

2025 Spring UnCommon Reads

IDH2930 The Hunger Games Trilogy

Class Number# 25926

Meeting Time: Thursdays: 9:35am-10:25am

Meeting Location: Little 117

Professor: Ms. Patti Takacs patriciatakacs@ufl.edu

Books: [Hunger Games Trilogy](#) (Required Texts)

The Hunger Games (2008)

Catching Fire (2009)

Mockingjay (2010)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-5pm

Office Location: Library West Office #502 (take the middle elevators to the 5th floor - stairways you need keyed access) questions ask the circulation desk

Course Description: The Hunger Games trilogy has become a classic in the short time it has been published. It has value because of its roots in cultural history. Cultural History is best characterized as a discussion of representation and the struggle over meaning within social constructs. The book has an interplay of class, politics, and ethics. This course explores Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy through literary, cultural, and philosophical lenses. We will analyze the themes of power, resistance, and survival, as well as examine the societal implications of the trilogy's portrayal of a dystopian future. Although this universe is a fictional one, it offers students a chance to discuss political issues within the Panem society, which has numerous problems aside from its rigid regime. This class will focus on cultural history by discussing the politics of The Hunger Games trilogy. We will tackle topics like whether Katniss is a feminist, disparities in wealth distribution, political philosophy, and the oppression of some of the districts. The course will also incorporate discussions on the relationship between fiction and reality, particularly in relation to media, politics, and the ethics of violence. Students will engage in critical readings of the texts, group discussions, and written analysis to understand the underlying social critiques woven throughout the series.

Learning Outcomes:

L1: Students will be able to synthesize relationships between political theory and modern day societies.

L2: Students will examine and discuss oppression and ethical wealth disparities.

L3: Students will compare and contrast societies and their political systems.

Disclaimer: Many of us have read the series, while we will try not to give away the endings of the books it is unreasonable to think we can read all three books within these weeks. It would be nice to be able to discuss things that happen throughout the other books so please understand that in discussion we might ruin some of the plots.

Weekly Schedule:

Jan 16th:

Introductions, course overview

Discussion Questions: What are the defining features of dystopian societies? How do these societies control or oppress individuals?

[for next week read pg. 1-60 \(ch 1-5\)](#)

Jan 23rd:

Discussion Questions: What is the role of the Capitol and the districts? What initial conflicts are set up in the story? How does the Capitol's manipulation of the Games and media reflect real-world power dynamics?

[for next week read pg. 61-114 ch. 5-9](#)

Jan 30th:

Team 1 Leads the class

Discussion Questions: How does the media in Panem shape the public's perception of the Games? What are the ethical implications of using violence for entertainment? How does violence in *The Hunger Games* compare to contemporary reality TV and media violence?

[for next week read pg. 114-172 ch. 9-13](#)

Feb 6th:

Team 2 leads the class

Discussion questions: How does fear play a central role in maintaining control over the districts? What parallels can be drawn between the Capitol's use of fear and how fear is used in other authoritarian regimes?

[for next week read pg. 172-232 ch. 13-18](#)

Feb 13th:

Team 3 leads the class

Discussion questions: Is the Hunger Games system morally defensible in any way? What does the Games' existence say about the nature of power and control?

[for next week read pg 233-302 ch. 18-23](#)

Feb 20th:

Team 4 leads the class

Discussion questions: How do the stakes change as the rebellion advances? What is the role of Katniss in navigating the moral complexities of revolution?

[for next week read pg 203-374 ch 23-27 \(end\)](#)

Feb 27th:

Team 5 leads the class

Discussion questions: The Capitol distracts the masses with the spectacle of the Hunger Games. What does this say about the power of entertainment in society and its potential to distract from real issues?

[for next week read pg. 1-74 ch 1-6](#)

March 6th: Paper Due

Team 6 leads the class

Discussion questions: At what point does the killing of other tributes become acceptable or justified in the Hunger Games? How does Katniss wrestle with this dilemma, and how does it affect her character development?

[for next week read pg. 75-120 ch 6-9](#)

March 13th:

Team 7 leads the class

Discussion questions: How are the people of the Capitol depicted in the novel? Are they all complicit in the oppression of the districts, or are there exceptions? How does the Capitol's lifestyle contrast with that of the districts?

[for next week read pg 120- 188 ch 9-14](#)

March 18th:

[Sunrise on the Reaping the next Hunger Games novel gets released!](#)

March 20th Spring Break read please read pg. 188-252 ch 14-18

March 27th:

Discussion questions: How does *The Hunger Games* critique social class and economic inequality? What are the parallels between the districts' struggles and real-world economic disparities?

