

## [SYLLABUS FOR ENVIROTOPIA COURSE]

ENGLISH 389. Special Topics in Literature:

# GREENING (E)UTOPIA

Spring, 2002: TuTh @ [TBA]

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### Description

Earth is on the brink of environmental catastrophe. Perhaps you hadn't heard.

Worldwide, only a tiny minority realize it. In the United States, *the one nation most responsible for the present crisis*, only a tiny percentage of our fellow citizens in positions of responsibility will acknowledge that there just might be a problem. This course will help us understand what we as Americans may be able to do about environmental degradation before it's too late.

The course will engage with the five-hundred-year-old tradition of utopian fiction in England and America as a way of learning how to think about one crucial issue: how would the ideal human community (or polity) relate to the natural environment? or how might the worst imaginable human community treat nature? It will repeatedly ask one simple question: *How best can human beings arrange to live together, sustainably, in the natural world?* Our collective intellectual enterprise thus might be called "The Greening of Utopia."

### Goals

The goal of the course is understanding -- an intellectual grasp of the changes that must be made in social systems if human beings are to live sustainably in harmony with nature. If Americans don't reach such understanding soon, we and the rest of the world face cataclysm and anomie. But if we *do* learn this lesson -- and if we are then bold enough to act on our knowledge -- we can be reasonably confident of a golden future.

### Requirements

In pursuit of this goal, the course will call for readings both in primary works of utopian writing, and in a wide range of non-fiction secondary works in disciplines such as environmental science, philosophy, economics, political science, and religion. The reading load will be heavy but always relevant and rewarding, raising issues that are critical to the survival of our civilization. It will expand our horizons. The majority of these secondary readings will be available on electronic reserve at the Woodruff Library.

The course will also require a good deal of writing, in the form of 1) weekly short papers (of no more than some 500 words) on a primary or secondary work, and 2) a term project of some twenty pages in length. Most of this writing will be accomplished and turned in in

paperless form, submitted electronically to the course's "Blackboard" web page (where it will be accessible to all students).

[The weekly short papers are to be critical response to a single aspect of a primary work. Students should bring a hard-copy first draft of these papers to class on Thursdays for use in discussion. A final version of the paper must be turned in to the course web page by Monday at 5:00 p.m.]

The nature of the final project will be decided by class consensus.

Groups of two or three students each will direct discussion on Thursdays; they will be responsible for integrating the primary and secondary readings by making a formal presentation to class, posing issues common to both and eliciting discussion from the rest of the students.

Most importantly, the course requires regular and vocal participation in class discussion. Despite the number of students who may enroll, the format of each class will be that of a large seminar, where all participants are expected to contribute to the search for answers to the questions posed by the texts. All students must therefore be prepared for every class. This means knowing each assigned reading well enough to be able to discuss it in class. Participation will count heavily toward the final grade.

Attendance is mandatory. Absences will be noted and will affect the student's grade.

If possible, the course may also include a visit to a utopian community in Georgia.

### **Primary texts**

Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*  
Sir Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis*  
Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*  
Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward, 2000-1887*  
William Morris, *News from Nowhere*  
H. G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia*  
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*  
B. F. Skinner, *Walden Two*  
Frederick Pohl, *The Space Merchants*  
Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*  
Ernest Callenbach, *Ecotopia*  
*Future Primitive*, ed. Kim Stanley Robinson [selected short stories]  
T. Coraghessan Boyle, *A Friend of the Earth*.

### **Reading schedule**

Thur Jan 17                      Introduction to the course

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WEEK 1: The idea of "utopia" / imperialism / social engineering / city planning / commune-ism

Tues Jan 22           TEXT: Sir Thomas More, *Utopia* (1516?)  
  
eRESERVE: from Orr, David. *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect*. 1994 [GE70. O77. 1994]  
  
eRESERVE: Lester Brown, from *The State of the World 1994*

Thur Jan 24           eRESERVE: from Plato, *The Republic*.  
  
eRESERVE: [piece on monastic communism, monastery's ecology]  
  
VIDEO: *Affluenza*, PBS.

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WEEK 2: Domination of nature / rationalism / empiricism / the birth of modern science

Tues Jan 29           TEXT: Sir Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis* (1627).  
  
