Utopia/Dystopia: Cinematic Visions of the Future

This seminar will screen, read and discuss a range of utopian/dystopian visions of the future as forecast in our popular cinema, and literature. Our screenings will explore a range of films from from 'sci-fi' to fantasy and horror, extending from the 1930s to the present, the 'near present' and far into the future. We will take on varied questions and issues including, the increasing prevalence of apocalyptic endings to present and future worlds; contrasts between a fragile democratic 'now' vs. an authoritarian techno-future; race, gender and sexuality in the 'scientifically' engineered and overdetermined future; class, labor and social privilege among replicants, cyborgs and humans; the 'post-human condition; the consumption of virtual reality, cyber-sex, and other commodities; post-technological tribalism; future 'hoods & cityscapes; warnings of cyber-surveillance, techno-collapse and eco-disaster. And finally, we will ask: what is 'utopia,' how is it 'imagined,' and is it still possible. We will develop our seminar discussions, screenings and papers with readings from the likes of George Orwell, Ray Kurzweil, Paul Vrillo, Aldous Huxley, among others.

Course Requirements:

[1] Approximately 12 page minimum, final essay due (tba). (50% of the final grade).
[2] Three short 'critical response' papers (5 pages minimum) that will provide, and develop, the concept, premise or argument of your final paper. (30% of final grade)
[3] Participation in the class and seminar discussions and regular attendance are essential. Each student will bring to the recitation and/or the general screening/lecture two written questions about the screenings/readings. (20% of final grade)
[4] All work must be word processed and come in on time. No late papers will be accepted

Required Reading:

**Blade Runner** by Scott Bukatman

**The Shallows** by Nicholas Carr

**The Age of Earthquakes** eds. Basar/Coupland/Obrist

**Against Civilization** ed. By John Zerzan

*** Other Readings: TBA ***
Fall 2018, Prof. Guerrero
Expressive Cultures: Utopia/Dystopia

Screenings & Readings

9/7    “The Day the Earth Stood Still” 1951  Start Reading: *The Age of Earthquakes* by eds. Basar/Coupland/Obrist

9/12   “Invasion of the Body Snatchers” 1956 *The Age of Earthquakes*

9/19   “Forbidden Planet” 1956 *The Age of Earthquakes*

9/26   “Lost Horizons” 1937  Read: *Against Civilization* (sections 1-3) ed. John Zerzan *** First Short Paper Due ***

10/3   “The Birds” 1963 *Against Civilization*

10/10  “Demon Seed” 1977 *Against Civilization*

10/17  “Zardoz” 1974 *Against Civilization*  
        *** Second Short Paper Due ***

10/24  “The Thing” 1982 *Against Civilization* (Sections 4-5)

11/7   “Brazil” 1985 *Against Civilization* (Sections 4-5)

11/14  “The Purge” 2013  Read: *The Shallows*

11/21  **** No Class:  Thanksgiving Break ****

11/28  “Fight Club” 1999 *The Shallows*  
        *** Third Short Paper Due ***

12/5   “Sorry to Bother You” 2018 *The Shallows*

12/18  “Koyaanisquatsi” 1983  Read: *Blade Runner*  
        *** Final Paper Due: TBA ***

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