

UTOPIANISM AND PUBLIC POLICY: PP 475.003

Winter 2015, T/TH 1:00 – 2:30

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Introduction

One could argue that all public policy has its roots in utopianism: the fundamentally human dissatisfaction with the way things are and the equally human drive to create for ourselves a better (if not perfect) society. But while the policy maker may be inspired by utopian ideals, she must reconcile this vision with political realities.

The course will be divided into two parts. First, we will briefly ground ourselves in utopian theory by examining three of the canonical utopian texts—Plato’s *Republic*, More’s *Utopia*, and Bacon’s *New Atlantis*—which gave rise to the genre and raised the fundamental questions with which future utopian visions have wrestled: What should a utopia require of and seek to obtain for its citizens? To what extent is true utopia possible? For whom and for how long? What are the benefits of pursuing utopian ideals, and what are the hazards? What freedoms must be sacrificed? In what sense do the qualities that make a utopia a paradise make it a nightmare as well? What hinders utopianism from successful fruition: fundamental contradictions in human nature, a lack of resources, a lack of political wherewithal, or all of the above? Against such long (impossible) odds, why do we continue to strive for utopia?

In the second part of the course, we will turn our attention to attempts made to implement utopian philosophy at the community, the city, and the state level, examining various projects—their original organizing principles, evolution, successes and failures. In doing so, we will continue to pursue answers to the questions raised by Plato, Bacon, and More while considering new ones: What room is there in the political process for utopian imagination and idealism? By what means—peaceful or violent—should utopia be pursued? In a country as large and complex as the US, can these schemes be implemented successfully on more than a communal scale? How should success (or failure) be defined? What is gained in these utopian projects, and what is lost? What lessons do these utopian projects hold for policy makers?

Required Texts

To be obtained/purchased

- Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Richard W. Sterling and William C. Scott
- *Walden Two*, BF Skinner
- *Living Walden Two*, Hilke Kuhlmann
- *The City of To-morrow and its Planning*, Le Corbusier, trans. Frederick Etchells
- *Darkness at Noon*, Arthur Koestler, trans. Daphne Hardy
- *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley

Required Texts

To be accessed online

- *The Machinery of Freedom*, by David Friedman. Available at http://davidfriedman.com/The_Machinery_of_Freedom_.pdf
- *The Communist Manifesto*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Available at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm>

Grading

- Class attendance and participation, quizzes 20%
- Paper One, due 15%
- Paper Two, due 20%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Group Project 25%
 - Individual Paper 5%
 - Group Presentation 8%
 - Group Paper 12%

Attendance and Participation

Two things to remember about class discussion. First, while you may not agree with what others have to say, you should be respectful when you disagree or question others. Second, although class participation will be a part of your overall grade, I'll be judging you on the *quality* of your comments, as much if not more than the *quantity*. You don't have to be brilliant, just thoughtful.

Needless to say, you need to be here in order to participate. More than two unexcused absences will lower your grade. Three or more unexcused absences may result in failure or a request that you withdraw from the course. Excused absence means illness or a death in the family. If you know you're going to miss, let me know ahead of time, otherwise, contact me as soon as possible.

Electronic Devices are welcome—as long as they are used for educational purposes.

Quizzes

I reserve the right to administer quizzes, a harsh medicine, but one necessary to insure against the disease of non-reading. These will work in the following way: at the end of class, I will give you questions to think about as you read ahead. The next class, if I am going to quiz you, I will ask you to take a few minutes to write about one of these questions. These will be graded on a check-plus, check, check-minus scale, and will increase in frequency if I see signs the class is falling behind in the reading.

Midterm Exam

Thursday, February 26. We'll talk about the content of the exam as the semester progresses.

Disabilities

If you believe you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible so we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities to help

determine appropriate accommodations. I will treat any information you provide as private and confidential.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty that includes the following practices:

- 1) Copying, quoting, or *paraphrasing* documents of any kind (dictionaries, encyclopedias, newspapers, the Internet, other students' papers, etc.) without proper and explicit citation of the source;
- 2) Use of another's words without quotation marks around them, or use of another's *ideas* (even when paraphrased or modified) without proper and explicit citation of the source;
- 3) Turning in another's work as one's own or asking another to compose an essay.

A student who plagiarizes will automatically receive an "E" for the course, in addition to any actions taken by the appropriate university committee.

(From the Ford School BA Program Handbook)

"Students are responsible for being familiar with and are held accountable to the standards as articulated in the Academic Integrity Statement, as well as University policies outlined in the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities (<http://oscr.umich.edu/statement/>)."

A Note on the Writing Center

As I will continue to offer tutorial hours at the Ford School Writing Center through the Winter term, I am happy, during my regular scheduled hours, to read your work—*except your work for this course*. If you would like the Writing Center to read your papers for this course, please make an appointment with the other Writing Center instructor, Alex Ralph. If you would like to discuss your work for this course with me, please come see me during my course office hours or contact me for an appointment. I won't read a complete draft of your paper, but I am happy to read outlines and selected paragraphs, or to discuss ideas. To make an appointment with Alex at the Writing Center, go to: <http://www.fordschool.umich.edu/writing-center/>

Course Outline

1. THE THEORETICAL UTOPIA

Thur, Jan 8	Introduction	
Tue, Jan 13	<i>The Republic</i> , Plato	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read pp. 25 – 101 (st. 327 – 403c)
Thur, Jan 15	<i>The Republic</i> , Plato	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read pp. 101 – 153 (st. 403d – 461e)
Tue, Jan 20	<i>The Republic</i> , Plato	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read pp. 153 – 234 (through the end of Bk VII)
Thur, Jan 22	<i>Utopia</i> , Thomas More	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Bk Two
Tue, Jan 27	<i>The New Atlantis</i> , Francis Bacon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read all of it. Available online at: http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/bacon/atlantiss.pdf • Begin reading Fourier for class on Thurs, Jan 29

