COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Novel of Ideas: Utopia and Dystopia / Idėjų romanas: utopija ir distopija	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s) where the course unit (module) is delivered
Coordinator: Lecturer Eimantė Liubertaitė	Department of English Philology Faculty of Philology

Study cycle	Type of the course unit (module)
BA	Elective

Mode of delivery	The period when the course unit (module) is delivered	Language(s) of instruction
Face-to-face	Spring	English

Requirements for students	
Prerequisites: Advanced English language proficiency (B2, C1).	**Additional requirements (if any):** Previous academic experience in undergraduate literature courses.

Course (module) volume in credits	Total student workload	Contact hours	Self-study hours
5	136	32	104

Purpose of the course unit (module): programme competencies to be developed

The purpose of this course is to approach literary novels showcasing utopias and/or dystopias (or their respective features) in an analytical and intellectually stimulating way, while contextualizing the said genres within the framework of the novel of ideas. The students will be introduced to the development of the utopian and dystopian literary genres and sensibilities with a particular focus on the history of ideas that certain utopian and dystopian novels seem to represent. Throughout the course, the students will be asked to contemplate the significance of utopia and dystopia not only as frameworks for speculative ideas, but also as literary genres, especially with regard to the narrative structures that evidently aid the authors of utopian and dystopian fiction in developing their ideas.

In essence, the course aims at providing the students with:

- a comprehensive history of the development of utopia and dystopia as literary genres;

- a set of methodological tools necessary for the interpretation of the basic concepts and terms related to utopia and dystopia as literary genres.

Generic competences to be developed (as per the aims of the English Philology programme):
- 1. Responsibility: the ability to set goals and make plans, and take responsibility for them;
- 1.1. will be able to set goals, choose and use resources necessary for the completion of a task, plan their time and follow deadlines;
-1.2. will be able to take responsibility for their work/study results and learn from mistakes;
- 2. Intercultural competence: respect and openness to other cultures, the ability to work in a multicultural environment;
- 2.1. will be able to understand the specifics of different cultures and to analyze and assess cultural contexts;
- 2.2. will be able to study, work, and communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds and develop awareness, respect, and openness to cultural diversity;
- 3. Problem solving: the ability to solve problems by relying on analytical, critical, and creative thinking;
- 3.1. will be able to identify problems and challenges in their own and related fields;
- 3.2. will be able to identify problems by finding, analysing, and critically assessing relevant information, generate new ideas, and choose the most optimal solutions;
- 4. Openness to change: the ability to understand the necessity of change and the intention to improve oneself constantly;
- 4.1. will be familiar not only with the changes taking place in their field of interest but also with their causes, challenges, and opportunities;
- 4.2. will be open to new ideas, strive to change, and be creative and innovative;
- 4.3. will be able to evaluate the quality of their actions and achievements and strive to acquire the competencies necessary for future change.

Subject-specific competences (as per the aims of the English Philology programme):
- 1. Essential knowledge and skills of literary science: perception of literature as a phenomenon and perception of literature as a scientific discipline:
- 1.1. will know, understand and be able to describe literature as a phenomenon and properly use and interpret the basic concepts and terms of literary studies;
- 1.2. will acquire knowledge of the main branches and methods of literary studies;
- 2. Understanding and analysis of English literature: the ability to analyse and interpret English literature as a phenomenon:
- 2.1. will gain knowledge of the development of English literature, the most important authors and the most significant works;
- 2.2. will be able to analyse, interpret and evaluate the phenomena of English literature in the wider context of world literature, using appropriate terminology and methods;
- 3. Understanding an English-speaking culture: The ability to understand and explain the peculiarities of English culture;
- 3.1 will gain knowledge of English-speaking countries (especially the United States) and their socio-cultural context (aspects of geography, history, public policy, literature and art, mentality and self-awareness, customs and traditions, everyday communication conventions, etc.);
- 3.2 will be able to distinguish the most prominent features of English culture, compare the culture of English-speaking countries with Lithuanian culture, and identify and explain similarities and differences.

