

Writing Prompts from class:

This document will be continually updated after classes.

Week 1:

- Design your own utopia:
 - Part 1: Make a list of abstract (i.e. “equality”) and concrete (i.e. magical llamas) features of your ideal utopia—brainstorm as many as you can think of. They may be real or fantastical or both.
 - Part 2: Create a character that exists in this utopia and write a detailed description of their typical day.
 - Part 3: Something goes awry; something in the utopia is not what it seems—perhaps it’s fake; or there’s a secret, cynical cost behind it; or it malfunctions; or someone malicious manipulates it for their own agenda....write the scene where this deviance interrupts your character’s day.

Week 2:

- The apocalypse is coming. Create a character who is charged with designing a colony to preserve the best of civilization/society: what do they identify as the most important priorities to keep? Why? Explore the backstory of your character that explains some personal connection or value that leads them to make the choices they do in deciding what’s important to preserve.
- Plot twist: Human Beings are actually A.I. Whoever made us is in trouble with their boss now for messing up big time. Write the scene—with dialogue. (Or maybe a group chat that accidentally added a big time journalist . . .)

Week 3:

- Imagine what happens to the ones who walk away from Omelas. Where do they go? What is it like? What do they do?

Week 4:

- Your utopia has a catch...what is it?
- Take a line from Jemison’s story as a prompt for your own.

Week 5:

- Consider dystopian aspects of current events in the world. Choose one and take it to its extreme for a more complete dystopian scenario. For example, the return of old diseases due to people forgoing vaccines.

Week 6:

- Choose something normal and familiar to you in daily life (such as an object or activity) and write about it from the perspective of an outsider trying to make sense of it without the full context and with their own biases of understanding. The “outsider” could be someone from another culture, real or imagined, someone from one of the

utopian/dystopian worlds you've created, someone from the future, or an alien species from another planet.

Week 7:

- Write a prompt inspired by your independent reading and put it in a shared bucket. We will then draw prompts from others. Collected prompts are as follows:
 - Would you take care of a doll who had human emotions?
 - You see color for the first time; who are you, and what's your reaction?
 - The character never has a second truly alone. You are under the harshest conditions. How would your character survive?
 - Would you visit Golden Valley based off the name?
 - What if you were trapped on an island with your celebrity crush?
 - The life on Earth is all but dead and ash pollutes the sky and blacks out the sun...do something with that.
 - Imagine a dystopia/utopia detached from our present time. Think thousands of years in the past or future; what might it look like?
 - What if the protagonist believes in Nihilism and their life is integrated with instability in any form—for example an unstable legal system—and the protagonist is insouciant.
 - What if you were stuck abandoned—what would you sacrifice to live and how would you live?
 - If you were dropped into a Hunger Games scenario, what would be the top item you'd grab? Assume clean/safe food and water will be abundant.
 - You wake up one day in a world where no one knows who they are . . .