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: Jr. Assist. 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	150	32	118

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 of 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;

Learning outcomes of the course unit (module)	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
- a set of methodological tools necessary for the interpretation of the basic concepts and terms related to utopia and dystopia as literary genres.		
The course aims at achieving the following learning outcomes: - the students gaining knowledge of English-speaking countries (especially Great Britain 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, group discussion.	Cumulative assessment based on the successful completion of two tasks: 1. one presentation on a chosen utopian/dystopian novel from the secondary reading list 2. one examination essay based on one of the two main novels from the primary reading list
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). The lecturer will share the class with them 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)			2				2		-
2. Utopia: a history of solutions to reality - the philosophical exercises of Plato's *The Republic* (the role of art in utopia)			2				2	4	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			2				2	4	Home reading: chapter 2, "The Impossibility of Retreat", PDF pp. 51-82.
4. Dystopia: visions of a nightmarish future - technology becoming an ideology in E. M. Forster's *The Machine Stops*			2				2	4	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*			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)			2				2	10	Analysis and interpretation of the chosen extracts from the novel.
7. Discussing theory: An extract from Martha C. Nussbaum's *Love's Knowledge*			2					10	Home reading: chapter 6, pp. 168-195. Analysis and discussion.
8. Dystopia continued: Aldous			2				2	10	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*		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)		2					2	10	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)		2					2	10	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?*		2					2	4	Home reading: extracts from the novel – epigraph (p. 2), Chapter 1 (pp. 3-7), Chapter 3 (pp. 13-16), Chapter Four (pp. 17-22).
13. Students' presentations.		2					2	8	
14. Students' presentations.		2					2	8	
15. Students' presentations.		2					2	8	
16. Students' presentations.		2					2	8	
Total		**32**					**32**	**118**	

Assessment strategy	Weight, %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Presentation	30	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, and provide at least one reading of a particular issue explored in the novel. The students should rely on at least one article 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 (20%):** the presentation covers the topic thoroughly, cohesively, and insightfully, presenting

			at least one literary criticism article; **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.
Take-home essay	70	June	Essay requirements: a clear, well-structured essay that addresses a chosen question related to one of the two novels discussed during the course - Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or Huxley's *Brane New World*, and is supported by one of the three theoretical sources discussed during the theoretical seminars (Adorno & Horkheimer, Nussbaum, Arendt). The essay should show the student's awareness of the literary tradition of utopian/dystopian literature, in addition to providing the reader with the student's well-argued insights. Additionally, the student has to include at least two references to academic research, i.e. articles of literary and/or philosophical criticism. Word amount: 2,500 – 3,000 Maximum grade: 70 points = 70% Assessment criteria: **Structure and Organization**: 15% (15 points) The essay provides an introduction with the main argument or question clearly stated, which is then followed by a body that contains well-sourced evidence to support the main argument. The essay provides a relevant conclusion that simultaneously recognizes the illustrated argument and offers direction for further discussion. All paragraphs and sentences are organized according to a consistent flow of thought (transitions frequently used). **Content**: 40% (40 points) The essay provides ample and relevant information that supports the main argument of the essay. The student supports his or her argument with significant examples and explains any concepts he or she uses to advance the argument. The essay conveys the student's competence of the chosen topic and displays an in-depth research. **Language Proficiency:** 10% (10 points) Simple and complex language structures used

correctly, appropriate (academic) register is used, no more than 5 grammatical mistakes are made.

Academic conventions: 5% (5 points)
Appropriate layout, margins and fonts are used, total number of words meets the requirements, consistent documentation and referencing is displayed, appropriate bibliography is provided. For instructions on how to follow the written academic standard of the English department of Vilnius University, please consult the manual *Research Matters* (2006 Laima Erika Katkuvienė and Inesa Šeškauskienė. *Research Matters*. Vilnius: Vilnius University Publishing House. Second edition)

Attendance requirements
The attendance of seminars is **non-compulsory**, yet the students should recognise the necessity to attend all seminars to successfully perform all the required tasks (presentation, take-home essay).
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 *Research Matters*.

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, 1968.	PDF version available on VMA Moodle.
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*		Available at the

		Nowhere		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.
Yevgenyj Zamyatin	1924	*We*		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.
J.G. Ballard	1962	*The Drowned World*		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.
Cormac McCarthy	2006	*The Road*		Available at the university library.
Emily St. John Mandel	2014	*Station Eleven*		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.

Last updated: November 16th, 2023