

## General Education Course Information Sheet

*Please submit this sheet for each proposed course*

Department & Course Number	English 98TB
Course Title	Women's Utopian Writing, Past and Present
Indicate if Seminar and/or Writing II course	Seminar

1 Check the recommended GE foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) for this course

**Foundations of the Arts and Humanities**

- Literary and Cultural Analysis x \_\_\_\_\_
- Philosophic and Linguistic Analysis \_\_\_\_\_
- Visual and Performance Arts Analysis and Practice \_\_\_\_\_

**Foundations of Society and Culture**

- Historical Analysis \_\_\_\_\_
- Social Analysis \_\_\_\_\_

**Foundations of Scientific Inquiry**

- Physical Science \_\_\_\_\_  
*With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more)* \_\_\_\_\_
- Life Science \_\_\_\_\_  
*With Laboratory or Demonstration Component must be 5 units (or more)* \_\_\_\_\_

2. Briefly describe the rationale for assignment to foundation area(s) and subgroup(s) chosen.

This course focuses on literary texts and on the skills of literary analysis.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. List faculty member(s) who will serve as instructor (give academic rank):

Alexandra Verini, Teaching Fellow; Professor Lowell Gallagher, faculty mentor

Do you intend to use graduate student instructors (TAs) in this course?    Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No x

If yes, please indicate the number of TAs \_\_\_\_\_

4. Indicate when do you anticipate teaching this course:

2016-2017	Fall	Winter	Spring
	Enrollment _____	Enrollment _____	Enrollment <u>x</u> _____

5. GE Course Units

Is this an ***existing*** course that has been modified for inclusion in the new GE?    Yes \_\_\_ No x

If yes, provide a brief explanation of what has changed. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Present Number of Units: _____	Proposed Number of Units: <u>5</u> _____
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6. Please present concise arguments for the GE principles applicable to this course.

❑ General Knowledge

This course will introduce students to women’s writing from the Middle Ages to the present. It will also engage theories of gender and politics and introduce students to the methodologies of literary analysis and research.

❑ Integrative Learning

In addition to focusing on literary analysis, the course will use art historical, historical and political disciplinary lenses to illuminate women’s utopian thought.

❑ Ethical Implications

The course will inform students about women’s writing and political thought and encourage them to see language as a means of evaluating and intervening in cultural and political discourse.

❑ Cultural Diversity

The content of this course engages racial, class and gender identities, and its approach aims at illuminating sites of differences within women’s writing while also finding points of commonality.

❑ Critical Thinking

Class discussions and assignments will focus on using critical reading to analyze and draw conclusions about literary texts.

❑ Rhetorical Effectiveness

Students will write bi-weekly blog posts, deliver a presentation and write a final research paper. All these assignments and the in-class preparation for them will focus on developing and conveying persuasive arguments.

❑ Problem-solving

Students will write a final research paper in which they use secondary sources to answer research questions and enhance their arguments about a literary text.

❑ Library & Information Literacy

The course includes a library orientation at Powell library and a final research paper that requires students to find and evaluate secondary sources.

**(A) STUDENT CONTACT PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)**

- 1. Lecture: \_\_\_\_\_ (hours)
- 2. Discussion Section: **3** \_\_\_\_\_ (hours)
- 3. Labs: \_\_\_\_\_ (hours)
- 4. Experiential (service learning, internships, other): \_\_\_\_\_ (hours)
- 5. Field Trips: \_\_\_\_\_ (hours)

**(A) TOTAL Student Contact Per Week** **3** **(HOURS)**

**(B) OUT-OF-CLASS HOURS PER WEEK (if not applicable write N/A)**

- 1. General Review & Preparation: \_\_\_\_\_ (hours)
- 2. Reading **8** \_\_\_\_\_ (hours)
- 3. Group Projects: \_\_\_\_\_ (hours)
- 4. Preparation for Quizzes & Exams: \_\_\_\_\_ (hours)
- 5. Information Literacy Exercises: \_\_\_\_\_ (hours)
- 6. Written Assignments: **3** \_\_\_\_\_ (hours)
- 7. Research Activity: **1** \_\_\_\_\_ (hours)

