

Name: _____ Date: _____

Bridging Classics: A Study of Dystopia in Current Contexts

Objectives: Before we begin Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* in February, the third novel in our dystopian literature unit, students will examine the cultural prevalence of the dystopian genre in our current society. Through this activity, students will be engaging with a dystopian work of their choosing to deepen their understanding of elements of dystopian literature with Bradbury's novel. Students will analyze theme, setting, characters and the figurative devices attributed to this genre. Furthermore, examining genre as well as cultural significance fosters real world connections and encourages higher-order thinking appropriate to the second semester English I level.

Directions: Choose **one** novel, short story, game *or* movie from the Dystopian List OR you may select your own example of a novel, short story, videogame or movie. (****Common Sense: No Rated R/M!****)

Requirements:

1. **Create** one book jacket/DVD case cover (front and back). Must include at least 2 illustrations. (see amazon.com for samples, not copies)
2. **Write** one book/movie review of the work you chose. (See *New York Times Review of Books*, *L.A. Review of Books* or *IMDb.com* for samples, not copies)
3. **Write** one paragraph (5-8 sentences) explaining how the book/movie is an example of the dystopian genre. (See back of this sheet for the dystopian characteristics)

Young Adult Literature (Y.A. Lit.):

- *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
- *Catching Fire* by Suzanne Collins
- *Mockingjay* by Suzanne Collins
- *The House of the Scorpion* by Nancy Farmer
- *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld
- *Divergent* by Veronica Roth
- *Feed* by M. T. Anderson
- *The Host* by Stephanie Meyer
- *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card

Literature:

- *1984* by George Orwell
- *Brave New World* by Huxley
- *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand
- *Animal Farm* by George Orwell
- *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess
- *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
- *Cloud Atlas* by David Mitchell
- *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* by Philip K. Dick
- *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro
- *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy
- *The Stand* by Stephen King

Film: (Rating Range: G to PG-13)

- *Oblivion* (2013)
- *The Lorax* (2012)
- *In Time* (2011)
- *Terminator Salvation* (2009)
- *Wall-E* (2008)
- *I Am Legend* (2007)
- *The Island* (2005)
- *Titan A.E.* (2000)
- *Waterworld* (1995)
- *Logan's Run* (1976)
- *Planet of the Apes* (1968 or 2001)

Remember: if you decide to pick a film or videogame of your own choosing, it must fall between the **G to PG-13 ratings! No exceptions.**

Due Date: Wednesday, March 5th

Dystopias: Definition and Characteristics

Utopia: A place, state, or condition that is ideally perfect in respect of politics, laws, customs, and conditions. In Greek utopia means “no place,” signifying that a utopia cannot exist in present time and is an artificial, or fictional, representation of a perfect place, not one that actually exists or is attainable. Utopia is presented in Plato’s *Republic* and analyzed in Thomas Moore’s *Utopia*.

Dystopia: A futuristic, imagined universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through corporate, bureaucratic, technological, moral, or totalitarian control. Dystopias, through an exaggerated worst-case scenario, make a criticism about a current trend, societal norm, or political system.

Characteristics of a Dystopian Society

- Propaganda is used to control the citizens of society.
- Information, independent thought, and freedom are restricted.
- A figurehead or concept is worshipped by the citizens of the society.
- Citizens are perceived to be under constant surveillance.
- Citizens have a fear of the outside world.
- Citizens live in a dehumanized state.
- The natural world is banished and distrusted.
- Citizens conform to uniform expectations. Individuality and dissent are bad.
- The society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.

Types of Dystopian Controls

Most dystopian works present a world in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through one or more of the following types of controls:

- Corporate control: One or more large corporations control society through products, advertising, and/or the media. Examples include *Minority Report* and *Running Man*.
- Bureaucratic control: Society is controlled by a mindless bureaucracy through a tangle of red tape, relentless regulations, and incompetent government officials. Examples in film include *Brazil*.
- Technological control: Society is controlled by technology—through computers, robots, and/or scientific means. Examples include *The Matrix*, *The Terminator*, and *I, Robot*.
- Philosophical/religious control: Society is controlled by philosophical or religious ideology often enforced through a dictatorship or theocratic government.

The Dystopian Protagonist

- often feels trapped and is struggling to escape.
- questions the existing social and political systems.
- believes or feels that something is terribly wrong with the society in which he or she lives.
- helps the audience recognize the negative aspects of the dystopian world through his or her perspective.