

Contemporary Issues in International Cooperation: Utopia as Development Benchmark

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Division of International Studies
Korea University
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Course: Utopia as Development Benchmark

Course Number: DISS477
Lecture: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 14:00–15:15
Location: 218ISH

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1 Introduction

Though much maligned, utopian designs play an important role in development. On one hand, utopias have served to critique existing socio-political arrangements, to propose alternatives, and to inspire political action. On the other, they have supported and strengthened existing institutions. In both cases, they establish benchmarks for measuring social progress. In this class, we will situate utopianism among contemporary measures of development, evaluate our understanding of utopia as a concept; explore both past and present examples of utopia, including contemporary ecotopias; and investigate the experiences of those who have formed concrete utopian communities in both high and low income countries. Equipped with this knowledge, students will be challenged to formulate and articulate their own utopian ideals.

2 Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be knowledgeable on:

1. Diverse approaches to benchmarking development;
2. Several theoretical approaches to utopia as a concept;
3. Historical and contemporary examples of utopian designs and communities, including the challenges they faced in establishing and maintaining their communities; and
4. Self-selected materials on the social, economic, and political organization of societies.

In all the above, a special emphasis will be placed on familiarizing students with experiences from developing countries.

3 Course Requirements

- Great consideration has been given to what readings are assigned. As such, you are expected to have completed all the readings assigned prior to our class meetings. Do not expect that you can complete the readings assigned in one night simply because there are only two chapters or a few articles to read. The readings can be dense and take time to get through.
- A one-page Reaction Paper (RP) is due electronically under the appropriate date in the Response Paper forum of cuzproduces.com by 9am MONDAY morning each week for 9 out of the 12 weeks for which there are readings. This allows you to choose which weeks to write a reflection paper. The papers will not be graded with a letter grade, but will be allocated zero, one, or two points depending on how actively your paper engages the material. The paper should usually be 350–500 words (about one page single-spaced). These brief papers are intended to facilitate class discussion and target class lectures. You can use the Reaction Paper (RP) to ask for clarification about any aspect of the readings you did not fully understand and/or to express an opinion about one or more of the readings. In general, I would advise you to focus the RP on only one of the readings assigned for each week. RPs should be clearly written, spell-checked, stylistically polished, and grammatically correct.
- In addition to writing your own RP, you are expected to read and reflect on those of all other seminar participants prior to our class meeting. This will enable you to think about your classmates' reactions to the readings in advance of our collective discussion.
- You be assessed on the basis of a solo paper, a group project, and a brief final examination.
- The paper (1500–2000 words) will be due October 11th in both hard copy and electronic copy. In it you will describe the history of a utopian community of your choice, the philosophy underlying its organization, and the organization itself. This effort is intended to serve as a grounding for the group project in the second half of the semester.
- The group project will be to work with a handful of other students to design your own utopian community. Your group paper and presentation will identify the philosophical principles underlying your utopia and describe its social, economic, political, and cultural organization. Papers will be at least 7,000 words long (excluding bibliography) and will be due at the beginning of class on November 29th.

4 Grading

Weights	Grade Scale
40%	Solo paper
40%	Group project
10%	Final exam
10%	Article summaries

5 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unacceptable. If plagiarism is detected, you will receive a zero for the given assignment. Please note that plagiarism is much broader than many students realize. You are encouraged to look at this excellent summary of plagiarism from Indiana University (<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>), and you will be held to its standards.

6 Required texts

There are no required texts for this course. All the readings below will be available electronically. In addition, further readings may be assigned to compliment and integrate current events into the course discussions.

The possibility of a course packet will be discussed in the first class.

7 Schedule of Topics and Reading

Module 1: Why utopianism?

Week 1 (8/30 and 9/1): Introduction

Week 2 (9/6 and 9/8): Other measures of development

1. Martha Craven Nussbaum. *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*. Belknap Press, Cambridge, 2011, chapters 2 and 3.

Week 3 (9/15): Utopia as a measure of development

1. Henri Lefebvre, Eleonore Kofman, and Elizabeth Lebas. *Writings on cities*. Blackwell, Cambridge, Mass., 1996, pages 65–66 and chapters 14 to 16.

Recommended:

1. Russell Jacoby. *The End of Utopia: Politics and Culture in an Age of Apathy*. Basic Books, New York, 1999, chapter 1.

Week 4 (9/20 and 9/22): Ideology and Utopia

1. Karl Mannheim. *Ideology and Utopia*. Harvest Books, New York, 1936, chapter 2.

Recommended:

1. Pierre Bourdieu. The essence of neoliberalism. *Le Monde diplomatique*, December 1998.

Week 5 (9/27 and 9/29): The Utopian Mentality

1. Karl Mannheim. *Ideology and Utopia*. Harvest Books, New York, 1936, p. 192–211.

Module 2: Utopia in practice

Week 6 (10/4 and 10/6): Social Utopias: Fourier's Philosophy

1. Charles Fourier. *The Social Destiny of Man, or, Theory of the Four Movements*. Robert M. Dewitt and Calvin Blanchard, New York, 1857, pages 29–100. Available through [Google Books](#).

Week 7: No classes.

Solo paper due.

Week 8 (10/18 and 10/20): Social Utopias: Fourier's Phalanstery

1. Charles Fourier. *The Social Destiny of Man, or, Theory of the Four Movements*. Robert M. Dewitt and Calvin Blanchard, New York, 1857, pages 101–158. Available through [Google Books](#).

Week 9 (10/25 and 10/27): Utopia as dystopia: Modernist authoritarianism

1. James C. Scott. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 1998, chapters 3 and 4.

Week 10 (11/1 and 11/3): Technological Utopias

1. Howard P. Segal. *Technological Utopianism in American Culture*. Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, twentieth anniversary edition, 2005, chapters 1 and 2.

Week 11 (11/8 and 11/10): Ecotopias

1. Malcolm Miles. *Urban Utopias: The Built and Social Architectures of Alternative Settlements*. Routledge, New York, 2008, chapters 6 and 7.

Week 12 (11/15 and 11/17): Spiritual Utopias

1. Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. *Living Within: The Yoga Approach to Psychological Health and Growth*. Sri Aurobindo Publication Department, Pondicherry, 1987, chapter 1.

Week 13 (11/22 and 11/24): The Just City

1. Peter Marcuse, James Connolly, Johannes Novy, Ingrid Olivo, Cuz Potter, and Justin Steil, editors. *Searching for the Just City: Debates in Urban Theory and Practice*. Routledge, New York, 2009, chapters 1, 2, and 5.

Module 3: Group presentations

Week 14 (11/29 and 12/1): Group presentations

Week 15 (12/6 and 12/8): Group presentations

Week 16 (12/13 and 12/15): Group presentations