

**COURSE DATA****DATA SUBJECT**

**Code:** 44228  
**Name:** Shapes of hope: Utopian and dystopian fiction  
**Cycle:** Master's Degree  
**ECTS Credits:** 3  
**Academic year:** 2025-26

**STUDY (S)**

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
2243 - Master's Degree in Advanced English Studies	Facultat de Filologia, Traducció i Comunicació	1	First quarter

**SUBJECT-MATTER**

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
2243 - Master's Degree in Advanced English Studies	Shapes of hope: Utopian and dystopian fiction	COMPULSORY

**COORDINATION**

MARTINEZ LOPEZ MIGUEL

**SUMMARY**

This course proposes a journey through utopian, anti-utopian and dystopian thought in Western literature from its origins until the present day. By reading, analysing and debating over some of the main works of literature of these subgenres in the English language, a reflection will be made about the utopian undertones of political action. Likewise, the parameters of the search for a better social design will be studied as a basis of the theories of the Modern state and the welfare state; we will focus on the anticipatory character of the utopian and dystopian texts in their prophecy about the metamorphosis of the dream of happiness into a totalitarian nightmare, and of idealism into rationalism through satire. The exploration of the answers of utopian/dystopian literature to the scientific, technological, economic, moral and political crises of the different periods will conclude with an analysis of several utopias, as well as the reception of the post-contemporary re-writing of the apocalypse in narratives about terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, preventive/preemptive wars and the robotics revolution.

**PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE****RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE**

There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.



## OTHER REQUIREMENTS

## COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

### 2196 -

Ability to apply theoretical knowledge and skills to conduct critical, rigorous analysis using various tools, including printed and digital formats (ICT), within English Studies.

Ability to develop autonomy in learning, including resource and information search, and to access bibliographic and documentary sources in different areas of English Studies.

Ability to identify fundamental methodologies, theories, topics, and terminological, theoretical, formal, and ideological principles necessary for initiating linguistic or literary research in English Studies.

Ability to make informed judgments using established criteria and personal reflections. Achievement of proficiency in academic and scientific-technical English, both in written and oral forms.

Ability to organize, structure, and develop ideas in various academic documents, such as essays, technical reports, and advanced research projects masters theses within the field of English Studies.

Ability to publicly present from an advanced and more complex perspective than that of undergraduate studies experiences, ideas, or reports within the field of English Studies.

Advanced ability to understand from a more complex perspective than that of undergraduate studies the methodology required for solving problems specific to the field of English Studies.

Advanced ability to understand from a more complex perspective than that of undergraduate studies those concepts, principles, theories, or models related to different areas of English Studies.

Capacidad para interpretar y analizar textos representativos de la pluralidad lingüística y cultural de las sociedades anglófonas contemporáneas con el fin de reflexionar sobre su relevancia, no sólo en referencia a los contextos socio-lingüísticos, históricos, políticos y culturales en los que se inscriben, sino también en relación con la globalización de la cultura, dentro de los Estudios Ingleses.

Students should apply acquired knowledge to solve problems in unfamiliar contexts within their field of study, including multidisciplinary scenarios.

Students should be able to integrate knowledge and address the complexity of making informed judgments based on incomplete or limited information, including reflections on the social and ethical responsibilities associated with the application of their knowledge and judgments.

Students should communicate conclusions and underlying knowledge clearly and unambiguously to both specialized and non-specialized audiences.

Students should demonstrate self-directed learning skills for continued academic growth.

Students should possess and understand foundational knowledge that enables original thinking and research in the field.



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## DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

### 1. Th. More's Utopia: the template for utopian/dystopian literature

- 1.1. Morphology and grammar of a literary genre.
- 1.2. Utopian happiness
- 1.3. Capital, labour and the just war

### 2. Utopia, anti-utopia and dystopia in Swift's Gulliver's Travels

1. Dystopia and satire. Swift's personas
2. Foolish experimentation. On war, science and technology
3. Scatology, relativity and alienation
4. Hard and soft interpretations of Book IV
5. Reason, the vulnerability of human nature and Don Pedro's role play

### 3. The death of utopia: Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four

1. War, power, and politics: freedom and social classes
2. At war with desire and hope: The Golden Country
3. Ingsoc and doublethink: Newspeak as duckspeak

### 4. Biological catastrophe: A. Huxley's Brave New World

1. Visions of a post-Apocalyptic world
2. The hopeless existence of survivors, while affection, friendship, loyalty and love survive
3. Irrational hope in the midst of doom

### 5. The debate on post-contemporary utopias/dystopias: Suzanne Collins' The Hunger Games

1. The Hunger Games trilogy and the 21st century YA dystopia.
  2. Reading The Hunger Games through G. Hofstede and A.H. Maslow.
  3. Reception and adaptations.
- N.B. Oral presentations begin.

### 6. Assessment. Speaking and writing about utopia and dystopia today

1. Academic writing on utopian/dystopian literature. (Written section of the course assessment).
2. Oral presentations on utopian and dystopian literary topics. Q&A session



## Learning Outcomes

The student body will be able to critically read utopian, anti-utopian and dystopian texts from English-language literatures, from the origins of the subgenre in English Renaissance literature to the contemporary novel with a markedly dystopian tendency. Likewise, they will be able to analyse and discuss the social function of this literature in its various approaches to possible solutions to political, socioeconomic, ethical and cultural crises, as well as to the contingencies of human nature through different conceptual and rhetorical frameworks explored in these texts. They will be able to integrate the knowledge acquired and reflect on similar texts that explore the possibilities of pursuing happiness through the improvement of political, economic and moral orders in contemporary societies.

