

## **COMM 304: RHETORICS OF UTOPIA & REVOLUTION**

SPRING 2022

Monday/Wednesday/Friday 11:30 a.m. to 12:20 p.m.

Corboy Law Center, Room 525

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Julia DeCook, PhD

**E-MAIL:**

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**HOW TO ADDRESS ME:**

Professor DeCook or Dr. DeCook

**OFFICE:**

Lewis Towers, Room 902

**PRONOUNS:**

she/her/hers

**OFFICE HOURS:**

By Appointment

We do not predict the future, we create it.

In this class, we will be reading and studying the works of revolutionary thinkers, past and present, to imagine better futures and to truly embrace the concept of utopia. But how does a utopia happen? What steps do we need to take to create a better world? During this moment of intense global crisis, we will study the works of the revolutionaries that came before us and also the words of the revolutionaries that are working to create a better future in our current moment and time.

This is a reading intensive course where you will, at times, be reading a book (or even more) a week. It will be heavy on reading, discussion, and the co-construction of knowledge. In this course, I will be less of a lecturer and more of a guide in helping you all understand these concepts and how to apply them in meaningful ways to create social change. At the end of the class, you will all not only know these concepts and how to explain them, but to explain them in ways that are meaningful and impactful for the people in your communities and to communicate them using a variety of modalities.

This course is an intervention, a rallying cry, a space to share our despair but more importantly, to cultivate hope.

I invite you all on this journey with me and your fellow students, and to imagine better for us all.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS**

By the end of this course, students will have a better understanding of utopia and revolution, how ideology operates and solidifies via discourse, and ways to enact social change.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS/BOOKS

There are ten (10) required books for this course. Additional readings for the course will be posted on the Sakai page throughout the semester and students may need their Loyola UVID and password to access some content through LUC Libraries. Students are responsible for checking Sakai to see if there are additional readings for that week. Students will be expected to complete readings before class in order to fully participate in class discussion and activities.

Additionally, students are expected to have access to their own reading materials, laptops or desktop computers, notebooks, pens/pencils to take notes in class and to participate in class activities and to complete class assignments. If this is not possible for whatever reason, please let me know and we will find solutions or alternatives.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

For this class, you will need access to a reliable desktop computer, laptop computer, or tablet to be able to do the discussions, readings, viewings, and other assignments. You will need access to some kind of Word processor, like Microsoft Word, Apple Pages, or Google Docs to work on your assignments. To accomplish this, you will also need a reliable Internet connection.

You will also need to access Sakai regularly to keep up to date with the course materials. Remember that the course schedule outlines all of the required readings, and Sakai will be where readings that are *not* the required book will be.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS (available at local bookstores and online)

*The Wretched of the Earth*

by Frantz Fanon

*Feminism for the 99%*

by Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, and Nancy Fraser

*Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*

by José Esteban Muñoz

*Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*

by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

*The Old is Dying and the New Cannot Be Born: From Progressive Neoliberalism to Trump and Beyond*

by Nancy Fraser

*Four Futures*

by Peter Frase

*We Do This 'Til We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice*

by Mariame Kaba

*Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*

by Julie Sze

*We Will Not Cancel Us: And Other Dreams of Transformative Justice*

by Adrienne Maree Brown

*The Coming Insurrection* (will be provided to students on Sakai)

by The Invisible Committee

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There is a total possible of 150 points that students can receive in this course. The grading scale is:

GRADE	POINTS
A	94+
A-	90 to 93
B+	87 to 89
B	84 to 86
B-	80 to 83
C+	77 to 79
C	74 to 76
C-	70 to 73
D+	67 to 69
D	64 to 66
F	63 and below

Below is a table that breaks down the points of each graded assignment. Brief descriptions of the assignments are below the table.

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS
Participation	25 points
Friday Reflections (10 total, 5 points each)	50 points
Midterm	30 points
Final Project	45 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	150 points

### ***Participation (25 points)***

I will not be taking attendance every class period. However, I still expect you all to attend class regularly, complete the readings on time, turn in all assignments on their due dates, and to regularly participate in class discussions. Since this is a smaller class, participation will be crucial because the class format will mostly take form in discussion – not lecture.

If for whatever reason you cannot attend class, please let me know ahead of time. You do not need to list a long list of reasons, provide proof, or anything of that nature. If you cannot attend class due to illness, family emergency, or just need a mental health day, please just let me know.

