

Fall 2022
ENGLISH 6931
TOPICS IN ENGLISH
Thematic Title: *Histories of Anti-Capitalism*
MW 3:00-4:15 PM
Cudahy Hall 128

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Office Hours: MWF 12:00-1:00 PM or by appointment

“We live in capitalism,” Ursula K. Le Guin once said. “Its power seems inescapable. So did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings. Resistance and change often begin in art, and very often in our art, the art of words.” This course will take a long view of anti-capitalist thought, from the Luddite revolt of the early nineteenth century to the ongoing climate strikes of Greta Thunberg—investigating where resistance to capitalism has flourished and where it has failed, as well as where it has intersected with important trends in feminist, antiracist, anticolonial, LGBTQ+, ecological, and disability activism. We will also explore the speculative literary genre of utopia, and explore how its utopian, quasi-utopian, heterotopian, dystopian, and downright anti-utopian figurations have reflected, inspired, and critiqued the left’s centuries-long struggle against capitalist realism.

Alongside weekly reflections and enthusiastic class participation, students in this course will produce a 12-to-25-page seminar paper on a subject of their choosing related to the themes of the course, as well as present their work to their peers in a conference-presentation format, with an eye towards eventual publication.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Study, critically analyze, and apply major works of anti-capitalist theory and practice;
- Demonstrate understanding of the cultural, historical, and political contexts that produced various anti-capitalist political movements;
- Investigate major concepts, methods, and theoretical movements that have shaped the practices of contemporary literary studies;
- Explore the relationship between capitalism, anti-capitalism, and interrelated ideas of history, futurity, ecology, disability, gender, sexuality, race, class, utopia, and the nation;
- Use literary study to develop skills for careful reading and clear writing;
- Produce cogent academic writing in a variety of modes and media forms.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND PERSONAL EMERGENCIES

Everyone at Marquette recognizes that this continues to be an extremely difficult time which may be filled with many different sorts of uncertainty as we move forward with the academic year. Your safety, health, and well-being are our primary concern and we want to be able to support you in any way that we can.

The university also understands that you may be facing personal obstacles that may make it difficult to meet your typical academic goals. Please refer to the Student Resources page on the Marquette COVID-19 Response webpage for information and resources on basic needs such as housing, food, financial aid, and medical and mental health; the webpage also offers information on official University communications, access to technology, and student services. Faculty and staff are also here for you.

If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your situation outside of class, please don't hesitate to talk with me. I want to be a resource for you. You are not alone.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the BookMarq on 16th Street)

Peter Frase, *Four Futures*

Gavin Mueller, *Breaking Things at Work*

Barbara Foley, *Marxist Literary Criticism Today*

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*

Kathryn Yusoff, *One Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*

Any edition is fine, including electronic ones.

Selected additional texts will also be made available through D2L, as well as during class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation	20%
Discussion Leader (x2)	20%
D2L Forums	10%
Jameson mini-essay	10%
Prospectus	10%
Paper Presentation	10%
Final Paper	20%

Class Participation: You are expected to attend every class having read the material and ready to discuss it, and to participate actively in our conversation. Please let me know in advance of our meeting if you find you will need to miss a session.

Discussion Leader: Beginning with Week 3, each member of the class will have two days in which they are expected to inaugurate our discussion based on the readings for that day. The requirements for this are necessarily very loose, as each day of the course will have a very different type of text to be discussed; in general, however, the discussion inaugurator will be asked to (1) succinctly describe the project of the text; (2) articulate a brief critical response to

the material; and (3) direct our collective attention to major problems in, questions about, and/or particularly important moments in the text. My expectation is that the discussion leader(s) for each day will, collectively, lead a significant portion of the 75-minute class period; you should feel free to use pedagogical and classroom management strategies that work for you, including handout, free writes, small group discussions, creative activities, and the like. A sign-up sheet for this role will be distributed in class next week.

D2L Forums: This course will make extensive use of the forums on D2L, where you can express your response to the material before class begins and where we can continue our discussions after class is over. You are asked to contribute a short 250-500-word response to the material at least five times over the course of the semester. (Longer is perfectly okay).

These “sandbox” posts do not have to be formal written posts, but can also take the form of a podcast, a short video, a work of art or music, a short story or fan fiction, a comic, or more; any response of any sort is fine, provided it is thoughtful and substantial. These can even be done collaboratively. The idea is to respond collectively to the material we are studying together in a way that is not stifling, anxious, or overstructured by academic expectations that cannot really apply to this odd and altered educational context; my hope is to strip away grading strictures that can only be dysfunctional in the current moment and foster instead more multifaceted, more generous, and hopefully richer intellectual encounters, driven by your interests.