**(B) TOTAL Out-of-class time per week** **12** **(HOURS)**

**GRAND TOTAL (A) + (B) must equal at least 15 hours/week** **15** **(HOURS)**

Instructor: Alexandra Verini  
 Email: averini@ucla.edu  
 Office hours: TBD

## WOMEN'S UTOPIAN WRITING, PAST AND PRESENT

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The term *utopia*, which means a good place (*eu/topos*) that is nowhere (*ou*), was coined by Thomas More in 1516, but visions of an ideal world existed much earlier in works such as Plato's *Republic*, *Genesis* and Augustine's *City of God*. Although women often fared poorly in traditional utopias, utopian writing later became a privileged formal and theoretical domain for twentieth-century feminists, acting both as a vehicle for social critique and a blueprint for political action. But what kinds of female utopias existed before the twentieth century? How did women in the Middle Ages and early modern period articulate and enact social, political, economic and religious ideals? How do their approaches compare to those of our contemporaries?

By pairing works by women writers of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries with those of twentieth century feminists, this course investigates how women produce visions of the present and the future, of the real and the imagined. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, we will examine texts from a wide range of genres—literary prose, poetry, drama, history, philosophy and theology. As we track how the genre of utopia (and dystopia) is adapted for different purposes, we will open up a dialogue between the past and the present, using early texts to understand the origins of present-day utopian thought and contemporary works to frame older ones. Our exploration of women's utopian writing will involve the formal analysis of each text, but we will also ask broader cultural questions. For example, what does utopia mean to women? In what ways do women's theories of utopia align with and differ from those of their male contemporaries? How do these texts define and produce community? What is the connection between women's utopian visions and their historical circumstances? What patterns do we see in the relationship between generic form and utopian vision? How do other identity categories such as race and class intersect with gender in this type of theorization? What are the possibilities and limitations of utopia discourse for women? Finally, what insight can these texts offer into the ways that we create our own utopias?

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Understand and apply key theoretical and methodological approaches to the field of literary analysis through the study of women's utopian writing
- Analyze the various social historical and literary contexts in which these texts were written to appreciate how literature both reflects and shapes the surrounding world
- Improve critical thinking and reading skills through engaging with a diverse range of literary, historical and theoretical texts
- Successfully navigate the scholarly research process: identifying a question, finding and engaging with secondary sources, integrating sources in a paper etc...
- Develop key academic writing skills: constructing a thesis, supporting it with primary and secondary evidence, conveying the argument within a clearly structured paper etc...
- Practice methods of scholarly critical engagement, including active discussion, the process of peer review and revision of one's own writing

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Class Participation 20%

Class Blog Posts 15%

Presentation 10%

Utopia Assignment 1 (due Week 7) 10%

Utopia Assignment 2 (due Week 10) 10%

Research Project:

- Close Reading preparation assignment (due Week 5 in class) 10%
- Final Paper (due Friday of Finals Week by 5pm) 25%

### **Class Blog:**

As a document of our investigations and source of ongoing discussion, our class will create a blog about women's utopias in the past and present. You will be asked to write 4 blog entries (approximately 200-500 words) in response to prompts about the text assigned for that week. Your posts should use specific examples and close readings from the text. You will sign up for dates to write your entries on the first day of class. Blog entries will be due at 5pm the day before our seminar meeting.

### **Presentation:**

You will prepare a 7-10 minute presentation on one of the texts assigned this quarter, for which you will sign up during the first class meeting. This presentation, which will be done at the beginning of class, should consist of 1.) a brief introduction to the biographical/historical/social context for the work; 2.) a close-reading of a passage of your choosing; 3.) 2 discussion questions to spark class conversation.

### **Utopia Assignments:**

In addition to the more traditional academic final research paper, you will also complete two short creative assignments that explore the connections between the course texts and real-world utopian thought (detailed rubrics for both of these assignments will be given in Week 3):

#### **1. Create your own Utopia (Week 7)**

Write a 2-3 page essay in which you describe your vision of a perfect world (or micro-community such as at UCLA, your neighborhood etc...) and defend your decisions by making reference to examples (positive or negative) from at least 2 of the works that the class has read so far.