2. THE COMMUNAL UTOPIA

Thur, Jan 29	<p><i>The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier</i>, edited by Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu</p> <p>*All readings on ctools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read pp. 205 – 329 • IV. “The Theory of Passionate Attraction” • V. “The Ideal Community” • VI. “Attractive Work”
Tue, Feb 3	<p><i>The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier</i>, edited by Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu</p> <p>*All readings on ctools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read pp. 329 – 346, VII. “The New Amorous World”
Thur, Feb 5	<p>Fourierist Communities in the U.S.: <i>The Utopian Alternative</i>, by Carl J. Guarneri</p> <p>*All readings on ctools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read pp. 153 – 163, “The Communitarian Boom and Bust” • Read pp. 178 – 218, “Life in the Phalanxes”
Tue, Feb 10	<p><i>Walden Two</i>, by BF Skinner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapters 1 -4; 8; 12 – 17 (app. 90 pages) • PAPER ONE DUE
Thur, Feb 12	<p><i>Walden Two</i>, by BF Skinner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapters 18 – 20; 23 - 24; 27 – 29; 32 – 33 (app 120 pages)
Tue, Feb 17	<p>The Community of Twin Oaks: <i>Living Walden Two</i>, by Hilke Kuhlmann</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Part 3, pp. 81 – 132 • Explore www.twinoaks.org
Thur, Feb 19	<p>The Community of Los Horcones (Comunidad Walden Dos): <i>Living Walden Two</i>, by Hilke Kuhlmann</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Part 4 and Conclusion, pp. 135 – 170 • Read “Isolated Desert Community Lives by Skinner’s Precepts” (ctools) • Explore www.loshorcones.org

3. THE UTOPIA VS. THE STATE

Tue, Feb 24	<p>The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS): The Government Raid of the Yearning for Zion (YFZ) Ranch, April 2008</p> <p>*All articles on ctools*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Under the Banner of Heaven</i>, by Jon Krakauer (Chapter Two) • Eldorado Investigation • ACLU Statement • Texas Supreme Court Ruling • Texas Supreme Court Minority Opinion • “Caregivers Blast Texas’s Treatment of Children” • “Polygamy—Where Religious Liberty Ends” • “Presumption of Evil” • “Texas Vows New Tack”
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Thursday, Feb 26

MIDTERM EXAM

WINTER BREAK

3. THE UTOPIA VS. THE STATE (cont’d)

Tue, March 10	MOVE vs. the City of Philadelphia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings TBD
Thur, March 12	<p>The Amish and the State: Clashes over military conscription, war bonds, and Social Security</p> <p>*All readings on ctools*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Amish and the State</i>, “Negotiating with Caesar” (Chapter 1) • <i>The Amish and the State</i>, “Social Security and Taxes” (Chapter 7) • <i>Shipshewana</i>, “The Indiana Councils of defense and the Amish” (Chapter 4) • FINAL PROJECT IDEA PAPER DUE

4. THE LIBERTARIAN UTOPIA: THE THREE FRIEDMANS

Tue, March 17	<p>The Libertarian Principle: <i>The Machinery of Freedom</i>, by David Friedman</p> <p>http://davidfriedman.com/The_Machinery_of_Freedom_.pdf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Introduction and Part III
Thur, March 19	<p>The Seasteading Institute: Community and/or Nation building on the Open Seas (Patri Friedman)</p> <p>*All readings on ctools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Libertarians Dream” (from <i>The Economist</i>) • Read <i>The Seasteading Book</i>: Chs 2, 4 – 10, 12. <i>SKIM</i> Chs. 39 – 41. • Explore www.seasteading.org; in particular, the “Floating City Project” under the “Resources” tab

5. TECHNOLOGY AND UTOPIA

Tue, Mar 31	<i>Brave New World</i> , Aldous Huxley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapters 1 – 6 • PAPER TWO DUE
Thur, April 2	<i>Brave New World</i> , Aldous Huxley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapters 7 – 18
Tue, April 7	The Technotopians, For & Against	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings TBD

6. THE UTOPIAN CITY

Tue, March 24	<i>The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning</i> , by Le Corbusier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreword, pp xxi – xxvii • I. The Pack-Donkey’s Way and Man’s Way, p. 5 – 12 • II. Order, pp 15 – 26 • Extract from a Report Made to the Town Planning Congress of Strasbourg, pp. 96 – 102 • Second Part, pp. 159 – 247
Thur, March 26	Chandigarh, India: The Plan and Results *All readings on ctools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Le Corbusier Plan,” by Ravi Kalia • “A Planned City” and “Conclusion,” by Ravi Kalia • “Socio-economic Change and the Poor,” by Madhu Sarin • FINAL GROUP PROJECT DEADLINE TO MEET WITH ME (Friday, Mar. 27)

7. THE UTOPIAN NATION: The State-planned economy and Communism

Thur, April 9	<i>The Communist Manifesto</i> , by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Preamble, Parts I, II, III.2, and III.3
Tue, April 14	<i>Darkness at Noon</i> , by Arthur Koestler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read The First Hearing and The Second Hearing • SECOND PAPER DUE
Thur, April 16	<i>Darkness at Noon</i> , by Arthur Koestler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read The Third Hearing and The Grammatical Fiction

8. THE UTOPIAN IMAGINATION: Class Projects

Tue, April 21	Group Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups 1, 2, and 3
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