Participation has so many points because the purpose of this class is to read and learn new ideas and to discuss them with your classmates in the goal of creating opportunities for raising consciousness through engagement with one another. As a result, you will be expected to regularly participate and contribute to our discussions.

Additionally, since we will be mostly engaging with each other through discussion, I expect you all to be respectful, kind, and patient with one another. If a student is perceived to be hostile, intimidating, or disrespectful to the professor or their classmates, they will be asked to leave the class and if required, mediated conflict management will be conducted and reports will be made about the student's behavior.

Students will also be expected to be respectful, kind, and understanding toward one another. If a student is deemed to be hostile or disrespectful toward their classmates or the professor, they will be asked to leave the class.

### ***Friday Reflections (50 points)***

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we will not be meeting in person on Fridays. Instead, I will ask you all to submit reflections every Friday based off a viewing or listening opportunity (a documentary/video or podcast) that relates to the topic for that week to deepen your understanding of the topic. Other than participation, these reflections are the only other individual part of the class.

These reflections will prepare you for the topic for the next week, and provide additional basis for understanding the topics we will cover that week.

We will not be meeting on Fridays, either online or offline, and you will need to submit your reflections by 8 p.m. every Friday to Sakai. Your reflections should be a minimum of 2 pages, double spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font.

### ***Midterm Project (30 points)***

The final project for this course will be a group project where the group will create their own zine/manifesto for the group's topic. Students will be encouraged to form groups based on shared interests (environmental justice, racial justice, prison abolition, etc.) and then create a zine together. Ideally, with a class of 15 students, you will work in groups of 3.

For the midterm, an annotated bibliography of sources, a detailed project proposal, and a project plan for the final project will be required.

To accomplish this, think of the topic, what you will need to create your zine, and the kinds of information you want to include for someone who has had not had significant exposure to these ideas. Basically, think of your zine as a kind of pamphlet, with both text and art and other means of communicating, meant to introduce someone to these ideas and to create opportunities for them to want to learn more about the topic.

Using this as your framework, create an annotated bibliography, proposal, plan and timeline. Even if we have not yet covered the topic in class, you can look ahead or find additional materials for your annotated bibliography we may not cover in class.

All materials for the midterm must be turned in on Sakai by March 25, Friday, by 8 p.m.

The breakdown of points for the Midterm Project will be:

- Annotated Bibliography: 15 points
- Project Proposal: 15 points
- Project Plan/Timeline: 5 points

Only *one student* should submit all of the materials for the Midterm Project to the instructor on Sakai, but include *all of the names of their group members* on them.

### ***Final Project (45 points)***

Your final project should be your zine/manifesto, submitted as a PDF. Your zine/manifesto (or zinefesto if that's what you want to do) should be a total of 10 to 15 pages (and can go over this amount) and include text, or art, and/or other media forms in communicating your ideas and topic.

Because you are making a zine or a manifesto, you are allowed to be extremely creative in how you decide to communicate the topic – if you want to use memes or even more abstract forms of communication, you are welcome to do so.

You will present a draft of your zine/manifesto on April 27, in class, to the rest of the group in order to have an opportunity for feedback. You will submit your final project on May 5, at 10 p.m., on Sakai.

### **E-MAIL/SAKAI POLICY**

I will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on weekends. If you have not received any feedback during this period, please feel free to reach out to me again to ensure your communication was received.

I expect students to use appropriate, professional, and considerate language when communicating with me and other students via email. If you are nervous or uncertain about how to go about this, check out this presentation on email etiquette: [E-mail Etiquette for Students](#).

Students are responsible for checking Sakai and their LUC email accounts regularly to stay up-to-date on announcements.

If you don't check your LUC email account, you should forward it to an account that you do check. You may also forward your LUC mail to a non-LUC account. Students are responsible for any information distributed via email and/or Sakai.

## **LATE WORK POLICY**

You will be expected to turn in and complete all assignments on their assigned due dates at the proper time. However, I understand that life happens. If you need an extension on an assignment, please let me know and we will work something out.

## **SENSITIVE CONTENT POLICY**

During this course, students may be exposed to topics that may be triggering or traumatic. If at any point during the semester you feel uncomfortable participating in a class activity or topic due to this, please let me know and we will try to find an alternative topic for you during that week.

