



Studies in Dystopian Literature Summer Reading 2022-2023

Students entering *Studies in Dystopian Literature* will read ONE (or more!!) of the following for summer reading. In order to be fully prepared for class discussion during the first week of school, it is always recommended that you “engage with the text” by highlighting and annotating passages that describe characters, settings, symbols, themes, or the items listed below.

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*. (1986). Anchor Books, 1998. (ISBN# 978-0-49081-8)
Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. (1951). Simon and Schuster, 2012. (ISBN# 978-1-4516-7331-9)
Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. (1932). Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2006.
(ISBN# 978-0-06-085052-4)

1. 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. Where do you recognize these characteristics in the novel?

Dystopias, through an exaggerated worst-case scenario, make a criticism about a current trend, societal norm, or political system. What criticism is Atwood or Bradbury or Huxley making *about his or her present-day society* (1980s, 1950s, 1930s respectively) in this novel?

2. Characteristics of a Dystopian Society:

- Propaganda is used to control the citizens of society.
- Information, independent thought, and freedom are restricted.
- Citizens of the society worship a figurehead or concept.
- Citizens are perceived to be under constant surveillance.
- Citizens live in 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.
- Society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.

3. The Dystopian Protagonist:

- Often feels trapped and is struggling to exist.
- Questions the existing social and political systems.
- Believes/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.

Please feel free to read all three...or just READ, READ, READ. During the course, we will read *1984*, *Anthem*, and *The Parable of the Sower* (a Graphic Novel), in addition to an independent dystopian or apocalyptic novel each quarter. **I encourage you to buy your books at Wordsworth (in the Heights) so that you have the correct ISBN#s.**

Questions? Contact Ms. Conyer: lconyer@episcopalcollegiate.org