#### **2. Present on a Real-World Utopia (Week 10)**

For our last class, you will research a present-day intentional or utopian community and prepare a 5-7 minute presentation on this community and its similarities and differences to at least two of the texts we have read in the course. A 2-3 page write-up of your presentation will be due after the final class.

### **Final Research Paper:**

Write a 12-15 page research paper on a topic related to the class. You may focus on either (a) 1-2 work(s) from the syllabus or (b) a work of your own choosing with my approval (more detailed instructions will be provided in Week 2). The timetable for this assignment is as follows:

In Week 4, you will meet with me to identify a paper topic. In week 5 you will write a 1-2 page close reading of a key passage from your chosen text. In week 6, you will complete a written project overview of 1 to 2 paragraphs with a preliminary bibliography, followed by a rough draft in Week 8 (6-8 pages minimum) and an in-class peer review in Week 9. You will hand in the final

paper during finals week. Failing to complete any of the preliminary steps of the assignment will negatively impact your final grade.

Late Assignment Policy: Each assignment must be emailed to me or given to me in class by the day that it is due. I will take off 1/3 of a grade for every day (or portion of a day) a paper is late (eg: An A- becomes a B+, a B becomes a B-, etc.).

### READING LIST

Aphra Behn, “The Golden Age” (1684)  
 Octavia Butler, “Blood-Child” (1984)  
 Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam* (1613)  
 Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World: The Description of a New World...* (1666)  
 Hesiod, *Works and Days*, selection (8<sup>th</sup> century BCE)  
 Ursula Le Guin, *The Dispossessed* (1974)  
 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, selection (c. 8 CE)  
 Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976)  
 Christine de Pizan, *The City of Ladies* (1401)  
 Plato, *Republic*, selection (c. 380 BCE)  
 Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, *Sultana’s Dream* (1905)  
 Mary Ward, *A Briefe Relation, with Autobiographical Fragments and Selection of Letters* (c. 1605)

### \*Secondary reading excerpts from:

Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” *Theatre Journal* 40.4 (1988)  
 Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: the Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970)  
 Seemin Hasan, “Feminism and Feminist Utopia in Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain’s *Sultana’s Dream*,” in *Behind the Veil: Representation of Muslim Woman in Indian Writings in, English 1950-2000* (2007)  
 Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill, “Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism” *Feminist Studies* (1996)

### WEEKLY SCHEDULE

#### Week 1 Introduction to Utopia/Feminotopia

- Hesiod, *Works and Days*, short selection
- Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, short selection
- Aphra Behn, “The Golden Age”

Discussion focus: Introduction to the course and brief lecture on utopian literature; introduction to close-reading analysis through comparison of poems about the Golden Age

#### Dreaming of a Perfect World for Women

##### Week 2

- Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, selections
- Plato’s *Republic*, selections

Discussion focus: What vision of utopia does this text offer? What role does the genre of the dream vision play in this type of imagining? What sense of female identity does the City of Ladies convey? What models of female friendship and community emerge from this text?

In-class writing focus: developing a thesis statement

**Week 3**

- Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain, “Sultana’s Dream”
- Seemin Hasan, “Feminism and Feminist Utopia in Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain’s *Sultana’s Dream*,” *Behind the Veil: Representation of Muslim Woman in Indian Writings in, English 1950-2000* (New Delhi, 2007)

Discussion focus: What tropes of the dream vision do you recognize here? What is the relationship between Hussain’s utopia and the ‘real’ world? Why might she have chosen this genre for her vision an ideal female world?

In-class writing focus: integrating secondary material into an argument

**Narrating the Self: Madness and Perfection****Week 4**

- *The Book of Margery Kempe*, selections
- Begin reading Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*

Discussion focus: To what degree is *Margery Kempe* a utopian text? How can we use the tools of literary analysis to read this record of ‘real life’? How do religion and mental health intersect in visions of ideal worlds?

