

*Department of English*  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

**ENGE2380 TWENTIETH-CENTURY FICTION  
(The Book in Twentieth-Century Dystopian Fiction)**

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**Course Description**

This course examines some of the key works of dystopian fiction written in the twentieth-century. It does so by thinking about the ways in which the book – that common symbol of culture and civilization – is treated in these works. The course begins by contextualizing the dystopian novel in the literary landscape of the twentieth-century and thinking through the notion of dystopia and its cognates. After revealing a strong link between the dystopian image and the emasculation of culture, we move on to consider the particular visions of society presented by Ray Bradbury, George Orwell, and Anthony Burgess. As we shall see, they are visions of society that insist that we not only question our idea of “culture” but also how culture itself intervenes in the inevitable tension between state and individual.

**Learning Outcome**

By the end of the course, you should be able both to recognize the genre of dystopian fiction and articulate many of the features of dystopian fiction. In addition, you should be able to understand some of the different ways in which critics and commentators have read the idea of “culture.” In doing so, this will allow you to then to offer insightful comment on the value of literature to contemporary society. Finally, by the end of this course you should be able to produce a well-reasoned essay

**Reading List**

George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*

Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*

**Assessment**

Seminar Preparation/Participation	10%
Seminar Presentation	15%
In-Class Essay	20%
Formal Essay	55%