Thur Jan 31           eRESERVE: from Sir Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*  
  
eRESERVE: from Sir Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*  
  
eRESERVE: Lynn White, Jr. "The Historic Roots of our Ecological Crisis." *Science* 155:1203-7(1967).  
  
eRESERVE: John Passmore, *Man's responsibility for nature*  
  
eRESERVE: William Leiss, *The domination of nature*  
  
eRESERVE: from Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*

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WEEK 3: Living close to nature / American Romanticism / wilderness / individualism

Tues Feb 5           TEXT: Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*  
  
Thur Feb 7           eRESERVE: from David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*. 1996 [BD581. A25. 1996]  
  
eRESERVE: from Daniel B. Botkin, *No Man's Garden: Thoreau and a New Vision for Civilization and Nature*.

eRESERVE: from Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. 2000. [HN65 .P878 2000]

eRESERVE: from William Shore, ed., *The Nature of Nature: New Essays from America's Finest Writers On Nature*.

eRESERVE: Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*

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WEEK 4: Industrialism / nationalism / centralization of economic power / the totalitarian state

Tues Feb 12            TEXT: Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward, 2000-1887*.

Thur Feb 14            eRESERVE: Herman E. Daly, *Beyond Growth : The Economics of Sustainable Development*. [HC79 .E5D324 1996] or [HD75.6 .D35 1994]

eRESERVE: Daniel Chiras, *Lessons from Nature*, Ch. 1 "Can the Human Race Survive the Human Race?"

eRESERVE: Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man and Technology*

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WEEK 5: Nostalgic Romantic medievalism / anti-urbanism / craft socialism / rejection of industrialism

Tues Feb 19            TEXT: William Morris, *News from Nowhere*.

Thur Feb 21            eRESERVE: Pepper, David. *Eco-Socialism : From Deep Ecology to Social Justice*. [GF21 .P4 1993]

eRESERVE: F.W.J. Schelling, from *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*

eRESERVE: Neil Evernden, *The Social Construction of Nature*

eRESERVE: Mark A. Lutz, & Kenneth Lux, "Wants, Needs & Indifference," Appendix 1, 322-332, *Humanistic Economics*.

eRESERVE: A. T. Durning, Ch. 2, "The Consumer Society"; Ch. 4, "The Environmental Costs of Consumption," in *How Much is Enough: The Consumer Society and the Future of the Earth*.

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WEEK 6: World problems / world government / technology as savior / macro solutions

Tues Feb26           TEXT: H. G. Wells. *A Modern Utopia*

Thur Feb 28           eRESERVE: Herman Daly, *Steady-state Economics, Toward a Steady-state Economy*

eRESERVE: Herman E. Daly, *Beyond Growth: The Economics of Sustainable Development.*

eRESERVE: Osborne, D. and Gaebler, T. (1992). "Community-owned Government." in *Reinventing Government*, pp. 49-75.

eRESERVE: Berry, J, Portney, K.E. and Thomson, K. (1993) "The Case for Strong Democracy." in *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy*. pp. 283-294.

eRESERVE: from *Agenda 21 : The Earth Summit Strategy to Save Our Planet.*

eRESERVE: from Meadows, Donnella H., Dennis L. Meadows, Jorgen Randers, and William W. Behrens, III. *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind.*

eRESERVE: Langdon Winner. Ch. 5, "Decentralization Clarified," 85-97, in *The Whale & the Reactor*

eRESERVE: George Orwell, from *1984*.

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WEEK 7: Natural science allied with industry against nature

Tues Mar 5           TEXT: Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

Thur Mar 7           eRESERVE: Fritz Hull, *Earth and Spirit: The Spiritual Dimension of the Environmental Crisis*. 1993. [GF 80. E12. 1993]

eRESERVE: from Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature*

eRESERVE: A. Schnaiberg. Ch.4. "The Expansion of Consumption," in *The Environment*, 157-204.

eRESERVE: Juliet Schor, *The Overspent American: Upscaling, Downshifting and the New Consumer.*

eRESERVE: Edward Wilson, *The Diversity of Life*

eRESERVE: Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*

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Spring Recess

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WEEK 8: Efficiency / simplicity / conservation / behavioral engineering / enforced ecology / micro-utopias

Tues Mar 19 TEXT: B. F. Skinner, *Walden Two*

Thur Mar 21 eRESERVE: Schumacher, E.F. *Small is Beautiful.* [HB 171.S384]

eRESERVE: Arne Naess, from *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle*

eRESERVE: Eben Fodor, *Better Not Bigger: How to Take Control of Urban Growth and Improve Your Community.*

eRESERVE: Timothy Beatley, *The Ecology of Place : Planning for Environment, Economy, and Community.*

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WEEK 9: Capitalism and overpopulation

Tues Mar26 TEXT: Frederick Pohl, *The Space Merchants.*

Thur Mar 28 eRESERVE: Thomas Malthus, from *An Essay on the Principle of Population*

eRESERVE: Barry Commoner, "Rapid Population Growth and Environmental Stress," *International Journal of Health Sciences* 21(2):199-227 (1991).

eRESERVE: Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Explosion.*

eRESERVE: Hawken, Paul; Lovins, Amory; Lovins, L. Hunter; edd. *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution.* [HC106.82 .H39 1999]

eRESERVE: from H. Patricia Hynes. *Taking the Population Out of the Equation*.

eRESERVE: Laurie Ann Mazur, ed., *Beyond the Numbers: A Reader on Population, Consumption and the Environment*.

