



1-day course

# When Things Go Wrong: Dystopia and the Place of Writing from *Frankenstein* to *The Handmaid's Tale*

September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Target audience

English teachers at secondary I and secondary II-levels

## Date and schedule

September 11th, 2020  
9.00 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.

## Course venue

UNIL-EPFL Campus,  
Lausanne

## Certification

A certificate of participation will be delivered at the end of the course.

## Teaching approach

Through lectures, discussions and workshops, the course will introduce participants to a range of dystopian texts and their adaptations.

Participants are encouraged to share their experience and their pedagogical reflection on the role of literature in developing critical thinking.

## Organization

- English Department, Faculté des lettres, Université de Lausanne

## Introduction

What would the world be without books? How would that change our apprehension of the world? *Fahrenheit 451* and other texts pose that question at a time when we seem to be moving to radically new information technologies and cultural practices. This 1-day course proposes to examine the role of dystopian fiction in addressing contemporary threats and issues. While writers have used fiction to explore imaginative possibilities or to express concerns about real enough forms of social conflict, religious violence, political oppression and ideological manipulation, fiction tends to escape from the safe confines of the book into the world and shape it as a place. It also provides a space in which the reader can reflect on reality, develop critical thinking and forms of resistance. Whether that place is utopia or dystopia, fiction constantly interrogates its blissful and damning force, and its capacity to ask uncomfortable questions, quarrel with the world, and imagine it anew.

## Objectives

- Explore the genre of dystopian literature and see how it may help us read some of our current social, political and ecological questions
- Consider dystopian literature in the vaster context of the Western book culture and history of writing and reading
- Confront different readings of widely received texts and reconsider them in the light of current scholarship and contemporary theoretical questions
- Reflect on the role of (teaching) literature and its visual adaptations (TV, film, etc.)
- Propose ways of reading speculative and dystopian fiction as modes of interrogation in/of the contemporary world
- Consider texts as a place of ideological resistance

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Register on [www.formation-continue-unil-epfl.ch/en](http://www.formation-continue-unil-epfl.ch/en)

## Course fee

- CHF 200.–  
including coffee breaks.

## Registration deadline

June 26, 2020. Places are limited.

## Training team

- **Prof. Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère**, Head of Continuing Education for English, UNIL
- **Dr. Boris Vejdovsky**, Senior Lecturer in American Literature, English Department, UNIL
- **Dr. Marie Emilie Walz**, Junior Lecturer in Comparative Literature, English Department, UNIL

## Teachers

- **Prof. Valérie Cossy**, Assoc. Prof. in Gender Studies, English Department, UNIL
- **Prof. Kirsten Stirling**, Assoc. Prof. of Modern English Literature, English Department, UNIL
- **Dr. Marc Atallah**, Senior Lecturer, French Department, UNIL and director of the Maison d'Ailleurs
- **Dr. Marie Emilie Walz**, Junior Lecturer in Comparative Literature, English Department, UNIL
- **Dr. Enit Steiner**, Senior Lecturer in Modern English Literature, English Department, UNIL
- **Dr. Boris Vejdovsky**, Senior Lecturer in American Literature, English Department, UNIL
- **Mercedes Gulin**, Cultural Mediator at the Maison d'Ailleurs (Yverdon)



## Programme

### Morning lectures:

(9.00 a.m.-12.00 p.m.)

- Welcome by **Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère** and **Boris Vejdovsky**
- **Enit Steiner**: A 'Hideous Progeny' for the Ages: Creating *Frankenstein*
- **Valérie Cossy**: Does Sex Make a Difference in *Frankenstein*?
- **Kirsten Stirling**: "Er... was that in the book?" Teaching filmed fiction: *Frankenstein* and *The Handmaid's Tale*

### Afternoon talks and workshops:

(1.30 p.m.-5.00 p.m.)

- **Boris Vejdovsky**: *Fahrenheit 451*
- **Marie Emilie Walz**: Reading Young Adult dystopian fiction: *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* book series
- **Marc Atallah** presents the Utopia/Dystopia exhibition at the Maison d'Ailleurs (Yverdon)
- Workshop on futuristic cities (Philip K Dick & other writers) with **Mercedes Gulin**, mediator at the Maison d'Ailleurs (Yverdon)

(5.00 p.m.-5.30 p.m.)

- Book display and closing apéritif with **Matthew Wake**