[for next week read pg 252-311 ch 18-22](#)

April 3rd:

No class (I have a conference) please still read pg. 311-391 ch. 22-26 (end)

April 10th:

Final Presentations Due- 2- minutes in length - just sharing with your classmates what your final project was on - final thoughts

April 17th: No class Good luck on Finals

Assignments:

10% Attendance: Please email if you will be missing class for any reason, attendance is mandatory. UF attendance regulations applicable to this course

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

20% Participation: This class is discussion based, it is designed for us to talk about interesting political and social topics. Everyone brings a different experience and perspective to the world and one of the best things is being able to hear others opinions on the same topics.

20% Discussion Leader: The listed discussion questions are just suggestions, it would be better if you and your partner/s came with your own questions that inspired peer interaction and class discussion. You will work in teams of two or three. We will assign these on week 2 after the add drop period of the class.

20% Paper: Due March 6th

These are suggestions, if there is another topic you would like to examine please feel free.

Topic 1: The Capitol as a Reflection of Social Inequality: Discuss how the Capitol symbolizes extreme wealth and excess, and how this contrasts with the struggles of the districts. What does this disparity say about power structures and exploitation in society? How has *The Hunger Games* influenced your thoughts around politics, media, and social justice? Can you draw connections between the events of the trilogy and current global ideas/movements?

Topic 2: Totalitarianism in the Hunger Games: Analyze how the Capitol's control over the districts functions as a metaphor for totalitarian regimes in history (e.g., fascism, communism). How does the annual Hunger Games serve as a mechanism of control? How does *The Hunger Games* challenge or reinforce your understanding of power, oppression, and resistance? What about your impressions of violence and war? Has your idea of revolution changed?

Topic 3: Propaganda and Media Manipulation: Examine the role of propaganda, media, and the public spectacle of the Games in maintaining the Capitol's power. How do characters like Caesar Flickerman serve as tools for control? What drives a rebellion? Hope, freedom, starvation/desperation? How desperate do you need to be in order to fight? Do you just fight for what is right because people are in danger? What's the difference between a rebellion and a resistance?

30% Final Project: Due April 10th

Option 1: Design a propaganda campaign: Designing a propaganda campaign involves creating a carefully orchestrated communication strategy aimed at influencing people's beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors. Propaganda is typically used to promote a particular agenda, ideology, or cause, and it is often associated with persuasive techniques that appeal to emotions, biases, and group identities.

Ideas for how to do this:

Define Your Objective

- **Clear Goal:** Identify exactly what you want to achieve with the campaign. Are you trying to change people's opinions, mobilize a group, increase support for a cause, or discredit an opponent? The goal should be specific and measurable.
- **Target Audience:** Understand who you're trying to influence. Are they a general public, a specific demographic, or a particular group? Tailor your message to their values, beliefs, and concerns.

Understand Your Audience

- **Demographics and Psychographics:** Research the age, gender, education, socio-economic status, political orientation, and emotional triggers of your target audience.
- **Media Consumption:** Know where your audience gets its information. Do they consume traditional media (TV, radio, print), or are they more active on digital platforms (social media, websites, blogs)?
- **Existing Attitudes and Beliefs:** Identify any pre-existing beliefs, biases, or fears that you can leverage to your advantage. Understanding the psychological landscape of your audience is crucial.

Craft Your Message

- **Simplicity and Clarity:** Propaganda works best when the message is simple and easy to understand. It should be repetitive, reinforcing the same key ideas over and over.
- **Emotional Appeal:** Propaganda often uses emotional triggers like fear, pride, anger, or hope to persuade. Appeal to the emotions that are most likely to resonate with your audience.
- **Us vs. Them:** Create a strong contrast between your side and the "other." This could be framed as a moral battle, a fight for survival, or an ideological conflict. The "enemy" in the campaign should be painted as a clear and immediate threat.
- **Slogans and Catchphrases:** Create memorable slogans that encapsulate the campaign's message. Catchphrases are effective because they can spread quickly and be easily recalled by the audience.
- **Symbols and Icons:** Use recognizable symbols, logos, or images that evoke powerful associations (e.g., flags, colors, historical figures, or images of strength and unity).

Choose the Right Channels

- **Traditional Media:** Newspapers, radio, and television have long been powerful tools for spreading propaganda. These can reach large and diverse audiences but may be more easily controlled by authorities.
- **Social Media:** Digital platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are powerful tools for spreading messages rapidly. Social media also allows for the use of memes, viral videos, and targeted advertisements.
- **Leaflets and Posters:** Physical materials like posters, pamphlets, and flyers can be effective for localized campaigns or when targeting specific communities.
- **Influencers and Opinion Leaders:** Leverage individuals with influence over the target audience—whether politicians, celebrities, or everyday leaders within the community—to amplify your message.