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WEEK 10: Ecofeminism.

Tues Apr 2           TEXT: Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*.

Thur Apr 4           eRESERVE: from Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein, eds. *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*.

eRESERVE: from Judith Plant. *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism*.

eRESERVE: Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, from *Ecofeminism*

eRESERVE: Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, chs. 1, 2, 5, or 7.

eRESERVE: Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*

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WEEK 11: Attaining sustainability

Tues Apr 9           TEXT: Ernest Callenbach, *Ecotopia*

Thur Apr 11          eRESERVE: from Herman E. Daly, *Beyond Growth : The Economics of Sustainable Development*. [HC79 .E5 D324 1996] or [HD75.6 .D35 1994]

eRESERVE: Arne Naess, Ch. 1, "The Environmental Crisis and the Deep Ecology Movement," 23-34, in *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*.

eRESERVE: Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long Range Ecology Movements," *Inquiry* 16:95-100 (1973).

eRESERVE: Paul Taylor. Respect for Nature, 256-313.

eRESERVE: Thomas Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way Into the Future*.

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WEEK 12: Imagining a variety of sustainable futures.

Tues Apr 16 Selected stories in *Future Primitive*, ed. Kim Stanley Robinson

Thur Apr 18 eRESERVE: eRESERVE: Elgin, Duane. *Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life That is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich*. rev. ed. 1993. [BJ1496. E356. 1993], Chapter 6, "Civilizations in Transition," pp. 163-194.

eRESERVE: from AtKisson, Alan. *Believing Cassandra : An Optimist Looks at a Pessimist's World*. [Chelsea Green Pub Co; ISBN: 1890132160] EMORY DOES NOT OWN: ORDER.

eRESERVE: from George Sessions, ed. *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-first Century*. [GE195 .D44 1995]

eRESERVE: Lester W. Milbrath, "Learning Our Way to a New Society" in *Envisioning a Sustainable Society*.

eRESERVE: William A. Shutkin, *The Land That Could Be: Environmentalism and Democracy in the Twenty-first Century*.

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WEEK 13: Environmental apocalypse

Tues Apr 23 TEXT: T. Coraghessan Boyle. *A Friend of the Earth*.

Thur Apr 25 eRESERVE: Christophehr Manes, *Green Rage: Radical Environmentalism and the Unmaking of Civilization*

eRESERVE: Donella Meadows, *The Limits to Growth, Beyond the Limits: Confronting Global Collapse*

eRESERVE: Elgin, Duane. *Voluntary Simplicity*, Chapter 7, "Civilizational Revitalization," pp. 195-218.

eRESERVE: Eugene Linden, *The Future in Plain Sight: Nine Clues to the Coming Instability*.

eRESERVE: Garrett Hardin, *The Limits of Altruism: An Ecologist's View of Survival*

eRESERVE: Garrett Hardin, *Exporing New Ethics for Survival: The*



*Voyage of the Spaceship Beagle*

VIDEO: *Blade Runner*.

eRESERVE: Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature*

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Hawken, Paul; Lovins, Amory; Lovins, L. Hunter; edd. *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*. [Back Bay Books; ISBN: 0316353000] [HC106.82 .H39 1999]

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Kassmann, Kenn. *Envisioning Ecotopia*.

Katz, Eric; Light, Andrew; and Rothenberg, David, edd. *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*. [GE195 .B463 2000]

Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac*.

McLaughlin, Andrew. *Regarding Nature : Industrialism and Deep Ecology* (Sunny Series in Radical Social and Political Theory) [JA75.8 .M35 1993]

Nash, Roderick. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Yale. 1982. [E169.1. N37. 1982]

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Small is Beautiful*. [HB 171.S384]

\_\_\_\_\_. *Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered: 25 Years Later...With Commentaries by E. F. Schumacher, James Robertson (Preface), Paul Hawken (Introduction)* [NOT OWNED BY EMORY.]

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