lloyd Wright (Part 5)</i>
2/19 R	Conformity as Ideal <i>Readings: Campbell, Chapter 4</i> <b>ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE</b>

WEEK 7	
2/24 T	Immigrants, Overpopulation & the City of Tomorrow (I) <i>Readings: LeGates, Wilson &amp; Kelling (Part 4)</i> <b>Assignment 2 Handed Out</b>
2/26 R	Immigrants, Overpopulation & the City of Tomorrow (II)
WEEK 8	
3/3 T	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
3/5 R	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK
WEEK 9	Screening: Brazil
3/10 T	Gender Issues in Dystopias <i>Readings: Atwood, M. The Handmaid's Tale</i>
3/12 R	The Suburb: Quaint & Frightening <b>ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE</b> <i>Readings: Atwood, M. The Handmaid's Tale</i>
WEEK 10	Screening: Gattaca
3/17 T	You Can't Get There From Here <i>Readings: LeGates, William Whyte (Part 7)</i>
3/19 R	Dystopia & the Absurd
WEEK 11	Screening: City of Lost Children
3/24 T	Modernism Revisited <i>Readings: LeGates, Mike Davis (Part 3)</i>
3/26 R	Homogeneity & Order <b>Assignment 3 Proposals Due</b>
WEEK 12	
3/31 T	The Steampunk Aesthetic <i>Readings: Campbell, Chapter 3</i>
4/2 R	Children in the Dystopian City
WEEK 13	Screening: The Truman Show
4/7 T	Dystopias Today: The Exurb (I) <i>Readings: Stephenson, N. Snow Crash</i>
4/9 R	Dystopias Today: The Exurb (II) <i>Readings: LeGates, Robert Fishman (Part 1)</i>
WEEK 14	
4/14 T	Dystopias Today: Synthesis <i>Readings: LeGates, Melvin Webber (Part 8)</i>
4/16 R	Dystopias Tomorrow
WEEK 15	
4/21 T	FINAL PRESENTATIONS I
4/23 R	FINAL PRESENTATIONS II
WEEK 16	
4/28 T	<b>ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE (essay &amp; creative project)</b>