

## **Course Title:** Utopian Movements in U.S. History

**Course Description:** In this course students will examine American traditions of utopian thought, reform, and practice from the colonial period to the latter half of the twentieth century. We will begin by exploring the utopian ideals present in the early American colonies and their impact on both the American Revolution and the formation of American national identity. We will then focus on specific examples from each of the primary waves of utopian movements in U.S. history: the 1820s, 1840s, 1870s, and 1890s, devoting particular attention to the impact of each of these movements on the politics and social movements of the time in light of their participants' thoughts and practices regarding the relationships between the individual and the community, education and reform, gender and sexuality, industrialization and nature, work and family life, economic equality and social justice, and religion and society. The course will conclude with an overview of the connections between these early utopian movements and several major twentieth century experiments in cooperative living. Students will analyze change over time in examples of utopian thought and practice via the below historical, literary, and film sources.

### **Proposed Readings:**

- Bellamy, Edward. *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*. New York: Signet Classic, 2000.
- Callenbach, Ernest. *Ecotopia*. New York: Bantam Books, 1990.
- Fogarty, Robert S. *All Things New: American Communes and Utopian Movements, 1860-1914*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Miller, Timothy. *The Quest for Utopia in Twentieth-Century America: 1900-1960*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998.
- 🕒 Sargent, Lyman Tower. *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- 🕒 Segal, Howard P., Ed. *Technological Utopianism in American Culture*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1985.
- 🕒 Tuveson, Ernest Lee. *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968.
  
- 🕒 Provided selected readings from:
  - Armytage, W. H. G. "Aspects of Utopian Fiction." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 6, no 2 (1973).
  - Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *Herland*. New York: Signet Classic, 1992.
  - Hansot, Elizabeth. *Perfection and Progress: Two Modes of Utopian Thought*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974.
  - Heckman, Davin. *A Small World: Smart Houses and the Dream of the Perfect Day*. North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2008.
  - Holloway, Mark. *Utopian Communities in America: 1680-1880*. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2011.
  - Roemer, Kenneth M., Ed. *America as Utopia*. New York: Burt Franklin, 1981.

- Roemer, Kenneth M. "Sex Roles, Utopia and Change: The Family in Late Nineteenth-Century Utopian Literature." *American Studies* 13.2 (1972): 33-47.
- Sargent, Lyman Tower. 'Utopianism in colonial America', *History of Political Thought*, 4 (1983), 483-522.
- Sutton, Robert P. *Communal Utopias and the American Experience: Secular Communities, 1824-2000*. Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2004.
- Sutton, Robert P. *Communal Utopias and the American Experience: Religious Communities, 1732-2000*. Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2003.
- Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2007.
- Waters, Ronald G. *American Reformers, 1815-1860*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1997.

⌚ Potential selected films for class analysis:

- *Metropolis* (1927)
- *Logan's Run* (1976)
- *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth* (2011)