I encourage you to think of these comments as possible “seeds” for the final paper; feel free to begin to develop your thoughts there. You are also highly encouraged to kill two birds with one stone by posting a forum comment on the days you are scheduled to be the discussion inaugurator.

Jameson Mini-Paper: After reading the two Jameson essays for September 26 and 28, I ask you to produce a brief 500-1000-word utopian “reading” of a text or object from contemporary life, along the lines of the way Jameson reads *The Godfather*, *Jaws*, the armed forces, and Wal-Mart.

Final Paper: Your final paper will be on a topic chosen and developed by you with some connection (however tenuous) to the material discussed in this class. The project will move through several stages:

Abstract: You will submit an abstract for the paper you plan to me by Friday, November 4, alongside a call for papers, a journal special issue, a conference announcement, etc. that you might theoretically write the paper towards. (The sooner the better!) You should get in the habit of watching the CFP clearinghouse for English studies at call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu in order to find a CFP that is a good fit.

Symposium: The last week of our class will be a mini-conference with panels constructed from the abstracts you submit to me. You will all present a conference version of your paper in a conference-style presentation, with each participant having 10-15 minutes to speak, followed by audience Q&A. Ideally this discussion will help you develop your final paper for submission in the following week.

Final Paper: The final 12-to-25-page paper is due to me by 5 PM on Friday, December 16, via D2L's Digital Dropbox. The final paper should endeavor to be an original scholarly intervention in a contemporary debate about literary studies, very broadly conceived, with an eye towards conference presentation and eventual publication. This means your final paper should demonstrate both its originality and participation in an existing scholarly conversation through appropriate citation of existing work (both primary and secondary sources). Such sources might include: other texts by the author(s) under consideration; secondary criticism of those or other texts; relevant cultural or literary theory and criticism; historical research and documents; scholarship from other academic disciplines on related issues and themes; popular criticism; research into patterns in the critical and popular reception of a text; and fan scholarship.

To produce an "A" essay, you must construct an essay that does more than simply summarize or comment on the work of others; you must forward, counter, or transform what they have to say. An A essay advances an original argument that builds toward a climax and makes a persuasive case for its own significance. A essays are clearly written, and often eloquent.

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.

—Kenneth Burke, "The Philosophy of Literary Form"

FORMAT OF WRITTEN WORK

Your final paper should be typed in twelve-point font, double-spaced with one-inch margins, saved in a format Microsoft Word can open. Your filename should contain *your name* in it, for example, yourlastname-finalpaper.docx.

I expect you to *edit* and *proofread* all written work, even forum comments.

Given the usual conventions of our discipline, I suggest either MLA bibliography or Chicago footnote style for citation.

DOUBLE SUBMISSION OF PAPERS

I do not object to double submission of papers if that works for your course plan. In fact, I encourage it! However, you must ask for permission in advance from both professors and your

proposal must satisfy the requirements of both assignments. Your paper should be approximately twice as long as a single-submitted paper to reflect its dual purpose.

INCOMPLETES

Please talk to me, as soon as possible, if you feel as though you will not be able to meet the deadline for the final paper. Of course things happen, but I strongly advise against trying to use incompletes as a task-management strategy in graduate school.

PAPER SUBMISSION

The final paper should be submitted via D2L's Dropbox by class time on the due date, Friday, December 16, by 5 PM.

Your other written work, including the sandbox posts and the Jameson mini-paper, will be posted in the D2L forums. Remember that the sandbox assignments will have flexible due dates driven by your own interests and responses. **It is thus your responsibility to make sure you are properly keeping up with your work in this course in a timely fashion.**

Except in very unusual circumstances, work will not be accepted by email.

TECHNOLOGY IS TERRIBLE: PLAN AHEAD!

The Internet goes down. Files become corrupted. Computers crash. These are predictable facts of twenty-first century life, not emergencies. For this course, for all your courses, for the rest of your career and your life in this world you need to develop work habits and strategies that take into account the basic, inescapable unreliability of computers. Start your assignments well in advance of the due date; save them often; save backup copies of essential documents, including copies off-site using a service like Carbonite, Dropbox, or Google Drive.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class discussion is an essential component of this seminar; class discussion, not lecture, will be the primary means by which we will investigate these texts together. It is crucial that you come to class every day having read the required material and prepared to discuss it.