Learning outcomes of the course unit (module)	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods

The course aims at achieving the following learning outcomes: - the students gaining knowledge of English-speaking countries (especially the United Kingdom and the United States) and their socio-cultural context; - the students gaining the ability to identify a literary or interdisciplinary problem and choose appropriate research methods; - the students gaining the ability to collect, analyse, systematise and critically evaluate material from various sources and adequately apply philological research methods to investigate the selected research problem; - the ability to describe the results of the research in a scientific text, provide conclusions or recommendations, present and defend them in front of their peers.	Problem-based, interactive seminars that are centered around academic reading, text analysis, academic research, academic writing, and group discussion.	Cumulative assessment based on the successful completion of two tasks: 1. Individual presentation. 2. Written exam.
More generally, the course will aid the students in developing the following: - the ability to set goals, choose and use resources necessary for the completion of a task, plan their time, and follow deadlines; - the ability to understand the specifics of different cultures and to analyse and assess cultural contexts; - the ability to identify problems by finding, analysing, and critically assessing relevant information, generate new ideas, choose the most optimal solutions; - being open to new ideas, strive to change, and be creative and innovative.	**NB** In case distance-learning will be required, the seminars will be web-based and offered online. All the study materials (reading materials, assignments, etc.) will be uploaded to the VMA Moodle system (Virtualioji mokymosi aplinka). The students will be given the opportunity to join the course online (virtually) when provided the official permission to do so from the Dean's Office. Then, the lecturer will share the class with the students via MS Teams.	

Content: breakdown of the topics	**Contact hours**	**Self-study work: time and assignments**

	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Exercises	Laboratory work	Internship/work placement	**Contact hours**	**Self-study hours**	**Assignments**
1. Introduction to the course: aims, structure, assessment scheme. Seminar topic: Novel of ideas – what is it? Brief overview of the conventions of the genre (underlining the relevant features of utopian, dystopian, and post-apocalyptic fiction, as well as science-fiction)			1				2		In-class reading: short story "We Ate the Children Last" by Yann Martel.
2. Utopia: a history of solutions to reality - the philosophical exercises of Plato's *The Republic* (the role of art in utopia)			1				2	6	Home reading: extracts from *The Republic* (Book X): pp. 1199-1212.
3. Utopia continued: the impossibility of utopia - discussion of the utopian impulse in Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* and the (anti)utopian nature of B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two*, as presented in Jenny Odell's chapter			1				2	6	Home reading: chapter 2, "The Impossibility of Retreat", PDF pp. 51-82.
4. Dystopia: visions of a nightmarish future - technology as/and ideology in E. M. Forster's *The Machine Stops*			1				2	8	Home reading: the novella *The Machine Stops* (in full).
5. Discussing theory: An extract from Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*			1				2	10	Home reading: chapter "Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception", pp. 94-137. Analysis and discussion.
6. Dystopia, 1st primary text discussed: Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* - commentary on the culture industry (Adorno & Horkheimer)			1				2	8	Analysis and interpretation of the chosen extracts from the novel.
7. Discussing theory: An extract from Martha C. Nussbaum's *Love's Knowledge*			1				2	10	Home reading: chapter 6, pp. 168-195. Analysis and discussion.
8. Dystopia continued: Aldous			1				2	8	Analysis and

Huxley's *Brave New World* - ethical relevance of reading/perception (philosophical insights of Martha C. Nussbaum)									interpretation of the chosen extracts from the novel.
9. Discussing theory: An extract from Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*				1				2	10	Home reading: chapter 13, "Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government", pp. 460-480.
10. Dystopia, 2nd primary text discussed: George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* - political and ideological background of a totalitarian society (Arendt)				1				2	8	Analysis and interpretation of the chosen extracts from the novel.
11. Dystopia continued: George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* - linguistic and ideological implications of Newspeak (Arendt)				1				2	8	Analysis and interpretation of the chosen extracts from the novel.
12. Dystopia after the 1950s: new approaches - the (post)human issue of empathy in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*				1				2	6	Home reading: extracts from the novel – epigraph (p. 2), Chapter 1 (pp. 3-7), Chapter 3 (pp. 13-16), Chapter Four (pp. 17-22).
16. Individual presentations				4				8	16	Preparing a presentation on a novel chosen from the secondary reading list.
Total: 136				**16**				**32**	**104**	

Assessment strategy	**Weight, %**	**Deadline**	**Assessment criteria**
Individual presentation	40	At the end of the course (May)	Students will be required to make a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation on a chosen text from the secondary reading list. In their presentations, the students should introduce a chosen novel, contextualize it within the framework of the novel of ideas, introduce and explain the chosen theoretical framework, and provide at least one reading of a particular issue explored in the novel. The students should rely on at least two articles of literary criticism while preparing their presentations. Assessment criteria: **Structure (2%):** the presentation has an introduction, a main body, and a conclusions section, as well as a list of references;