Leverage Visuals and Storytelling

- **Imagery:** Use compelling images or videos that support your narrative. These visuals should evoke strong emotions and be easy to interpret. For instance, images of suffering can drive empathy, while images of strength and unity can inspire action.
- **Narratives and Stories:** People connect with stories far more than abstract ideas or statistics. Tell a narrative that supports your campaign's objective. It could involve a personal story, an imagined future, or a heroic journey.

- **Repetition and Consistency:** Ensure that the visual and verbal elements of your campaign are consistent across all media and are repeatedly presented. Repetition helps the message stick and become familiar.

Option 2: Create a cultural history: You can use the book society for this, you can create your own cultural history, you can create a new one, or you can research an existing one. **Cultural History Definition:** the history of a culture or culture area

specifically : a history treating one or a number of historic world cultures as an integrated unit for purposes of cross comparison with others and for analysis of the forces presumed to be in operation as regards cultural growth, development, fruition, and decay

OR a history that especially by contrast with narrative political history concentrates upon the social, intellectual, and artistic aspects or forces in the life of a people or nation

Ideas for how to do this:

Define the Scope and Focus:

- Choose a specific time period or community: This could be a particular era, a geographical region, or a specific group of people. For example, you could focus on the cultural history of the Victorian era in England, the indigenous communities of the Amazon rainforest, or the African American experience in the United States.

Identify the key themes and questions:

- What aspects of culture are you interested in exploring? Are you interested in art, literature, music, religion, social structures, or other cultural practices? What specific questions do you want to answer about the cultural history of your chosen group?

Gather Evidence: Explore primary sources:

- These are materials that were created during the time period you are studying, such as diaries, letters, photographs, artwork, artifacts, and oral histories.

Analyze secondary sources:

- These are scholarly works that have been written about the topic, including books, articles, and academic studies.

Consider different perspectives:

- Look for sources that represent diverse viewpoints and interpretations, including the perspectives of different social groups, genders, and ethnicities.

Analyze and Interpret the Evidence: Identify patterns and trends:

- Look for recurring themes and patterns in the evidence you have gathered. For example, you might notice a recurring theme of religious fervor in the Victorian era, or a pattern of resistance to oppression in the African American experience.

Consider the context:

- Understand the historical, social, political, and economic factors that shaped the culture of your chosen group.

Analyze the meaning of cultural expressions:

- Consider the symbolism and meaning behind different forms of cultural expression, such as art, music, literature, and ritual practices.

Explore the relationship between culture and power:

- How did culture reinforce or challenge existing power structures? How did different social groups use culture to assert their identity and negotiate their place in society?

Consider the role of change and continuity:

- How did culture change over time? What aspects of culture remained consistent?

Construct a Narrative:

- **Develop a compelling argument:** What is the main point you want to make about the cultural history you are studying? What is your interpretation of the evidence?
- **Organize your findings:** Structure your research and analysis in a logical and coherent way.
- **Present your findings:** Write a clear and engaging narrative that conveys your understanding of the cultural history you have explored.

Reflect on the Significance of the Cultural History:

Consider the broader implications:

- How does the cultural history you have explored relate to broader historical and social trends?

Identify the lessons learned:

- What insights can be gained from studying this particular cultural history?

Explore the relevance of the cultural history to the present day:

- How does the past continue to shape the present? What connections can be made between the past and contemporary issues?

Tips for Creating a Cultural History:

- **Start with a specific question or problem:** This will help to focus your research and analysis.
- **Be open to new perspectives:** Consider different interpretations and viewpoints.
- **Engage with the evidence critically:** Analyze the sources carefully and consider their limitations.
- **Write in a clear and engaging style:** Communicate your findings effectively to your audience.
- **Connect your research to broader historical and social contexts:** Understand how the cultural history you are studying fits into the larger picture.

By following these steps, you can create a compelling and insightful cultural history that sheds light on the past and helps us understand the present.

UF Policies & Additional UF Information

Class attendance/make-up exams and other work Policy:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. See UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Policy on Accommodations for students with disabilities:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the “Get Started With the DRC” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site: <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/> It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

University grades and grading policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Gator Evals:

Online course evaluation process. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/> Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/> Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>

Class behavior and demeanor:

It is expected that you refrain from using cell phones unless it is applicable to class. All students are expected to help create an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning for all participants. Behavior that disrupts teaching and learning is unacceptable; accordingly, interactions should be civilized, respectful, and relevant to the topic. Diverse opinions and engaging argumentation are critical to the higher learning endeavor, but inappropriate behavior that disrespects others or inhibits others from learning may result in sanctions, including but not limited to the removal from the classroom and/or the course.

The University’s honesty policy:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website for more information.

Class Recordings:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal education use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Campus Resources:

Health and Wellness U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources:

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392- 1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call 866-281-6309 or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.

Teaching Center: 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420.

General study skills and tutoring:

Writing Studio: Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information. Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.