

ENGLISH 200: LITERARY STUDIES--UTOPIAN/ DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

Prof. Hanson, fall 2009, section C, MWF 10:10-11:00 a.m. Human beings have a natural tendency to desire a better future and to daydream about living in a more perfect society. But what would a more perfect society look like? This is a question writers have tried to answer for hundreds of years, and this body of imaginative writing is named utopian literature, after Sir Thomas More's hugely popular *Utopia* (1516). In this course, we will explore the nature and evolution of utopian literature, as well as the emergence of dystopian literature (such as George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*), which imagines societies far worse than our own. We will discuss many of the important artistic and political questions that utopian and dystopian texts raise. Possible texts for the course include: More's *Utopia*, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* (1888), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), M.T. Anderson's *Feed* (2002), and Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003).

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