Consequently, attendance in this class is mandatory. You should plan on attending every class. Please talk to me (in advance if possible) if you ever find you will need to miss a class meeting.

The course adheres to Marquette University's attendance policy, which can be found on the Internet at <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#attendance>.

You are allowed **three unexcused absences** over the course of the fall semester. **After that, your class participation will drop by half a letter grade for each additional unexcused absence.** Upon the seventh unexcused absence, you may receive a WA (Withdrawn—Excessive Absences) for the semester.

Merely being present in class is insufficient for an "A" in class participation. Each student is expected to *participate in* and *contribute to* our discussions. Just being in the room is not enough.

COVID PROTOCOLS

Everyone in this class will be expected to follow the current COVID-19 policies in effect on campus, including current guidance on quarantines and on masks.

EMAIL

Students in this class are required to check their official Marquette email account—whatever account D2L sends its emails to—at least once a day, in case there are any last-minute announcements or disruptions.

I endeavor to respond to all emails within 24 hours, usually much less—but please do not send me urgent emails regarding your assignments on the night before they are due and expect an immediate reply.

LAPTOP POLICY

In-class use of laptops, Kindles, iPads, etc. is permitted for access to electronic versions of our texts and for notetaking. However, students *must* refrain from non-class-related computer use, including email, instant messaging, Facebook, Twitter, and the like. **Please do not abuse this privilege or distract your fellow students.** I reserve the right to ban individual technological devices if this becomes a problem. Except in unusual cases of personal emergency, cleared with me at the start of class, no use of cell phones will be permitted during class time; please turn off your ringers and put them out of sight.

CONFERENCES

All students are asked to meet with me in a short one-on-one conference at my office at least twice during the semester to discuss the course and your work within it. Please know I am very happy to meet with you individually to discuss work-in-progress in excess of this requirement, as many times as you like. Simply come to my weekly drop-in office hours, or see or email me to set up an appointment.

FLEXIBILITY

If it will benefit the class, changes may be made to the above.

MOVIE NIGHTS

Outside class screenings will be scheduled for any filmic text we decide to study (if any). Details will be arranged in class.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who believe they may require accommodations in this course should contact me early in the semester so your learning needs can be appropriately met.

I am of course more than happy to work with you to make sure you are successful in this course and to make this course most accessible for you. However, without documentation, I am limited in what I am able to do. Therefore, in order for me to help you most effectively, I need you to be proactive in contacting Marquette University's Office of Disability Services (located on the fifth floor of the 707 Building). ODS can be reached by phone at (414) 288-1645 or by email at ods@marquette.edu.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are expected to abide by the academic honesty policy outlined in the graduate bulletin. I urge you all to examine this material and consult me with any questions you may have about plagiarism or academic integrity *before* it becomes an issue.

Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. **Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course.** No exceptions or special dispensations will be made.

Full details of Marquette’s academic integrity policy are available on the Internet at <http://www.marquette.edu/provost/academic-integrity.php>.

On a personal level, I (like everyone) hate being lied to. Please, do not feel you need to concoct elaborate stories. Simply be honest with me about whatever is going on and we will work it out.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

We all enter this classroom with preexisting political, ethical, philosophical, and intellectual commitments. You are all required to engage the material—but you are absolutely *not* required to agree either with any of the writers we will discuss, or with me, in whole or in part.

RESPECT

This classroom is a community. It is crucial that we treat each other with the appropriate level of courtesy and respect. No one should be made to feel unwelcome here.

Failure to treat other students with the respect they deserve will **severely** negatively impact your class participation grade.

KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN!

I want this class to be a meaningful and valuable experience for you, both in its own terms and in service of the development of your larger research agenda. If you have any ideas, suggestions, or concerns about the way things are going, my door is always open.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

Readings will be finalized in consultation with discussion leaders for each week.

Students should come to class prepared to discuss the listed reading.