\*Visit to Powell Library TBC

**Week 5**

- Complete Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*

\*In class excerpt: Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: the Case for Feminist Revolution*

Discussion focus: What role(s) does the protagonist’s gender play in being on the edge of time? Why do you think the story is narrated in third person perspective? How does the non-chronological structure of the book relate to its themes? In what ways does this work engage with the priorities of the feminist movement?

In-class writing focus: paragraph cohesion

**\* Close Reading preparation assignment due**

\*\*Optional Class Trip to the Los Angeles Women’s Buildings TBA\*\*

**Building Worlds through Science Fiction****Week 6**

- Margaret Cavendish, *The Blazing World: The Description of a New World, called the Blazing-World*
- Thomas More, *Utopia*, selections

Discussion focus: Why do you think this work is often cited as a precursor to the genre of Science fiction? How does Cavendish’s work compare to More’s? What role does gender play in *The Blazing World’s* vision of an ideal society? What implications does this vision have for Cavendish’s contemporary world?

In-class writing focus: transitions

**Week 7**

- Ursula Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*

Discussion focus: What links are there between Le Guin’s work and Cavendish’s? What is the relationship between the individual and society in this text? Why do you think Shevek is a man? What kind statements about twentieth feminism is this novel making? How do Le Guin’s formal strategies contribute to her novel’s utopian content?

**\*Utopia Assignment #1 due**

**When Things Go Wrong: Feminist Dystopia****Week 8**

- Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam*

\*In class excerpt: Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory”

Discussion focus: How is female authority portrayed here? How is gender defined? Why do you think Cary chose this genre (drama) for a story of female rulership gone wrong?

In-class writing focus: Peer review

**Week 9**

- Octavia Butler, “Bloodchild”

\*In class excerpt: Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill, “Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism”

Discussion focus: What is the relationship of the dystopian genre to utopia? Does thinking about genre help us better understand this work? How does Butler’s writing style connect to her social critique in this story?

In-class writing focus: peer review

**Week 10****Real-World Utopias**

Student presentations on contemporary utopian communities (Utopia Assignment #2)

**\*Utopia Assignment #2 write-ups due**

**\*\*Final paper due FRIDAY of finals week by 5pm**

**POLICIES****Communication**

During the week I check my email on a regular basis and can get back to you within 24 hours. While I am happy to answer short questions over email, if you want to discuss an issue in greater depth, I would recommend that you attend my office hours or arrange a meeting with me. Please do not contact me about papers within less than 24 hours before or after the due date.

**Academic Honesty**

- Plagiarism will not be tolerated. If you fail to cite your sources, intentionally or unintentionally, you will be reported to the Dean of Students and penalized severely. For more information, visit the Dean of Students’ website: <http://www.studentgroups.ucla.edu/dos/students/integrity/>.
- The UCLA Library’s Research Guide for Avoiding Plagiarism can be found on our course website and at <http://guides.library.ucla.edu/citing>. Please review it carefully.

**Technology**

Please refrain from using email, texting, surfing the internet, talking on the phone, or any other form of electronic entertainment during class. Should you find yourself unable to ignore your email/cell phone/social media sites during our class sessions, you will not receive participation points for the day.

**RESOURCES****OSD Accommodations**

If you wish to request an accommodation due to a suspected or documented disability, please inform me and contact the Office for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible at A255 Murphy Hall, (310) 825-1501, (310) 206-6083 (telephone device for the deaf).

Website: [www.osd.ucla.edu](http://www.osd.ucla.edu)

**Purdue Online Writing Lab**

(<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>) This is a great website for any questions you might have about the nuts and bolts of paper writing.

**Student Writing Center**

In addition to availing yourself of my help during office hours, I strongly encourage you to visit The Undergraduate Writing Center (A61 Humanities; Rieber 115). The Center is staffed by peer learning facilitators (PLFs), undergraduates who are trained to help at any stage in the writing process. To schedule an appointment, go to: <http://www.wp.ucla.edu/uwc>.





