

Architecture of Utopia

Spring 2024 | history & theory seminar

Prof. Matei Denes



01 _ overview

Utopia has been tied to architecture since Thomas More's illustrated book created the genre. Utopias are always spatial and social. This course will examine the link between the two through readings, presentations, discussions, and projects.

By examining historical utopias, intentional communities, and dystopias, the class will look to understand how utopias shape our present and future. Topics covered will include the history of utopia, its architectural manifestations, its relationship to the city, how utopia functions as a socio-political concept and non-western examples.

02 _ goals

The class will focus on 3 main goals:

1. Understand architecture as a social & political practice
2. Learn to ask the right questions about architecture and projects to make them socially positive and transformative.
3. What is the relationship between architectural drawing and social planning.

03 _ assignments

The class will have 4 assignments:

1. Reading and discussion of Thomas More's Utopia
2. Participation in class discussions.
3. 20 minute presentation on a specific Utopia and leading class discussion
4. Develop a contemporary Utopia through written and drawn means.

04 _ evaluation

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|-----------------------------|-----|
| 1. More's Utopia Discussion | 10% |
| 2. Class Discussion | 30% |
| 3. Presentation | 25% |
| 4. Utopia Project | 35% |

05 _ schedule

week 01 Th 01.18	introduction
week 02 Th 01.25	typologies of utopia Thomas More - Utopia Discussion
week 03 Th 02.01	architecture of utopia Utopia Presentations pt 1
week 04 Th 02.08	utopia & the city Utopia Presentations pt 2
week 05 Th 02.15	socio-political utopia Architectural utopia presentations pt 1
week 06 Th 02.22	built utopias & intentional communities Architectural utopia presentations pt 2
week 07 Th 02.29	MOVIE Metropolis - Fritz Lange
week 08 Th 03.07	feminist & non-western utopias Intentional Communities presentation pt 1
SPRING BREAK	
week 09 Th 03.21	dystopia Intentional Communities presentation pt 2
week 10 Th 03.28	speculative and poetic spaces Dystopia presentations

week 11 Th 04.04	utopia project ideas
week 12 Th 04.11	utopia project development
week 13 Th 04.18	utopia project production
week 14 Th 04.25	utopia project presentations
week 15 T 04.30	utopia project presentations
office hours	available by appointment on Tuesdays and Wednesdays

06 _ school standards

LEARNING AND TEACHING CULTURE POLICY

In addition to the overarching values and ethics of the university, the New Jersey School of Architecture is dedicated to optimism, diversity and solidarity, professional conduct, constructive evaluation and instruction, collaborative community, health and wellbeing, time management and school-life-work balance, respectful stewardship and space management, and well-rounded enrichment. The pedagogy of architecture and design is as complex as it is rewarding, and as dynamically evolving as the people who learn and teach it. This understanding resides at the core of the NJSOA Learning and Teaching Culture Policy.

CANVAS

This course will use the learning management system CANVAS as the repository for all readings assignments and project assignments. All student work must be uploaded in the appropriate assignment folders. To access CANVAS, you must have a UCID account with NJIT.

KEPLER ARCHIVING

Students must upload copies of their assignments to the new KEPLER 5 system found under the KEPLER tab in CANVAS "Modules". CANVAS assignments folders are automatically ported to KEPLER, although students will need to initiate a separate KEPLER upload. The new KEPLER has an improved interface for easier batch uploading. Any file, regardless of file size, or type can be uploaded, although .pdfs and .jpegs are recommended to ensure viewability. KEPLER no longer has individual student folders. Rather, student work is now available for review in either "List View" organized by student, or "Gallery View" with thumbnails of all work in an assignment folder viewable at once.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Language to be pasted in the syllabus:

Academic integrity and honesty are of paramount importance. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. The NJIT Honor Code will be upheld, and any violations will be brought to the immediate attention of the Dean of Students. All students are responsible for upholding the integrity of NJIT by reporting any violation of academic integrity to the Office of the Dean of Students. The identity of the

student filing the report will remain anonymous. All students are expected to adhere to the **University Code on Academic Integrity**[link](#) and to the **Code of Student Conduct**[link](#).