WEEK	THEMES AND ASSIGNMENTS
WEEK 1	<u>What Is Capitalism? What Is Anti-Capitalism?</u> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The Communist Manifesto” [marxists.org] Mark Fisher, <i>Capitalist Realism</i> (excerpt) [D2L] Existential Comics, “Explaining Capitalism to Aliens”
Sep. 5	LABOR DAY
WEEK 2	<u>Four Futures</u> Peter Frase, <i>Four Futures</i>

WEEK 3	<u>The Luddites and after</u> Gavin Mueller, <i>Breaking Things at Work</i>
WEEK 4	<u>Critique</u> Barbara Foley, <i>Marxist Literary Criticism Today</i>
WEEK 5	<u>Utopia</u> Fredric Jameson, “Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture,” “Utopia as Replication,” and <i>An American Utopia</i> [D2L and YouTube]
WEEK 6	<u>Postcolonialism</u> Frantz Fanon, <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i>
WEEK 7	<u>Black Marxism</u> C.L.R. James, Cedric Robinson, bell hooks, and Angela Davis [D2L]
WEEK 8	<u>Gender</u> Silvia Federici (wages for housework), Kathi Weeks (abolition of the family) [D2L]
WEEK 9	<i>20th century text we will choose together</i>
WEEK 10	<u>Queer Marxism</u> José Esteban Muñoz, <i>Cruising Utopia</i>
WEEK 11	<u>Disability</u> disability rights movements, the ADA, Marta Russell and Ravi Malhorta, Sami Schalk, “Neoliberalism and the Commodification of Mental Health” [D2L]
WEEK 12	<u>Ecology</u> John Bellamy Foster (ecology against capitalism), André Gorz (“The Social Ideology of the Motorcar”), Kathryn Yusoff (the Anthropocene), Greta Thunberg [D2L and Web]
WEEK 13	<u>The University</u> <i>How the University Works</i> ; student movements; precarious labor and unionization; student debt abolition; state funding [D2L and Web]
THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS	
WEEK 14	<i>21st century text we will choose together</i>
WEEK 15	PRESENTATIONS
Dec. 16	FINAL PAPERS DUE

FOLLOW FAME: FRIENDS AND ALUMNI/AE OF MARQUETTE ENGLISH

On Facebook (page): www.facebook.com/marquettefame

On Facebook (group): www.facebook.com/groups/496438583889194
(search for “Undergraduate English at Marquette”)

On Twitter: @MarquetteENGL

On Instagram: @marquette_english

I will also be inviting you to English community events periodically during the fall and spring semesters. I hope you can attend! I will also be sure to keep you informed about academic events on campus, including this semester’s Tolkien lecture series.

Further Reading

Students interested in continuing their study of anti-capitalism and the utopian tradition might be interested in some of the following critical texts:

Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*
 Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*
 Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*
 Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*
 Emma Goldman, *Writings of Emma Goldman*
 Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* and “The End of Utopia”
 Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces”
 Raymond Williams, “Utopia and Science Fiction”
 Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*
 Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*
 Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious and Archaeologies of the Future*
 Tom Moylan, *Demand the Impossible and Scraps of the Untainted Sky*
 Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*
 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*
 Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*
 Edward Said, *Orientalism*
 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”
 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*
 David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*
 Lee Edelman, *No Future*
 Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism*
 Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class*
 Leanne Besamoke Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*
 David Graeber, *Debt and Bullshit Jobs*
 Tom Lutz, *Doing Nothing*
 Selma James, *Sex, Race, and Class*
 Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*
 Sarah Jaffe, *Work Won't Love You Back*
 Sarah Ahmed, *Complaint!*
 Jules Joanne Gleeson and Elle O'Rourke, *Transgender Marxism*
 Christopher Chitty, *Sexual Hegemony: Statecraft, Sodomy, and Capital in the Rise of the World System*
 Aaron Bastani, *Fully Automated Luxury Communism*
 Mark Bould and China Miéville (eds.), *Red Planets: Marxism and Science Fiction*
 Ida Yoshinaga, Sean Guynes, and Gerry Canavan, *Uneven Futures: Strategies for Community Survival from Speculative Fiction*
Utopia: A Very Short Introduction
Critical Theory: A Very Short Introduction
Marx: A Very Short Introduction

For fiction recommendations, just ask!

ENTRANCE SURVEY

NAME

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTELLECTUAL INTEREST

CAREER AMBITION(S)

HOMETOWN / PLACE YOU CALL HOME

At a glance, which two weeks do you feel like you might most wish to be discussion leader for? Are there texts you might supplement or substitute for the ones I've already listed?

Do you have an idea for a 20th century book/film/text we might study together in week 9? Why would you pick that text?

Do you have an idea for a 21st century book/film/text we might study together in week 14? Why would you pick that text?

Is there anything else you'd like me to know that could help make this class a success?

ENGLISH 6931 EXPANDED WEEK-BY-WEEK SCHEDULE

Please consult with the other people listed as discussion inaugurators for your week to ensure your plans complement each other!

