

Dystopian Literature Independent Reading List

April/May 2012 ~ Humanities 6

* indicates book is available in the PJA library

** after the title indicates challenging read and/or mature content

Descriptions are a compilation of information taken from Amazon.com and personal recommendations.

Blacker, Terence. *The Angel Factory

In this riveting futuristic tale, Blacker masterfully constructs an intriguing world that bears an eerie resemblance to the here and now. Thomas Wisdom, a model son, breaks into a secret computer file and discovers that his whole life is a lie. His all-too-perfect mother and father are not his real parents, nor are they CIA agents. They are angels sent to earth on a mission to save the planet from destruction. In order to accomplish their goal, they need Thomas's cooperation.

Bordeen, S.A. *The Compound*

Eli and his family have lived in the underground Compound for six years. The world they knew is gone, and they've become accustomed to their new life. Accustomed, but not happy.. As problems with their carefully planned existence threaten to destroy their sanctuary—and their sanity—Eli can't help but wonder if he'd rather take his chances outside. Eli's father built the Compound to keep them safe. But are they safe—really?

Christopher, John. *The White Mountains (or any in the Tripod Trilogy)

Long ago the Tripods, gigantic three-legged machines, descended upon Earth and took control. They used "Caps," administered ceremoniously near each child's 14th birthday, to control humans' brains and keep them docile. In this powerful and suspenseful series, 13-year-old Will Parker and his friends deal with hunger, humanity, envy, and pride as they struggle to find out all they can about the Tripods and overthrow their rule.

Clayton, Emma. *The Roar*

In a bleak future, humans use terrible chemicals to fight The Animal Plague that causes all of the world's animals to go rabid and renders most of the planet uninhabitable. The population now cowers in overcrowded walled cities. Mika, 12, and his parents live in London in terrible conditions. Mystery shrouds the existence of Mika's missing twin, Ellie.

Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games (or any in this series)**

In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. Long ago the districts waged war on the Capitol and were defeated. As part of the surrender terms, each district agreed to send one boy and one girl to appear in an annual televised event called, "The Hunger Games," a fight to the death.

Condie, Ally. *Matched (or any in this series)*

For Cassia, nothing is left to chance--not what she will eat, the job she will have, or the man she will marry. The Society Officials have determined optimal outcomes for all aspects of daily life, thereby removing the "burden" of choice. When her ideal marriage match is identified, a mistake is made. This sets Cassia on a dangerous path to the unthinkable--rebellling against the predetermined life her society has in store for her.

Cormier, Robert. *I Am the Cheese

Imagine discovering that your whole life has been a fiction, your identity altered, and a new family history created. Suddenly nothing is as it once seemed; you can trust no one, maybe not even yourself. It is exactly this revelation that turns 14-year-old Adam Farmer's life upside down. As he tries to ascertain who he really is, Adam encounters a past, present, and future too horrible to contemplate.

Dashner, James. *The Maze Runner (or any in this series)*

Thomas wakes up in an elevator, remembering nothing but his own name. He emerges into a world of about 60 teen boys who have learned to survive in a completely enclosed environment, subsisting on their own agriculture and supplies from below. A new boy arrives every 30 days. They have begun to give up hope. Then a comatose girl arrives with a strange note, and their world begins to change.

DeVita, James. *The Silenced*

In a world filled with sanctions and restrictions, Marena struggles to remember the past: a time before the Zero Tolerance Party murdered her mother and put her father under house arrest. A time before they installed listening devices in every home and forbade citizens to read or write. A time when she was free. In the spirit of her revolutionary mother, Marena forms her own resistance group—the White Rose.

DuPrau, Jeanne. *The City of Embers (or any in this series)

It is always night in the city of Ember. The only light during the regular twelve hours of "day" comes from flood lamps. Beyond are the pitch-black Unknown Regions, which no one has ever explored. Among the many things the people of Ember have forgotten is their past and a direction for their future. What will happen when the generator finally fails?

Farmer, Nancy. *The Ear, the Eye, the Arm

The year is 2174. The place is Zimbabwe, Africa. Three adventurous children escape their parents' heavily guarded mansion to explore the dangerous world outside. They are pursued by the Ear, the Eye and the Arm, detectives hired by the children's parents. The worst danger of all lies at the top of the Mile High MacIlwaine, a hotel so tall that it sways like a tree in the wind, for up there are not merely humans, but spirits whose aim is to devour the souls of Zimbabwe.