			Content (30%): the presentation covers the topic thoroughly, cohesively, and insightfully, presenting at least two literary criticism articles; **Language (5%):** no more than 5 grammatical errors are made; the requirements of academic English are followed; **Questions (3%):** the student answers questions in a comprehensible and informative way, exhibiting in-depth knowledge of the chosen topic.
Exam	60	June	Students must pass a written examination on a date determined by the course instructor. The examination consists of three (3) open-ended questions based on the compulsory (primary) reading list. Students may consult the primary sources, that is, the novels and texts included on the list, but may not use personal notes or online resources during the exam. Answers must demonstrate the student's awareness of the literary tradition of utopian and dystopian fiction, present well-argued original insights, and show a thorough understanding of the theoretical frameworks covered during the course, namely the work of Arendt, Adorno and Horkheimer, and Nussbaum. **Assessment Scale** Each of the three (3) questions is assessed out of 20 points (60 points in total) on the following criteria: knowledge of the primary sources, awareness of the literary tradition of utopian and dystopian fiction, quality of argumentation and original insight, use of a theoretical framework (Arendt, Adorno and Horkheimer, or Nussbaum), cohesion, and academic English. **19–20 points (Excellent)** Outstanding knowledge and skills. The student demonstrates excellent knowledge of the primary sources and a holistic approach to the subject matter, and shows a clear awareness of the literary tradition of utopian and dystopian fiction. The answer is cohesive and logically structured, and develops a persuasive, original argument. The student applies a well-chosen theoretical framework appropriately and with insight, and writes in fluent academic English. **17–18 points (Very good)** Solid, very good knowledge and skills. The student

			demonstrates very good knowledge of the primary sources and applies it effectively in the answer. The arguments are logical and well supported, and the answer shows a good awareness of the utopian and dystopian tradition. The student understands the key theoretical concepts, uses the chosen framework adequately, and writes in very good academic English. **15–16 points (Good)** Above-average knowledge and abilities. The student demonstrates good knowledge of the primary sources. Examples are provided but not always fully interpreted. The knowledge of key concepts is good, although occasional inaccuracies occur, and the awareness of the utopian and dystopian tradition is present but limited. The structure of the answer occasionally lacks cohesion. The student draws on a theoretical framework, though not always consistently, and uses correct academic English. **13–14 points (Highly satisfactory)** Average performance, with some minor shortcomings. The student is familiar with the primary sources and can use them independently. The analysis lacks depth, however, and some inaccuracies and incorrect word choices occur. References to the utopian and dystopian tradition are limited, and the theoretical framework is applied only partially or superficially. The academic English has noticeable flaws. **11–12 points (Satisfactory)** Below-average knowledge and skills. The student knows most of the primary sources but shows a lack of consistency and logical structure in discussing them. Few examples are given, and the argument is underdeveloped and shows little original insight. The student's knowledge of the subject matter is inconsistent, and there is little awareness of the utopian and dystopian tradition. The theoretical framework is barely used, and the academic English has many flaws. **10 points (Sufficient)** Knowledge and skills meet the minimum criteria for a pass. The student's knowledge of the primary sources meets the minimum requirements of the course, but the answer contains major mistakes and the student struggles to apply what was learned

			during the course. There is no meaningful awareness of the utopian and dystopian tradition, and the theoretical framework is absent or misapplied. The academic English is poor, and an informal register is used throughout. **0–9 points (Insufficient)** Knowledge and skills do not meet the minimum criteria. The student has failed to master the primary sources and shows very poor knowledge of the subject matter, or the knowledge shown is irrelevant or insufficient. The answer shows no awareness of the utopian and dystopian tradition and no use of a theoretical framework, and does not use academic English.

On the use of AI

Generative AI (GenAI) tools may be used to support the preparation of the **visual** components of individual presentations. However, **students must not use GenAI to generate the content of their presentations**, including the arguments, analysis, and interpretation, and must not submit AI-generated text or summaries as their own work. Where the authenticity of a student's work is called into question, the student may be asked to provide the prompts used (a transcript of their GenAI conversation) when preparing their presentation.

Attendance requirements

Students are required to attend a minimum of 70 percent of classes, reflecting the established correlation between academic performance and class attendance. Failure to meet this attendance threshold disqualifies students from taking the written exam in June. Additionally, if questions arise regarding the authenticity of a student's work, they may be required to validate their work through a viva voce defense. Should a student miss over 30 percent of the classes, they will be advised to retake the course after a year.