# New Course Proposal

	<b>English 98TB Women's Utopian Writing, Past and Present</b>	
<b>Course Number</b>	English 98TB	
<b>Title</b>	Women's Utopian Writing, Past and Present	
<b>Short Title</b>	WOMEN-UTOPIAN WRNG	
<b>Units</b>	Fixed: 5	
<b>Grading Basis</b>	Letter grade only	
<b>Instructional Format</b>	Seminar - 3 hours per week	
<b>TIE Code</b>	SEMT - Seminar (Topical) [T]	
<b>GE Requirement</b>	Yes	
<b>Major or Minor Requirement</b>	No	
<b>Requisites</b>	Enforced: Satisfaction of entry-level Writing requirement. Freshman and sophomores preferred.	
<b>Course Description</b>	This course examines women's utopian writing from the Middle Ages to the present. Students will discuss how these writings serve both as reflections of particular historical moments and as critiques that resonate with different moments in time.	
<b>Justification</b>	Part of the series of seminars offered through the Collegium of University Teaching Fellows	
<b>Syllabus</b>	File <a href="#">ENGL 98TB Syllabus.pdf</a> was previously uploaded. You may view the file by clicking on the file name.	
<b>Supplemental Information</b>	Professor Lowell Gallagher is the faculty mentor for this course.	
<b>Grading Structure</b>	<b>Class Participation - 20%</b> <b>Class Blog Posts - 15%</b> <b>Presentation - 10%</b> <b>Utopia Assignment 1 - 10%</b> <b>Utopia Assignment 2 - 10%</b> <b>Research Project - 35%</b>	
<b>Effective Date</b>	Spring 2017	
<b>Discontinue Date</b>	Summer 1 2017	
<b>Instructor</b>	Name <b>Alexandra Verini</b>	Title <b>Teaching Fellow</b>
<b>Quarters Taught</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Winter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spring <input type="checkbox"/> Summer	
<b>Department</b>	English	
<b>Contact</b>	Name <b>MICHELLE CHEN</b>	E-mail <b>mchen@oid.ucla.edu</b>
<b>Routing Help</b>		

## ROUTING STATUS

**Role:** Registrar's Publications Office

**Status:** Pending Action

**Role:** Registrar's Scheduling Office - Thomson, Douglas N (DTHOMSON@REGISTRAR.UCLA.EDU) - 51441

**Status:** Added to SRS on 8/15/2016 5:27:01 PM

**Changes:** Short Title

**Comments:** No Comments

ENGLISH 98TB

**Role:** FEC School Coordinator - Kikuchi, Myrna Dee Castillo (MKIKUCHI@COLLEGE.UCLA.EDU) - 45040

**Status:** Approved on 8/11/2016 3:56:23 PM

**Changes:** No Changes Made

**Comments:** Routing to Doug Thomson in the Registrar's Office.

**Role:** FEC Chair or Designee - Bristow, Joseph E (JBRISTOW@HUMNET.UCLA.EDU) - 54173

**Status:** Approved on 7/28/2016 9:23:51 AM

**Changes:** No Changes Made

**Comments:** No Comments

**Role:** FEC Chair or Designee - Kikuchi, Myrna Dee Castillo (MKIKUCHI@COLLEGE.UCLA.EDU) - 45040

**Status:** Returned for Additional Info on 7/27/2016 4:07:53 PM

**Changes:** No Changes Made

**Comments:** Routing to Joe Bristow for FEC approval.

**Role:** CUTF Coordinator - Chen, Michelle L. (MCHEN@OID.UCLA.EDU) - 53042

**Status:** Approved on 7/13/2016 4:05:12 PM

**Changes:** No Changes Made

**Comments:** on behalf of Professor Kathleen L. Komar, Chair, CUTF Faculty Advisory Committee

**Role:** Initiator/Submitter - Chen, Michelle L. (MCHEN@OID.UCLA.EDU) - 53042

**Status:** Submitted on 7/13/2016 3:49:51 PM

**Comments:** Initiated a New Course Proposal

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Comments or questions? Contact the Registrar's Office at  
[cims@registrar.ucla.edu](mailto:cims@registrar.ucla.edu) or (310) 206-7045