HCAD librarian Maya Gervits has assembled excellent resources for students use on using images, citing, and plagiarism [link](#).

Grading Scale for Undergraduate Courses:

Grade	Description
A	Superior
B+	Excellent
B	Very Good
C+	Good
C	Acceptable
D	Minimum
F	Inadequate
AUD	Audit
I	Incomplete--given in rare instances to students who would normally have completed the coursework but who could not do so because of special circumstances. It is expected that coursework will be completed during the next regular semester. If this grade is not removed before final grades are due at the end of the next regular semester, a grade of F will be issued.
W	Withdrawal
S	Satisfactory
U	Unsatisfactory

ABSENCES

HCAD does not maintain an active official policy on absences, although the NJSOA requests coordinators and instructors to customize a policy for the cohort they teach. Coordinators should maintain a consistent absentee policy across a studio year that is clearly explained in the studio syllabus. Instructors of individual courses are asked to maintain an absentee policy for an individual course.

The NJIT office of the Dean of Students (DOS) maintains a way for students to explain absences that instructors can use to regulate absenteeism. By providing verifiable documentation through filing an online [Student Absence Excuse Request](#) form related to the absences within 14 days, a student can ask for accommodation and that their absences not affect their grade. Once the absence has been verified, the DOS will communicate with the instructor. Nonetheless, the DOS only verifies documentation, and it remains the instructor's discretion to provide any accommodation and the student's responsibility to follow up with the instructor. Accepted reasons for absence include bereavement, medical concerns, military activity, legal obligations, or university-sponsored events. Some NJSOA instructors have found that requiring DOS documentation is a strong incentive to attend class. Additional DOS information outlined [here](#).

Here are some other attendance enforcement methods that NJSOA instructors currently practice: ask students to notify the instructor by email, text, or phone before missing class and provide sufficient cause for nonattendance to maintain grades, use Canvas for attendance and calibrate scoring; or simply dock a student one-half grade (from an A to a B+) for every class missed (up to 3 classes for a studio course). This last measure is a legacy NJSOA policy no longer in force.

All instructors are asked to keep an accurate attendance log. If absenteeism is affecting a student's performance, the NJSOA strongly recommends issuing a warning notice mid-semester to remind the student of the grading consequences. If a student challenges a grade, and absenteeism is an issue, the appeals committee will request this log.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please be reminded that your syllabus represents a foundational document between instructor and student. It is a kind of contract. While information initially included may be supplemented later, such as by providing clarifying information on an assignment, the general scope, schedule, and grading value should be clearly outlined in the syllabus you post on the first day. Please bear that in mind.

NJSoA typically organizes outcomes to add to 100%. NJIT recommends that a final project or exam count for no more than 35% of a semester grade.

PLAGIARISM

Students and faculty must familiarize themselves with a proper way to cite visual and intellectual sources. Plagiarism, whether deliberate or inadvertent, simply cannot be tolerated. Simply put, plagiarism is the use of visual or intellectual material created by others without proper attribution. Even the use of one's own material for more than one assignment can also be considered plagiarism. Students should not do so without the expressed consent of all instructors involved. Our librarian, Maya Gervits, has assembled excellent resources on copyright, plagiarism citing, and avoiding plagiarism: <http://researchguides.njit.edu/c.php?g=671665&p=4727920>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The school's moral, ethical, and legal obligation is to provide appropriate accommodations for all students with physical and/ or learning disabilities. If students need accommodation related to disabilities, all official documentation must be filed with the Dean of Students and the Disability Support Service Office. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester if accommodations are warranted.

Dean of Students: [https:// www.njit.edu/doss/](https://www.njit.edu/doss/)

Disability Support Service: [http:// www.njit.edu/ studentsuccess/disability-support-services-0/](http://www.njit.edu/studentsuccess/disability-support-services-0/)

07 _ bibliography

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