

## IP206: Utopia: Text, Theory, Practice



### Assessment 1: 5 x 500 word blog posts

Due: Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 12 noon<sup>1</sup>

From Week 2 (“If you build it, they will come”) to Week 10 (Decolonising utopia) inclusive you are asked to produce a blog entry on a weekly basis that responds to the reading/viewing/listening and research that you have done for each seminar.

This is assessment *for* individual and co-operative collaborative learning. That is, the blog entries are not intended to simply “test” what you have learnt. Rather, this assessment is designed to help you formulate your thoughts; the blog entries will drive our classroom discussion and will function as a collective resource. You will benefit from the opportunity to formally reflect on your reading, but you will also benefit from your classmates going through the same process. You are encouraged to read and think about each other’s posts.

### Guidance for writing

- This module (and this assessment) asks you to be both “archaeologists” (i.e. digging into what has already been thought and said about utopia) and “architects” (i.e. thinking about how we might ourselves imagine a reconstructed better society).
- As you conduct your primary and secondary reading, and any independent research, be consciously open to ideas that grab you and add to your personal understanding of the act of imagining a better future society.
- Choose a quotation. This might be from a creative primary source, such as a novel or film. It might be from a different kind of primary source: a media report, a poster, a manifesto, a map, etc. It might be from the secondary criticism you encounter. The quotation should reflect an idea that has engaged, challenged or moved you. It does not need to be an idea that you agree with fully or at all. However, it should be something that adds to your understanding of utopia, either through what it explicitly says or because it launches you down a particular line of thought.
- The quotation could be as short as a pithy phrase/sentence or as long as a paragraph. Please provide this quotation at the top of your entry. You may post an image or a video clip instead (or as well) if appropriate. Quotations are not included in the word count.
- Use this quotation as a “springboard” for your blog entry. Explain why you chose it, and what its significance is.
  - How does this idea add to, clarify or complicate your understanding of utopia? (Remember, you do not necessarily need to agree with the quotation that you have chosen)

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<sup>1</sup> This is the date of the final submission. However, work should have been completed on an ongoing basis throughout the term.

- Be both an archaeologist and an architect; i.e. how does this quotation (what has already been thought, said or done) connect to your ideas about the problems facing our current society and how we might imagine a better future?
- You are **only** expected to do the research that you have been asked to do to prepare for each class. You are **not** expected to do additional research for this assessment.
- You **may** refer to knowledge gained in previous weeks, or to ideas that you have encountered in other modules. You **may** draw on your observations of the world. You **may** discuss your feelings; after all, many utopian expressions make deliberate appeals to the heart as well as the head. You **may** be imaginative. You **may** be creative. You **may** be personal.
- Your understanding of utopia, and your ideas about the imaginary reconstruction of society, will develop and evolve over the module i.e. in Week 2 you will not be expected to know anything more about utopias than what we discussed and what you read to prepare for class.
- The word count is around 500 words per week, but it does not need to be strictly followed. Give yourself enough space to explore an idea fully (this won't happen, for example, in 100 words) but if you've done this comprehensively in less than 500 words, or if you've been inspired to follow a line of thought that has taken you over 500 words, this is okay.

### Guidance for submission

- Blog posts should be uploaded to Moodle before midnight on Sunday before our Monday class. This will give me time to read them before we meet. I will offer brief feedback on all posts uploaded on time.
- There is a clearly-labelled forum in each weekly section. Simply navigate to the appropriate week, open the forum, click on "Add a new discussion topic" and write your entry. The blog is "open," meaning that you are all able to view each other's posts. This kind of learning is intentionally collaborative and co-operative; you will benefit from your peers' work, and they will benefit from yours. You are encouraged to comment on ideas that you find interesting, offer alternative perspectives, etc. Obviously, you should not copy/repeat any one else's argument. You may use a quote that someone else has already used, so long as your take on it is your own.
- Please provide bibliographic references for any sources that you make use of.
- You are strongly advised to complete all 9 blog entries. This will a) benefit your learning; b) give you the opportunity to learn to write better blog posts; and c) give you options to choose from when it comes to the final submission.
- However, you will only be marked on 5. So if there are up to 4 weeks when you can't post (e.g. due to sickness, assessment overload, etc.), this is fine – so long as there are 5 entries that can be submitted at the end of the module.
- If there are valid reasons why you can't post 5 entries before the weekly seminar (e.g. you have reasonable adjustments in place or there are mitigating circumstances) you should arrange an appointment with me as soon as you become aware of the situation so that we can agree a fair way forward.

- **There is no need to revise your entries. If, at a later point in the module, you strongly feel that you would like to add to or change your entry, please use the comment function to add a brief afterword rather than rewriting the post.** (Remember, the point is to capture the evolution of your ideas on a weekly basis)
- On or before the due submission date, please simply upload a document to Tabula which states which 5 pieces you would like me to mark. There is no need to upload anything else.