Farmer, Nancy. *House of the Scorpion

Matteo Alacrán was not born; he was harvested. His DNA came from El Patrón, lord of a country called Opium--an area that was once called Mexico. Matt's first cell split and divided inside a petri dish. Then he was placed in the womb of a cow, where he continued the miraculous journey from embryo to fetus to baby. He is a boy now, but most consider him a monster--except for El Patrón. As Matt struggles to understand his existence, he is threatened by a sinister cast of characters. Escape is the only chance he has to survive.

Gooble, Beth. *Flux*

Nellie is a 12-year-old orphan living in a shack in the Outbacks of a nameless dystopian world. Motivated by hunger, she makes forays into the city, trying to avoid the Skulls, a predatory male gang. She has learned how to travel between levels of reality by stepping through hidden gates, a discovery that leads her on a quest for the truth about her mother.

Goodman, Allegra. *The Other Side of the Island*

Honor and her parents have been forcibly relocated to a seaside shack, the most dangerous living facility in this future world where the Corporation, headed by the mysterious Earth Mother, has created a totally controlled society. Honor's parents refuse to conform. Honor suffers from being different, but when she meets Helix, a boy whose parents are also intent on rebelling against the Corporation, the two children join together in a daring rescue.

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *Among the Hidden (or any in this series)

Luke is one of the shadow children, a third child forbidden by the Population Police. He's lived his entire life in hiding. Then, one day Luke sees a girl's face in the window of a house where he knows two other children already live. Finally, he's met a shadow child like himself. Jen is willing to risk everything to come out of the shadows -- does Luke dare to become involved?

Huxley, Aldus. *Brave New World**

"Community, Identity, Stability" is the motto of the World State. Here everyone consumes daily grams of soma to fight depression and babies are born in laboratories. Though there is no violence and everyone is provided for, Bernard Marx feels something is missing.

Lloyd, Saci. *The Carbon Diaries 2015 (or any in this series)

It's the year 2015, a time when global warming has begun to ravage the environment. In response, the United Kingdom becomes the first country to mandate carbon rationing--a well-intentioned plan that goes tragically awry. This story of one girl's attempt to stay grounded in a world where disaster has become the norm is told in short diary entries.

Lowry, Lois. *Gathering Blue

Having suffered numerous unnamed disasters, civilization has regressed to a primitive, technology-free state. Kira, a crippled young weaver, has been raised and taught her craft by her mother. When her mother dies, Kira fears that she will be cast out of the village. Instead, the society's Council of Guardians installs her as caretaker of a precious ceremonial garment.

Lowry, Lois. *Messenger

Strange changes are taking place in Village. Once a utopian community that prided itself on its welcome to new strangers, Village will soon be closed to all outsiders. As one of the few people able to travel through the dangerous Forest, Matty must deliver the message of Village's closing and try to convince Seer's daughter to return with him before it's too late.

Malley, Gemma. *The Declaration*

In the year 2140, it is illegal to be young. Children are all but extinct. Sign the Declaration, agree not to have children and you too can live forever. Refuse, and you will live as an outcast. For the children born outside the law, it only gets worse – Surplus status. Not everyone thinks Longevity is a good thing. Surplus Anna is about to find out what happens when you can't decide if you should cheat the law or cheat death.

O'Brien, Caragh. *Birthmarked (or any in this series)*

In the future, in a world baked dry by the harsh sun, there are those who live inside the wall and those, like sixteen-year-old midwife, Gaia Stone, who live outside. Gaia has always believed it is her duty, with her mother, to hand over a small quota of babies to the Enclave. But when Gaia's mother and father are arrested by the very people they so dutifully serve, Gaia is forced to question everything she has been taught to believe.

Orwell, George. *1984***

The novel is set in an imaginary future world that is dominated by three perpetually warring totalitarian police states. The book's hero, Winston Smith, is a minor party functionary in one of these states. His longing for truth and decency leads him to secretly rebel against the government.