“Discussion Leader” assignment description from the syllabus

Beginning with Week 3, each member of the class will have two days in which they are expected to inaugurate our discussion based on the readings for that day. The requirements for this are necessarily very loose, as each day of the course will have a very different type of text to be discussed; in general, however, the discussion inaugurator will be asked to (1) succinctly describe the project of the text; (2) articulate a brief critical response to the material; and (3) direct our collective attention to major problems in, questions about, and/or particularly important moments in the text. My expectation is that the discussion leader(s) for each day will, collectively, lead a significant portion of the 75-minute class period; you should feel free to use pedagogical and classroom management strategies that work for you, including handout, free writes, small group discussions, creative activities, and the like. A signup sheet for this role will be distributed in class next week.

WEEK 5	<p><u>Utopia</u> MONDAY 9/26: Fredric Jameson, “Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture” DL: Emma</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 9/28: “Utopia as Replication” and <i>An American Utopia</i> DL: Isaac</p>
WEEK 6	<p><u>Postcolonialism</u> MONDAY 10/3: Frantz Fanon, <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> (Parts I and V only, and conclusion) DL: Jose, Isaac</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 10/5: <i>How Europe Underdeveloped Africa</i> (excerpts) and <i>African Lit and the CIA</i> (excerpts) DL: Ayo</p>
WEEK 7	<p><u>Gender (note switch of weeks 7 and 8 from original syllabus!)</u> MONDAY 10/17: Silvia Federici, “Wages against Housework,” Kathi Weeks, “Abolition of the Family” DL: Cassie</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 10/19: Jameson mini-essay presentations JAMESON MINI-ESSAYS DUE DL: none</p>
WEEK 8	<p><u>Black Marxism (note switch of weeks 7 and 8 from original syllabus!)</u> MONDAY 10/10: Cedric Robinson, “Racial Capitalism”; Susan Koshy, Lisa Marie Cacho, Jodi A. Byrd, and Brian Jordan Jefferson, “Introduction: Colonial Racial Capitalism” DL: Ayo</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 10/12: bell hooks, <i>Ain’t I a Woman?</i> (excerpts), Angela Davis, “Race and Criminalization: Black Americans and the Punishment Industry” DL: Jen</p>

WEEK 9	<p><u>INCITE! collective, <i>The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex</i></u></p> <p>MONDAY 10/24: <i>We will select essays to focus on together.</i> DL: none</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 10/26: <i>We will select essays to focus on together.</i> DL: none</p>
WEEK 10	<p><u>Queer Marxism</u></p> <p>MONDAY, 10/31: José Esteban Muñoz, <i>Cruising Utopia</i> (first half) DL: Jen</p> <p>WEDNESDAY, 11/2: José Esteban Muñoz, <i>Cruising Utopia</i> (second half) DL: none</p>
WEEK 11	<p><u>Disability</u></p> <p>MONDAY 11/7: Marta Russell and Ravi Malhorta, “Capitalism and Disability,” Sami Schalk, “Critical Disability Studies as Methodology” DL: Cassie</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 11/9: Luigi Esposito and Fernando M. Perez, “Neoliberalism and the Commodification of Mental Health” DL: Emma</p>
WEEK 12	<p><u>Ecology</u></p> <p>MONDAY 11/14: John Bellamy Foster, “Ecology against Capitalism” and “‘Let Them Eat Pollution’: Capitalism and the World Environment”; André Gorz, “The Social Ideology of the Motorcar” DL: Kia, Deo GRATIAS</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 11/16: Kathryn Yusoff, <i>One Billion Black Anthropocenes or None</i> DL: Alex</p>
WEEK 13	<p><u>The University</u></p> <p>MONDAY 11/21: Marc Bousquet, <i>How the University Works</i> (excerpt); Michael Bérubé, “American Studies without Exceptions”; student movements; precarious labor and unionization; student debt abolition; state funding; etc DL: Kia, Jose, Alex, Deo GRATIAS</p>
WEEK 14	<p><u>Bong Joon-ho, <i>Parasite</i> (film)</u></p> <p>MONDAY, 11/28: “<i>Parasite</i> and Capitalism” thinkpieces DL: none</p> <p>WEDNESDAY, 11/30: “<i>Parasite</i> as National Film” thinkpieces (including possible US remake/sequel/spiritual successor on HBO) DL: none</p>
WEEK 15	PRESENTATIONS