This will not affect your grade in the class, so please do not be afraid to bring it up or ask for a different topic. I will not require you to explain or give any reason why, just to request a different set of readings, viewings, or topic.

## **LIMITS TO CONFIDENTIALITY**

Under the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, all personnel of institutions of higher education are classified as "mandated reporters" who must report to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) if the reporter has reasonable cause to believe that a minor under 18 years of age known to the reporter in his or her official or professional capacity may be abused (physically or sexually) or neglected.

Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of Loyola University Chicago community members and others. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and

- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the [LUC Health Center](#).

## **ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Any student with a disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from the Student Accessibility Center to the instructor.

The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

## **ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH CHILDREN**

Students who are the caretakers of a child/children are allowed to bring their child/children with them to class in the event of an emergency (if childcare plans fall through, etc.).

Please let me know ahead of time if you will be bringing your child/children to class and also sit near the door in the event that the student needs to leave the classroom to tend to the child/children.

If the child/children are using devices like phones, tablets, etc., to entertain them during class time, I also ask that the student who is their caretaker to make sure to provide headphones as to not disturb the rest of the class.

## **PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty. Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher;

- Providing information to another student during an examination;
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination;
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor;
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted;
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom;
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines; or
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts.

Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.;
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material;
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit; or
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is an act of personal and professional courtesy, as well as intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at <http://luc.edu/english/writing>.

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. A student who submits the same work for credit in two or more classes will be judged guilty of academic dishonesty, and will be subject to sanctions described below. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to



submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course.

All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the appropriate area head and to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication. The office of the Dean of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances.

The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans. Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at: [http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg\\_academicgrievance](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance).

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations. (The School of Communication policy is consistent with the Academic Integrity Policy of the College of Arts & Sciences.)

## DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE

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### Week 1 - ONLINE

(January 19 and 21)

#### January 19: Introduction to course

Reading:

Course Syllabus

[On Liberation](#) by Herbert Marcuse (on Sakai)

Watch:

[Is Utopia Always Dystopia? Is Utopia Possible?](#)

(on Sakai)

#### January 21:

No online class meeting, first Friday reflection

This reflection has no viewing or listening component. Instead, I want you to only submit a 1 page reflection of:

1. what you hope to learn in this class
2. what you're excited about
3. and any questions you have coming in that you hope are answered.

Submit by 8 p.m. on Friday, January 21, to Sakai

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### Week 2 - ONLINE

(January 24, 26, and 28)

#### January 24:

*The Wretched of the Earth*,

forward to Chapter III (pages vii to 144)

#### January 26:

*The Wretched of the Earth*, chapter IV to conclusion (pages 145 to 240)

#### January 28:

Read:

[How Afrofuturism Can Help the World Mend](#) (on Sakai)

Watch:

[Dirty Computer](#) (on Sakai)

Submit Friday Reflection by 8 p.m. on Sakai

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### Week 3 – IN PERSON

(January 31, February 2 and 4)

#### January 31:

Listen:

[Parliament – Mothership Connection](#)

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Read:

[The Mothership Connection: Mythscape and Unity in the Music of Parliament](#) (on Sakai)

Afrofuturism, science fiction, and the history of the future (on Sakai)

[The Altermundos of Latin@ futurism](#) (on Sakai)

**February 2:**

Read:

Asian Futurism and the Non-Other (on Sakai)

Imagining a Desi Future (on Sakai)

[Taking the Fiction Out of Science Fiction: A Conversation about Indigenous Futurisms](#) (on Sakai)

Palestine and the Aesthetics of the Future Impossible (on Sakai)

Listen:

[Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape](#) (on Sakai)

**February 4:**

Read:

[Sultana's Dream](#) (on Sakai)

Watch:

[Octavia Butler, The Grand Dame of Science Fiction](#)

Submit Friday reflection by 8 p.m. on Sakai

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**Week 4**

(February 7, 9, and 11)

**February 7:**

Read:

*Bloodchild* by Octavia Butler (on Sakai)

["Shaping God": The Power of Octavia Butler's Black Feminist and Womanist SciFi Visions in the Shaping of a New world – An Interview with Adrienne Maree Brown](#) (on Sakai)

**February 9:**

Read:

