

Renaissance Studies

Humanities 312

Section: D100

Term: 1999 Spring

Instructor: Dolores Clavero,
AQ 5112, 291-3674

Discussion Topics: The utopian tendency in the human mind is very strong and has appeared in almost every age. In the European cultural tradition, since at least Plato's Republic, human thought has dwelt on the possibilities of social engineering, and since at least Hesiod's Works and Days it has pursued the dream of recovering a lost age of innocence.

In this course we will be specifically concerned with the proliferation of utopian projects in the Renaissance, a phenomenon related to both the breakdown of the medieval social order and to the excitement of the geographic discoveries that opened up a whole new world and totally new societies to Europeans.

We will study Renaissance utopian thought as manifested in three forms: the city-state, the pastoral and the religious utopia. We will combine the reading of relevant literary texts with an historical perspective that will help us to understand the conditions under which these works were produced. We will end with an inquiry into the benefits and dangers of utopian thought, as well as into its power as a creator of images of a better world.

Grading: 2 short assignments 30%

Oral presentation of a topic to be discussed in class 30%

Final paper 30%

Participation 10%

Required Texts: Tommaso Campanella, *The City of the Sun: A Poetical Dialogue*, University of California Press, 1981.

Thomas More, *Utopia*, Penguin Classics, 1965.

Sir Philip Sidney, *The Old Arcadia*, Oxford, 1994.

John C. Oli

Recommended Texts:

Materials/Supplies:

Prerequisite/Corequisite: 45 semester hours

Notes: HUM 312-4 may be applied toward the Certificate in Liberal Arts.

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