

### Utopia: Fiction and History

For as long as history has been recorded, human beings have sought to form communities—social, political, religious—according to ideals they articulate, most often in texts. History records many such experiments: both the ideals that guided them and the tensions of instituting those ideals among living human beings. This course will explore that particular interplay of history and fiction: the efforts to put an ideal into practice in specific places and times.

Each member of the seminar will choose one instance of a utopian experiment. Weekly meetings, after the first month, will address specific problems of research: identifying and locating sources; finding the relevant scholarship on one's topic; reading sources; asking questions; formulating a research paper; discussing problems in writing up one's findings; polishing the final essay.

The final paper—6250 words, not including the bibliography and notes, double-spaced, in 12-point New York Times font—is due in class, May 3.

#### Books:

Required: Plato, *Republic*, translation Robin Waterfield (Oxford World's Classics, 2008)  
Thomas More, *Utopia*, translated Robert M. Adams (Norton Critical Edition, 1975)

Strongly Recommended: Kate Turbian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Seventh Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* (Chicago, 2007).

#### Class Meetings:

- 1/18 Preliminaries
- 1/25 Plato, *The Republic*, Books 1-7
- 2/1 Plato, *The Republic*, Books 8-14
- 2/8 Thomas More, *Utopia*
- 2/15 Initial proposals: five minute oral reports
- 2/22 Identifying Sources: oral reports
- 3/1 Locating historiography: oral reports
- 3/8 Hurdles and Questions

Spring Break

- 3/22 Bibliographies: Reports
- 3/29 Blocking the draft: initial reports
- 4/5 Questions and Puzzles
- 4/12 Critiquing rough drafts: writing partners' reports
- 4/19 Critiquing rough drafts: writing partners' reports
- 4/26 Final drafts
- 5/3 Final drafts