



Smolbny
BEYOND BORDERS

**Utopian
Economic
Thinking**

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300, *In English, Wed, 14.30 – 17.40*

*Fields: Economic and Political Thought
Literature, History, Philosophy*

“a map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing ... Progress is the realisation of utopias.” (Wilde)

“The twentieth century began with a futuristic utopia and ended with nostalgia” (Boym)

ABSTRACT

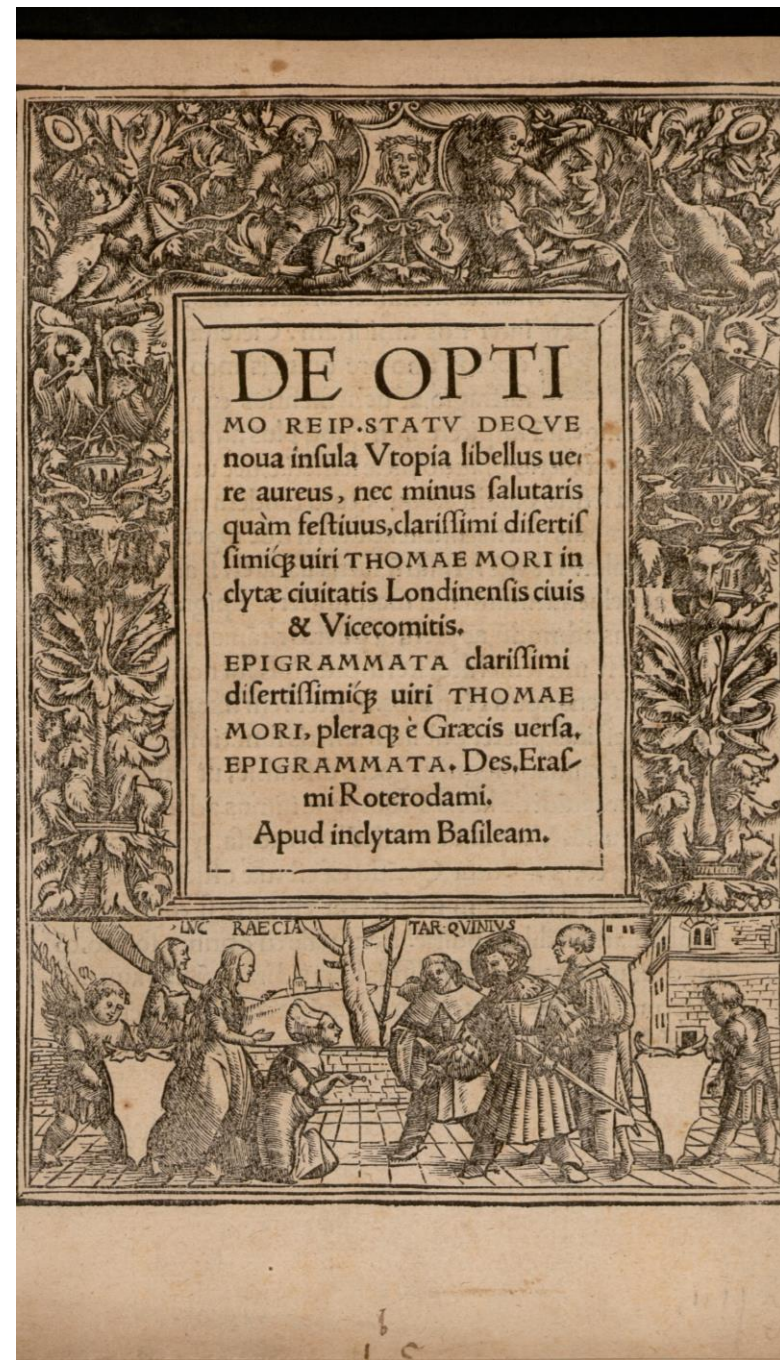
Utopia as a distinctive genre of writing describes the ideal society – a "place of nowhere." In economic thinking, "utopian" often carries a pejorative connotation. The purpose of this course is to explore the contexts in which economic theories, such as free-market capitalism or scientific socialism, become utopian and, conversely, how utopian visions can influence the improvement of social and economic institutions, including production, consumption, and redistribution. Classic utopian literature still holds significant potential.

The course will focus on key texts such as Plato's *Republic*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis*, various treatises by Charles Fourier, and others. Special attention will be given to Enlightenment Utopias (e.g., Alexander Radishchev), Soviet utopias (e.g., Kazimir Malevich and Alexander Chayanov), and more contemporary projects.

At a time when capitalism struggles with challenges like inequality, climate change, and political instability, and as the hopes for socialism seem to fade with the collapse of the USSR, the search for a new utopia becomes increasingly relevant. This course will serve as a laboratory for that search.

Main questions

- What could be valuable in Utopias for economic vision and thinking while in literature the form was always doubtful and the political status was often ambiguous?
- In what spaces (cities, enclaves, islands, planets) could a better ideal society be built?
- What is the potential of constant negation, criticism of reality for the progress?
- What are the boundaries and intersection of Utopia with dystopia, reality and science?
- What are the ideal economic institutions in terms of human collectivity and organization, property, consumption, money and labor?



What we read and learn?

- Classical texts of Thomac More, Francis Bacon, Plato
- Utopia in Political Economy of Adam Smith and Karl Marx
- Enlightenment and Utopia (Radishchev)
- Utopia and Socialism (Fourier)
- Avangarde and Futurism of the beginning of XXth century, the most Utopian time (Lafargue, Chayanov, Malevich, Keynes)
- Intentional communities
- Dystopia and Retrotopia
- Economic Utopian Thinking revisited: Universal Basic Income, Open Borders, Flexible Citizenship, 15-hours workweek, zero growth sustainable development

How we study Utopian?

HET, HPT, Cambridge school

Mannheim, Foucault, Hodgson and for example Jameson:

PROGRAM

- *TEXT SPACE (THE CITY)*
- *REVOLUTIONARY PRAXIS*
- *INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY*

IMPULSE

- *POLITICAL and ECONOMIC THEORY (REFORM)*
- *THE INDIVIDUAL BUILDING*
- *BODY, TIME, COLLECTIVITY*
- *INSTITUTIONS, PROPERTY LABOR, MONEY*

Jameson, 2005 (modified)



Café *Utopia* in Bordeaux

- Our course as a Lab for new economic Utopia, the only(?) way out.