## WORKLOAD

### PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Theory	24,00
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>24,00</b>

### NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	5,00
Individual or group project	0,00
Independent study and work	18,00
Preparation of lessons	10,00
Preparation for assessment activities	0,00
Resolution of case studies	18,00
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>51,00</b>

## TEACHING METHODOLOGY

-Introduction of theoretical content, texts and contexts, through lectures, with IT support when relevant.

-Discussion of set readings: autonomous reading of set texts and classroom discussion. Primary sources are to be read in advance and brought to class. Two movies will be watched and a selection of secondary sources and artistic portrayals of utopia/dystopia will be discussed.

-Preparation of individual/group oral presentations will also be supervised during office hours.

MD1 Introduction of theoretical content through lectures or expository sessions with ICT support, when applicable.

MD2 Pair work or group debate/discussion.



MD3 Reading of relevant material (independently or with in-class discussion, information selection and concept linking, studying, creating reading logs, outlines or summaries).

MD7 Group project development (design and development of a project for oral or written presentation. Negotiation regarding topic, work organization, task distribution, joint writing and review).

## EVALUATION

### ASSESSMENT BREAKDOWN FOR FIRST CALL:

**\*Student attendance and active participation (20% of the final grade):** in-class discussions; Q&A sessions. Active class participation is key to obtaining a high grade in this course. **2/10**

**\*Final written exam (30% of the final grade):** It will consist in 1) a theoretical component in which students will answer questions on theoretical issues discussed in class 2) a practical component in which students will (2a) identify and briefly comment on texts previously close-read in class. (2b) Students will write an essay-like commentary on one of two suggested topics. **3/10**

**\* Oral presentation (50% of the final grade):** 5-minute oral presentation on a topic chosen by the student, followed by a Q&A session. **5/10**

### ASSESSMENT BREAKDOWN FOR SECOND CALL (There are no make-up activities for continuous assessment elements of the first call -oral presentations, attendance, participation, etc.-):

**Final written exam (100% of the final grade):** It will consist in 1) a theoretical component in which students will answer questions on theoretical issues discussed in class 2) a practical component in which students will (2a) identify and briefly comment on texts previously close-read in class. (2b) Students will write an essay-like commentary on one of two suggested topics.

**IMPORTANT:** Intellectual honesty is essential in academic communities and for the fair assessment of student work. All assignments submitted in this course must be the student's own **original work**. Assignments involving **fraudulent collaboration** or generated with the help of **artificial intelligence** (ChatGPT or others) will not be accepted, unless their use is part of the course content and explicitly authorised by the instructor.

Both the exam and practical exercises must be free from spelling and grammatical errors. Each spelling, punctuation, or expression mistake will result in a deduction from the final grade, which may lead to a failing mark.

The general grading system will follow the regulations of the University of Valencia approved by the Governing Council on May 30, 2017. ACGUV 108/2017.

## REFERENCES



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**Core**

- Burgos, Andrea and Miguel Martínez. *El Ocaso de Koinonia. La Distopía en la Literatura Norteamericana*. Valencia: PUV Universitat de València, 2024.
- Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. Scholastic Inc., 2008.
- Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. Suggested edition: Longman Group, 1991.
- Martínez, Miguel (ed.). *Thomas More and Spain*. Valencia: PUV Universitat de València, 2025.

More, Thomas. *Utopia*. Suggested editions: Penguin Classics (2012), or Norton Critical Edition, 2010.

- Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty Four*. The Annotated Ed. Penguin Classics, 2013.
- Swift, Jonathan. *Gullivers Travels*. Suggested edition: Norton Critical Edition, 2002.

**Supplementary**

- Clays, Gregory. *Dystopia: A Natural History*. Oxford: O.U.P, 2016.
- Gordin D., Michael et al (eds.) *Utopia/dystopia: conditions of historical possibility*. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton U.P., 2010.
- Gottlieb, Erika. *Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trial*. Montreal: McGillQueens University, 2001.
- Hynes, Samuel (ed.) 1984: *A Collection fo Critical Essays*. Englewood Cliffs,N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971.
- Kumar, Krishan. *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1987.
- Manuel, Frank E., and Fritzie P. Manuel. *Utopian Thought in the Western World*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Martínez López, Miguel, *The idea of a commonwealth according to the Essenes and Thomas Mores Utopia*, chapter in A. Cousins & D. Grace (eds.), *Mores Utopia and the Utopian Inheritance*, New York: University Press of America, 1995, p. 53-68.
- Popper, Karl R. *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. 4th rev. ed. 2 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962. (Originally published in 1945.)
- Sargent, Lyman Tower. *British and American Utopian Literature, 15161985: An Annotated*,



Chronological Bibliography. New York: Garland, 1988.

- Webster, Richard. The Diminutive Insect. Gullivers Travels, Original Sin and the Imagery of Size. April 12 2014. <http://www.richardwebster.net/gulliverstravelsandoriginalsin.html>