Retake policy

The opportunity for a retake, specifically the retake of the written exam, is available to domestic and international students in the first two weeks of September 2027, on a date determined by the course instructor. Retakes are permitted exclusively for students who have met the 70 percent attendance requirement but did not pass the course. Additionally, retakes are intended for passing the course rather than grade improvement.

This course is heavily based on close reading, therefore students will be required to read the chosen novels in full, in the original language, not summaries or descriptions available online.

NB The students are expected to have and maintain academic integrity, therefore any type of plagiarism or academic dishonesty is strictly forbidden. Any plagiarised material found in a student's work will be recorded and reported to the Committee of the Study Programme of the Department of English Philology, resulting in the student failing the course. If during the re-taking of the exam, the student once again resorts to academic dishonesty, he or she will be reported to the Dean's office, where the issue of the student's expulsion will be raised. For more information on types of plagiarism, please consult the manual *How to Write a Research Paper in Linguistics, Literature, and Cultural Studies* (2024, Bartkuvienė, Šinkūnienė).

Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing place and house or web link
Compulsory reading				
Aldous Huxley	1931	*Brave New World*	Any official, licensed, unabridged copy is acceptable	Available at the university library.
George Orwell	1949	*Nineteen Eighty-Four*	Any official, licensed, unabridged copy is acceptable	Available at the university library.
Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno	1944	Chapter "Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" from *Dialectic of Enlightenment.*	Adorno, Theodor W. & Horkheimer, Max, Gunzelin Schmid Noerr (ed.). Dialectic of Enlightenment. Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2007.	PDF version available on VMA Moodle.
Martha C. Nussbaum	1990	Chapter 6 "Perceptive Equilibrium: Literary Theory and Ethical Theory" from *Love's Knowledge*.	Nussbaum, M. C. Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.	PDF version available on VMA Moodle.
Hannah Arendt	1951	Chapter 13, "Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government" from *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.	Arendt, H. The Origins of Totalitarianism. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973.	PDF version available on VMA Moodle.
Plato		Extract from *The Republic* (Book X)	Cooper, John M. (ed). Plato: Complete Works. Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publ.Co., 1997.	PDF version available on VMA Moodle.
E. M. Forster	1909	*The Machine Stops*	From *The Collected Tales of E. M. Forster*, New York: The Modern Library,	PDF version available on VMA Moodle.

			1968.	
Jenny Odell	2019	Chapter 2, "The Impossibility of Retreat" from *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*	Odell, J. How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy. Brooklyn: Melville House Printing, 2019.	PDF version available on VMA Moodle.
Philip K. Dick	1968	Extracts from *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (Chapters 1, 3, and 4)	Dick, Philip K. Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep. New York: Random House Worlds, 1996.	PDF version available on VMA Moodle.
Secondary reading (optional)				
Plato		*The Republic*		Available at the university library.
Thomas Moore	1516	*Utopia*		Available at the university library.
Henry David Thoreau	1854	*Walden; or, Life in the Woods*		Available at the university library.
Samuel Butler	1872	*Erewhon*		Available at the university library.
William Morris	1890	*News From Nowhere*		Available at the university library.
H. G. Wells	1895	*The Time Machine*		Available at the university library.
H. G. Wells	1905	*A Modern Utopia*		Available at the university library.
Charlotte Perkins Gilman	1915	*Herland*		Available at the university library.
B.F. Skinner	1948	*Walden Two*		Available at the university library.
Aldous Huxley	1962	*Island*		Available at the university library.
Ernest Callenbach	1975	*Ecotopia*		Available online.
Ray Bradbury	1953	*Fahrenheit 451*		Available at the university library.
William Golding	1954	*Lord of the Flies*		Available at the university library.
Anthony Burgess	1962	*A Clockwork Orange*		Available at the university library.
Ursula Le Guin	1974	*The Dispossessed*		Available at the university library.
Marge Piercy	1975	*Woman on the Edge of Time*		Available at the university library.
Margaret Atwood	1985	*The Handmaid's Tale*		Available at the university library.

P.D. James	1992	*Children of Men*		Available at the university library.
Octavia E. Butler	1993	*Parable of the Sower*		Available at the university library.
José Saramago	1995	*Blindness*		Available at the university library.
Kazuo Ishiguro	2005	*Never Let Me Go*		Available at the university library.
Naomi Alderman	2016	*The Power*		Available at the university library.
John Lanchester	2019	*The Wall*		Available at the university library.
Paul Lynch	2023	*Prophet Song*		

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