

HI3001 – 1984: Past, Present, Prophecy

Wednesdays 2:30–5:30, LHS-TR+38

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During the second half of the twentieth century George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* became a staple (if not a cliché) of political, cultural and sociological comment. Heavily promoted by state actors after the Second World War for propaganda purposes, it took on a counter cultural life of its own during the late 1960s and 1970s. Interest in the book was reinvigorated in the 1980s thanks to the arrival of new computer, media and military technologies. In 2017 sales of the novel reached a new peak. Orwell's novel only seems to have gained in momentum and relevance; its depictions of "Big Brother," of telescreens, and of the "forever war" have been uncannily prescient. This course examines in detail the long cultural tail of Orwell's canonical text from a multidisciplinary perspective.

The course work includes an extended, intensive study of a literary text in conversation with the methods, concepts, and practices of contemporary history. Due to its interdisciplinary nature, this course features deliberation on and assessment of different disciplinary methods, and the assignments challenge you to express your knowledge in new modes and to different audiences.

Required Texts:

George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Penguin Modern Classics (014118776X)

Course Assignments and Assessment

Preparation and Participation	10%
Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	25%
Group Presentation	25%
Reflection Exercise	20%

Prospective Itinerary

Week 1 – This is the Day (or This the Year) in History

January 15 – from Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Week 2 – Big Brother Is Watching You (You Are Watching You)

January 22 – Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Part 1); Foucault, "Panopticism;" from Clarke, *Hope & Glory*

Week 3 – The Cold War (and the Forever War)

January 29 – Orwell, 'Can Socialists be happy?' & 'Wells, Hitler and the World State'; 'The Eights: 1948: The Rise of Globalism' (audio); "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (optional)

Week 4 – Slavery Is Freedom and Pain Is Pleasure

February 5 – Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Part 2); Postman, from *Amusing Ourselves to Death*

Week 5 – Doublethink: All Art Is Propaganda

February 12 – Orwell, ‘The prevention of literature’, ‘Writers and Leviathan’ & *The War Broadcasts* (Extracts)

Week 6 – Writing in Room 101

February 19 – Crick, “Eric Arthur Blair”; Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Part 3); Orwell, “Politics and the English Language”

Essay 1 draft due

Week 7 – Listening to a Novel, Hearing the World

February 26 – Mansell, from *National Acoustics*; Sterne, “Hearing”; Rice “Listening”

Essay 1 due

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Week 8 – Soundings of a Century

March 11 – Oliveros, “Some Sound Observations”; Rajaratnam, from *A Nation in the Making*; Schafer, from *The Soundscape*

Week 9 – The History of a Single Year: 1979

March 18 – Caryl, from *Strange Rebels: 1979 and the Birth of the 21st Century* & others

Week 10 – Cultures of 1984

March 25 – Group Presentations

Week 11 – *Nineteen Eighty-Four*’s Literary Legacies

April 1 – Atwood, “Orwell and Me” and selections from *The Handmaid’s Tale*; Murakami, selections from *1Q84*

Week 12 – Orwell in the World: Influence and Dispersion

April 8 – Orwell, “Shooting an Elephant;” Rushdie, “Outside the Whale”

Essay 2 Due

Week 13 – Writing Prophecies

April 15 – In-Class Review

May 1 – Reflection Exercise Due