Pfeffer, Susan Beth. *Life As We Knew It (or any in this series)*

High school sophomore Miranda's life turns fearful in a split second when an asteroid knocks the moon closer to Earth. The result is catastrophic. How can her family prepare for the future when worldwide tsunamis are wiping out the coasts, earthquakes are rocking the continents, and volcanic ash is blocking out the sun? Told in a year's worth of journal entries, this heart-pounding story chronicles Miranda's struggle to hold on to the most important resource of all—hope—in an increasingly desperate and unfamiliar world.

Philbrick, Rodman. *The Last Book in the Universe

It's the story of an epileptic teenager nicknamed Spaz, who begins the heroic fight to bring human intelligence back to the planet. In a world where most people are plugged into brain-drain entertainment systems, Spaz is the rare human being who can see life as it really is. When he meets an old man called Ryter, he begins to learn about Earth and its past.

Reeve, Philip. *Fever Crumb*

Fever Crumb is a girl who has been adopted and raised by Dr. Crumb, a member of the order of Engineers, where she serves as apprentice. Soon though, she must say goodbye to Dr. Crumb—nearly the only person she's ever known—to assist archeologist Kit Solent on a top-secret project. As her work begins, Fever is plagued by memories that are not her own and Kit seems to have a particular interest in finding out what they are.

Shusterman, Neil. *Unwind*

In America after the Second Civil War, the Pro-Choice and Pro-Life armies came to an agreement: The Bill of Life states that human life may not be touched from the moment of conception until a child reaches the age of thirteen. Between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, however, a parent may choose to retroactively get rid of a child through a process called "unwinding." Unwinding ensures that the child's life doesn't "technically" end by transplanting all the organs in the child's body to various recipients. Now a common and accepted practice in society, troublesome or unwanted teens are able to easily be unwound. With breath-taking suspense, this book follows three teens who all become runaway Unwinds.

Sedgwick, Marcus. *Floodland*

Global warming has caused the sea to rise until cities are turning into islands and civilization is crumbling. Ten-year-old Zoe discovers a small rowboat and keeps it a secret until she sets out alone on the great sea to find her parents. She lands on tiny Eels Island, where she must survive in a nightmarish world run by wild children.

Skurzynski, Gloria. *Virtual War

Fourteen-year-old Corgan was genetically engineered to be the fastest player on any electronic playing field. Every second counts, too, because Corgan is preparing for the big war: a bloodless, electronic battle to be waged against other doomed worlds. Always mindful of the Council's orders, Corgan has trained his whole life for this war, but--on the eve of the battle--he decides to break the rules for the first time.

Sleator, William. *House of Stairs*One by one, five sixteen-year-old orphans are brought to a strange building. It is not a prison, not a hospital; it has no walls, no ceiling, no floor. Nothing but endless flights of stairs leading nowhere except back to a strange red machine. The five must learn to love the machine and let it rule their lives. But will they let it kill their souls? This chilling, suspenseful indictment of mind control is a classic of science fiction and will haunt readers long after the last page is turned.

Stahler, David. *True Sight (or any in this series)*

On a frontier world is a colony called Harmony. Like everyone who lives there, Jacob is blind. This is a future where genetic engineering has taken a startling turn. On a distant planet, one remarkable young man will discover just how much there is to see -- if only he is willing to look.

Walsh, Jill Patton. *The Green Book*

Pattie, as the youngest member of the group, is given the honor of naming the new settlement. Refugees from the dying planet Earth, they, along with other ships, have been sent into space in the hope that some of them will survive to continue the human race. But the success of Shine remains doubtful as crops fail and provisions brought from Earth dwindle. It isn't until Pattie and her sister Sarah make an important discovery that survival becomes a certainty.

Wells, H. G. *The Time Machine**

In the heart of Victorian England, an inquisitive gentleman known only as the Time Traveler constructs an elaborate invention that hurtles him hundreds of thousands of years into the future. There he finds himself in the violent center of the ultimate conflict between beings of light and creatures of darkness.

Westerfeld, Scott. *The Uglies (or any in this series)

In a future world in which a compulsory operation at sixteen wipes out physical differences and makes everyone pretty by conforming to an ideal standard of beauty, Tally Youngblood is one of the most daring of the Uglies, and her imaginative tricks get her in trouble with the menacing department of Special Circumstances.