This is a preliminary version of the syllabus for this course. Its contents are subject to change.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Cutting across national boundaries and spanning a number of centuries, narratives about and poetic visions of ruined, collapsing, authoritarian, and/or totalitarian societies—whether situated in our future or in alternate realities—have occupied the imaginations of many novelists, short story writers, poets, and dramatists. Arguably, in their different ways, they share common concerns: how can humans best organize themselves to balance the desire for freedom with the need for security? What do the modes of thought that seem to disrupt that balance look like, and how ought we to countermand them? In this course, we will study a select output of exemplary works of literature that exemplify what we might call the “dystopian aesthetic”—that is, literature that critically examines the ways in which socio-political orders are constructed, maintained, and undermined; that warns of the consequences of certain ways of thinking and organizing; and that also often points to the values, actions, and frameworks that might help us to remedy or avoid the terrible outcomes that this literature often foregrounds.

The Department of English has designed FYSM 1004 a “writing-attentive” course. That means that students in this course must

- Spend a significant amount of class time learning, and improving, university-level forms of thinking and writing, particularly essay-writing skills, that will concentrate on the following:
  - establishment of university-level expectations for grammar and syntax
  - establishment and refinement of literary-critical skills through close analysis of texts from a variety of genres
  - generation and proof of an argumentative thesis across an essay
  - establishment and refinement of sophisticated ideas and opinions using proper, correct, and effective academic English style
  - use and citation of primary literary texts in appropriate and convincing ways
  - development of fluency in and facility with genre-specific literary terminology
  - introduction to the fundamentals of secondary research (including critical evaluation, use, and citation of academic sources)
• Complete a minimum of two graded writing assignments per term, in which they will be expected to demonstrate the above skills
• Write at least one 3-hour formally scheduled examination

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, successful students will have demonstrated their ability to:

• Write essays on literary topics that employ the techniques of an effective essay. This includes the ability to:
  o write effective introductions, thesis statements, and direction statements
  o organize arguments in a coherent fashion, using complementary but distinct subpoints that derive from the texts being analyzed
  o write paragraphs that effectively use topic sentences, transitions, and concluding sentences.

• Develop sustained analytical readings of literary texts that are informed by close readings of primary texts. This includes the ability to:
  o identify the formal/generic features of works under study, and explain the significance of authors’ choices of form/genre
  o identify authors’ deployment of various literary devices (symbolism, foreshadowing, and so on), and explain their significance to their texts
  o explicate and analyze passages from literary texts in support of an argument
  o document all engagements with primary texts using the latest MLA style

• Engage with secondary research responsibly and effectively to shape and advance arguments about literary texts. This includes the ability to:
  o differentiate between scholarly and non-scholarly sources
  o conduct research using appropriate strategies and search tools
  o document all engagements with secondary texts using the latest MLA style
  o explicate and analyze passages from secondary texts in support of an argument
  o use the insights of secondary texts to shape and inform arguments and analyses

• Apply a sound understanding of literary terms to develop analytical readings of literary texts. This includes the ability to:
  o define, explain, and distinguish between those terms
  o identify and expand on relevant examples
  o use those terms appropriately in analyses in the assigned papers and exams

• Apply the elemental principles of English grammar to identify, explain, diagnose, and correct common sentence errors, in their own writing and that of others. This includes the ability to:
  o label and explain the parts of speech
  o identify, define, and differentiate between phrases, clauses, subordinate clauses, and independent clauses
  o identify and classify different sentence types
  o explain the grammatical function of all marks of punctuation, and diagnose and correct punctuation problems

REQUIRED TEXTS:

5. Frank Miller, Klaus Janson, and Lynn Varley, *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* (1986; DC Comics, 2016)
7. Course pack (all poetry and short stories)

We will also have some additional readings (available for free) via cuLearn and ARES.

**EVALUATION:**

*Note: All Portfolio Assignments, Essays, and Exams mandatory. That means that you must complete and submit all of them to receive a grade for the course.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation (5% per term)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notebook Assignment (7.5% per term)</td>
<td>15%^</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Quizzes (2, 2.5% per)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Sept. 15 &amp; Nov. 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio Assignments (7 assignments: 1 online quiz, 1%; 1 close reading assignment, 3%; 2 peer reviews, 3% per; 2 reflections, 1% per; 1 annotated bibliography, 3%)</td>
<td>15%*</td>
<td>Sept. 19 (online quiz), Oct. 17 (close reading assignment), Oct. 31 (reflection #1—sample paper), Nov. 5 / 7 (peer review—Essay #1), Jan. 16 (reflection #2—Essay #1), Feb. 11 (annotated bibliography), Mar. 3/5 (peer review—Essay #2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay #1</td>
<td>10%*</td>
<td>Nov. 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15%^</td>
<td>TBA (exams are held Dec. 9 – 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay #2</td>
<td>15%*</td>
<td>Apr. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15%^</td>
<td>TBA (exams are held Apr. 12 – 27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus Assignment—Incentive Program (attendance + reflection)</td>
<td>Up to 5 tokens‡</td>
<td>Ongoing—Fall Term Only</td>
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^ Students who achieve 80% or higher on Notebook Assignment will have the option to shift half the weight of the Midterm to the Final Exam.
* Students who achieve 80% or higher on the Writing Portfolio Assignments will have the option to shift half the weight of Essay 1 to Essay 2.
‡ Tokens can be used for extensions/re-writes for select assignment during the term or, if unused, cashed in at the end of term for 1% bonus per.

**TEACHING APPROACH:**

I teach in a way that doesn’t just invite your participation, but rather that demands it. This is doubly true for a seminar course. In this class, you can expect me not to lecture at you in 80-minute intervals. Instead, I will be facilitating discussions and activities that require your involvement, and which will be broken up by occasional mini-lectures. The discussions and activities will give you opportunities to practice and develop the skills and content mastery announced in the learning outcomes, to measure the progress of your own learning, and to consolidate the knowledge and skills worked on in each class. Come prepared to be an active participant in your own learning. There can be no passengers in a seminar course.

**COURSE POLICIES & ASSIGNMENT DETAILS:**

Complete information about course policies and assignments will be in the final version of the syllabus, which will be available in August.