

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, 10:30–11:45
Location: 217ISH

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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.
5. Basic techniques for the electronic communication of information.

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

3 Course Requirements

- You be assessed on the basis of your response papers, class attendance, a solo paper, a group project, and a brief final examination.
- 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 TUESDAY morning each week for 7 out of the 10 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 between zero and three 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.
- Attendance grades will be calculated as follows: $\text{Min}(\frac{\text{classes attended}}{\text{scheduled classes}-3} \times 9, 9)$. The purpose is to allow you to miss three classes for personal reasons without penalty. All absences beyond that must be clearly justified and documented.
- The solo paper (1500–2000 words) will be due March 26th 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.
- Individuals who volunteer to present their solo paper to the class and are randomly selected to do so will receive five bonus points toward their final grade.
- The group project will be to work with a handful of other students to design your own utopian community and introduce it through a website and movie. Your website and movie will identify the philosophical principles underlying your utopia and describe its social, economic, political, and cultural organization. Websites will incorporate textual content of at least 5,000 words (excluding bibliography) and will be due at the beginning of class on June 4th.

4 Grading

Weights	Grade Scale
30%	Solo paper
40%	Group project
21%	Article summaries
9%	Attendance

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 two required texts for this course. All other readings will be available electronically. In addition, further readings may be assigned to compliment and integrate current events into the course discussions.

- Peter Kropotkin. *The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings*. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995.
- Nel Noddings. *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. University of California Press, Berkeley, second edition, 2003.

7 Schedule of Topics and Reading

Week 1 (March 5/7): Introduction

Week 2 (March 12/14): What is Utopia?

1. Herbert Marcuse. The end of utopia. In *Five Lectures: Psychoanalysis, Politics, and Utopia*, pages 62–82. Beacon Press, Boston, 1970.

Week 3 (March 19/21): Alienation (semester theme)

1. *Estranged Labor* in Karl Marx. *The Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. International Publishers, New York, 1964, p. 106–119.

Week 4 (March 26/28): Venus Project Individual paper due.

Week 5 (April 2/4): Mirror of Production

1. Jean Baudrillard. *The Mirror of Production*. Telos Press, St. Louis, 1975, p. 17–51.

Week 6 (April 9/11): Kropotkin I

1. Kropotkin, p. 1–83.

Week 7 (April 16/18): Noddings I

1. Noddings, p. 1–78.

Week 8 (April 23/25): Midterms. No class.

Week 9 (April 30/ May 2): Bookchin

1. Murray Bookchin. *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*. Cheshire Books, Palo Alto, 1982, p. 315–347.

Week 10 (May 7/9): Kropotkin II

1. Kropotkin, p. 84–157.

Week 11 (May 14/16): Noddings II

1. Noddings, p. 79–147.

Week 12 (May 21/23): Kropotkin III

1. Kropotkin, p. 158–199.

Week 13 (May 28/30): Noddings III

1. Noddings, p. 148–202.

Week 14 (June 4/6): Group presentations

Week 15 (June 11/13): Group presentations

Week 16 (June 18/20): Group presentations if needed.