### **COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT**

**NOTE:** ANY CHANGES TO A CSD MUST GO THROUGH ALL OF THE RELEVANT APPROVAL PROCESSES, INCLUDING LTPC.

Academic School/Department: General Education

**Programme:** Combined Studies

Level: 3

Course Title: Utopia and Dystopia

Course Code: FYS 3105

Course Leader: Sara Chetin

Student Engagement Hours:160Lectures:30Seminar / Tutorials:30Independent / Guided Learning:100

Semester:

**Credits:** 16 UK CATS credits

8 ECTS credits 4 US credits

#### **Course Description:**

Utopias are fairytales, dreams and visions about perfect worlds and future societies. Dystopias are the opposite - nightmare scenarios of oppressive and totalitarian outcomes from social, political, economic, cultural and technological developments in the contemporary world. Crucially, one person's utopia can be another person's dystopia! First year students are encouraged to immerse themselves in these alternative (but-not-too-far-off-our-own) worlds in a range of mediums - but particularly through film and literature. *Utopias and Dystopias* provides a broad framework for the development of critical thinking skills, as well as providing an indirect route to critical commentary on our own societies.

#### Prerequisites: none

# Aims and Objectives:

- To provide a broad historical overview of the development of utopias and dystopias through a range of media and sources and to foster appreciation of the importance of these sources
- To provide students with an appreciation of both justifications for and the implications of social, political, economic, cultural, and technological changes in the contemporary world
- To provide a broad introduction to themes and issues dealt with in particular in a

range of Major and Minor streams in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Communications, Creative Writing, Gender Studies, History, International Relations, Literature, Political Science, and Sociology

• To introduce students to the means by which they can monitor, build and reflect upon their personal development.

### **Programme Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following programme outcomes.

3A(i,); 3B(i); 3C(i); 3D(i)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification. This is located at the Departmental/Schools page of the portal

### **Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of the spectrum of utopian forms
- Critically evaluate basic political concepts and approaches to these forms
- Demonstrate an understanding of the contemporary utopian issues related to aesthetics, the environment, technology and the body, sex and gender, ecstasy, modernity and politics
- Reflect on their own learning experiences and life experiences and relate this to utopian and dystopian concerns
- Demonstrate a reflection of their own academic and social skills and be able to plan for their personal, educational and career development.

### **Indicative Content:**

Historical overview of Utopias from the Ancient Greeks to More, Bacon and Kant Dystopias and political regimes
Anti-Utopias
Post-Modern Dystopias
Aesthetics
Technology and body
Sex and Gender
Ecstasy
PDP

#### **Assessment:**

This course conforms to the Richmond University Standard Assessment Norms approved at Academic Council on June 28, 2012.

## **Teaching Methodology:**

Course meetings consist of interactive lectures on assigned readings, film viewings, group visits, small group discussions and reflection activities. Student work is assessed through a variety of ways using both formative and summative approaches. Feedback is intended to help improved student approach to learning and achieve better results.

# Bibliography:

# *IndicativeText(s):*

G. Claeys and L.T.Sargent, eds., *The Utopian Reader*, NYU Press, 1999. Lyman Tower Sargent, *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction*, OUP, 2010.

First Year Seminar Handbook and Weekly Planner (in house booklet) Introducing the Personal Development Plan (in house booklet)

Please Note: The core and the reference texts will be reviewed at the time of designing the semester syllabus

# Change Log for this CSD:

Major or	Nature of Change	Date Approved &	Change
Minor	_	Approval Body (School	Actioned by
Change?		or LTPC)	Academic
			Registry