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[The Combahee River Collective Statement](#) (on Sakai)

Radical Others: Women of Color and Revolutionary Feminism (on Sakai)

**February 11:**

Read:

[How neoliberalism colonised feminism – and what you can do about it](#) (on Sakai)

Watch:

[The Marketing of Neoliberal Feminism of a Darker Hue](#) (on Sakai)

Submit Friday reflection by 8 p.m. on Sakai

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**Week 5**

(February 14, 16, and 18)

**February 3:**

Read:

[The Disturbing Rise of 'Femonationalism'](#) (on Sakai)

[When Feminism Is White Supremacy in Heels](#) (on Sakai)

[The Girlboss Has Left the Building](#) (on Sakai)

[Girlboss culture isn't dead, it's rebranded as "that girl" now](#) (on Sakai)

**February 5:**

Read:

*Feminism for the 99%: A Manifesto*

**February 7:**

Read:

[The Social Construction of Sex](#) (on Sakai)

Submit Friday Reflection by 8 p.m. on Sakai

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**Week 6**

(February 21, 23, and 25)

**February 10:**

Read:

[Femifesto for Trans Liberation](#) (on Sakai)

[Why trans liberation means abolishing capitalism: Transgender Marxism](#) (on Sakai)

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Listen:

[An Episode on Climate Justice & Queer and Trans Liberation](#)

**February 12:**

Read:

The Queerest Insurrection (on Sakai)

**February 14:**

Read:

[“Embrace the Brick, Honey:” Miss Major, Bill T. Jones and More on What Queer Utopia Means to Them](#) (on Sakai)

Submit Friday reflection by 8 p.m. to Sakai

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**Week 7**

(February 28, March 2, and 4)

**February 28:**

*Cruising Utopia*, Introduction and Chapters 1 to 5

**March 2:**

*Cruising Utopia*, Chapters 6, 8, 10, and conclusion

**March 4:**

**NO FRIDAY REFLECTION**

HAPPY SPRING BREAK ☺

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**WEEK 8: SPRING BREAK MARCH 7 TO 11  
NO CLASS**

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**Week 9**

(March 14, 16, and 18)

**March 14:**

Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice, preface and parts I and II (chapters 1 to 10)

**March 16:**

Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice, parts III and IV (chapters 11 to 19)

**March 18:**

Read:

[The Cults of Capital](#)

Submit Friday reflection by 8 p.m. on Sakai

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**Week 10**

(March 21, 23, and 25)

**March 21:***The Old Is Dying and the New Cannot Be Born***March 23:**

In-class Work Day

**March 25:**

Read:

[Corona Biopolitics and Life After Capitalism – A Manifesto Of Hope](#) (on Sakai)

Submit Friday reflection by 8 p.m. to Sakai

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**Week 11**

(March 28 and 30, April 1)

**March 28:***Four Futures*, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2**March 30:***Four Futures*, Chapters 3, 4, and Conclusion**April 1:**

Watch:

[The Fallacy of Prison Reform by Angela Davis](#)

Submit Friday reflection by 8 p.m. to Sakai

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**Week 12**

(April 4, 6, and 8)

**April 4:***We Do This til We Free Us*, parts I to IV.**April 6:***We Do This til We Free Us*, parts V to VII.**April 8:**

Watch:

[AWAKE – A Dream From Standing Rock](#) (on Sakai)

Submit Friday reflection by 8 p.m. to Sakai

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**Week 13**

(April 11, 13, and 15)

**April 11:***Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*, Introduction, Chapter 1 and 2**April 13:***Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*, Chapter 3 and Conclusion

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**April 15:**  
**No Class, Easter Break**  
**No Friday Reflection**

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**Week 14**  
(April 18, 20, and 22)

**April 18:**  
**No Class, Easter Break**

**April 20:**  
*The Coming Insurrection* (on Sakai)

**April 22:**  
Group work day  
**No Friday reflection**

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**Week 15**  
(April 25, 27, and 29)

**April 25:**  
*We Will Not Cancel Us: And Other Dreams of Transformative Justice*

**April 27:**  
Group Presentations

**April 29:**  
End-of-semester celebration  
**No Friday Reflection**

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**Finals Week**  
(May 2 to May 6)

**FINAL PROJECT DUE ON MAY 5 AT 10 P.M.**