Utopia Reconsidered, 100 years after Weimar  
Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, Yale University  
Graduate Student Conference  
feat. a keynote seminar on Ernst Jünger’s The Worker with Matthias Rothe, UMN  
February 15-16, 2019

The Weimar Republic was a significant locus for utopian thought—in philosophy, architecture, art, and literature. In *The Spirit of Utopia*, published in 1918, Ernst Bloch condemned the generation of Germans that led the country into World War I, and declared that the only path forward was as yet uncharted: “we [will] cut new, metaphysically constitutive paths, summon what is not, build into the blue, and build ourselves into the blue, and there seek the true, the real.” Some forty years later, Theodor Adorno credited Bloch’s early work with “restoring honor to the word ‘utopia,’” yet Adorno, Bloch, and others were equally attuned to the dark side of utopian thinking, which had produced the Third Reich.

100 years after Weimar, we find ourselves in a place where it seems both impossible and urgent to chart new paths forward by harnessing as well as critiquing the utopian impulse. This graduate student conference will reexamine the energetic utopianism of the Weimar Republic and discuss its influence on utopian thought, literature, and art in the later 20th century. What are the conditions under which utopias emerge? What distinguishes utopias of the left from utopias of the right? How do utopias lay claim to historical legacy? What does it mean to think and act in terms of utopia? Do utopias produce something truly novel, or are they limited to a critique of the present moment? How do utopias live on?

Submissions may consider topics including but not limited to:

- Utopian thought, literature, art, architecture, and film from the Weimar period
- Weimar as a lost utopia/dystopia
- Marxist and Frankfurt School theories of utopia
- Utopianism in activism, protest, terrorism, and counterculture
- Surrealist utopias
- Utopias of the right (dystopias of the left)
- Soviet and socialist utopias
- Utopias in space and utopias in time
- Utopia as science fiction
- Religion, modern mysticism, and utopia

Literary analyses, theoretical exposes, and historical and cultural studies are welcome. We invite applicants from a wide range of disciplines, including literature, philosophy, political theory, history, religion, film studies, art history, and architecture. Interested participants should submit a short bio and 300-word abstract for a 20-minute presentation to weimarutopias@gmail.com by December 15, 2018.