

FILM 237 Film Philosophy

DePaul University, Autumn 2020/21 (September 9 - November 24, 2020)

Section 410, Online

Instruction Method: Asynchronous D2L, including VoiceThread (interactive lecture) and Panopto (video recording of lecture and movie clips). Student capabilities for reading and submitting pdf format documents is required. For drop deadlines visit: <https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. on Zoom.

Date of this syllabus' last update: September 1, 2020

Summary of the course

An introduction to philosophy using film as a lens through which philosophical ideas are examined. In discussion or writing students will analyze narrative or documentary films (classic or contemporary) on enduring philosophical questions, such as: what is truth, what is right, what is the meaning of life? (For Sections 410 and 412 all films are fictional narratives.)

Prerequisites

No previous knowledge of computers or philosophy is assumed, or necessary.

Textbooks

Required: Christopher Falzon, *Philosophy Goes to the Movies* (Routledge, 2015), 978-0-415-53816-9.

Online at D2L: Mary Litch and Amy Karofsky, excerpts from chapters of *Philosophy through Film* (Routledge, 2015), uploaded to D2L as a single file. There are also excerpts of philosophical writing by historically important philosophers of Western philosophy.

PID Learning Domain Description & Learning Outcomes

PI Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to address, critically think about, and analyze philosophical questions and problems.
2. Students will be able to evaluate philosophical questions, issues and/or problems using informed judgment.
3. Students will be able to analyze and interpret the methods used by philosophers in addressing philosophical questions, issues, and/or problems.
4. Students will be able to engage with philosophical topics and figures in their historical context.
5. Students will develop these skills through weekly reading and viewing assignments as well as online discussion.
6. Students will be able to write an analytic essay treating a philosophical question, issue and/or problem that forwards an identifiable thesis, argument, and conclusion.

PID Writing Expectations

Students will be expected to complete a minimum of 10 pages of writing for this course. This writing may take the form of essays, response papers, journal entries, take-home essay exams, critical analyses, etc. (For Sections 410 and 412 there are three short papers and online written discussion.)

Assignments and Grading

45 points – Three short papers, 15 points each. Each paper is at least 3 but no longer than 4 pages when double-spaced and using 12-point font. Each paper must be uploaded to D2L as a pdf file before its deadline (see deadlines below).

30 points – Ten 3-question quizzes, 1 for each module. Each quiz must be taken within the week of its module. There is a time-limit of about 10 minutes, but a quiz may be taken a second time.

25 points – Participation. Students are required to post their thoughts and/or questions into a discussion thread located on the D2L website for the course. The instructor will provide several prompts, but students are encouraged to post thoughts without a prompt. Please prepare for discussion as you would prepare for in-class meetings.

Grading Scale

A 93–100	B+ 87–89	C+ 77–79	D+ 67–69
A- 90–92	B 83–86	C 73–76	D 60–66
	B- 80–82	C- 70–72	F 0–59

Module 1

Movie: *Total Recall*

Reading: Falzon, 3- 5 (Introduction); 29 - 40 (ch. 1, Plato's cave and Descartes); Litch and Karofsky upload, ch. 2: Skepticism; René Descartes, the first of the *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Module 2

Movie: *Inception*

Reading: Falzon, 40 - 54 (ch. 1 cont., not essential but highly recommended)

Module 3

Movies: *The Seventh Seal* and *The Virgin Spring*

Reading: Litch and Karofsky upload, ch. 8: The Problem of Evil; David Hume, excerpts from sections IX - XI of the *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*

Module 4

Movie: *I, Robot*

Reading: Litch and Karofsky, excerpt of ch. 4 on Artificial Intelligence; Descartes, second meditation of the *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Module 5

Movie: *Crimes and Misdemeanors*

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Reading: Falzon, 121 - 141 (ch. 3, the Ring of Gyges, virtue ethics, Aristotle, and epicureanism)

Module 6

Movie: *Gone Baby Gone*

Reading: Falzon, 149 - 156 (ch. 3, Kant); Immanuel Kant, excerpts from chapters 1 and II of *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*; John Stuart Mill, excerpt from chapter II of *Utilitarianism*

Module 7

Movies: *The Return of Martin Guerre* and *Being John Malkovich*

Reading: John Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*

Module 8

Movie: *Memento*

Reading: John Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*, continued

Module 9

Movie: *Hilary and Jackie* and *Breaking the Waves*

Reading: Falzon, 166 - 177 (ch. 3, existentialism); Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism," and Zygmunt Bauman, excerpt from ch. 2 ("The Solitude of the Moral Subject") from *Postmodern Ethics*

Module 10

Movie: *Minority Report*

No reading assignment

Deadlines

Paper 1: Friday, October 2, upload to Submissions in D2L by midnight

Paper 2: Friday, October 23, upload by midnight as above

Paper 3: Friday, November 13, upload as above

NOTE: There is no final exam in this course.

Desire2Learn (D2L) quizzes:

Quiz 1: Availability ends 8:00 a.m., Saturday, September 19

Quiz 2: Availability ends 8:00 a.m., Saturday, September 26

Quiz 3: Availability ends 8:00 a.m., Saturday, October 3

Quiz 4: Availability ends 8:00 a.m., Saturday, October 10

Quiz 5: Availability ends 8:00 a.m., Saturday, October 17

Quiz 6: Availability ends 8:00 a.m., Saturday, October 24

Quiz 7: Availability ends 8:00 a.m., Saturday, October 31

Quiz 8: Availability ends 8:00 a.m., Saturday, November 7

Quiz 9: Availability ends 8:00 a.m., Saturday, November 14

Quiz 10: Availability ends 8:00 a.m., Saturday, November 21

Online Classroom Policies

Students are expected to participate in each module's activities and encouraged to ask questions or offer comments relevant to the topic. Participation allows the instructor to hear

the student's voice when grading papers. Sometimes online discussion is used to prepare a student to write. Students must keep up with reading assignments and watch assigned movies prior to participating in discussion. This ensures that comments and questions are focused toward the course learning objectives. DePaul University is a community that thrives on open discourse that challenges students both intellectually and personally to be socially responsible leaders. It is expected that all dialogue in this course is civil and respectful of the dignity of other students. In the event of difficulties the professor will partner with the Dean of Students Office to assist in managing such issues.

Religious Observations & School Activities

Please let your professor know in advance by email if you will be absent or need extensions on assignments due to religious observations or official school activities such as athletic competitions.

Resources for Students with Disabilities

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately, during office hours, to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. A student may also contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, csd@depaul.edu, Student Center, LPC, Suite #370. Phone number: (773) 325.1677; Fax: (773) 325.3720; TTY: (773) 325.7296. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter.

Academic Policies/Absences

All students are required to manage their class schedules each term in accordance with the deadlines for enrolling and withdrawing as indicated in the [University Academic Calendar](#). Information on enrollment, withdrawal, grading and incompletes can be found at: <https://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Enrollment-Policies.aspx>. In the case of illness, or other excused absences, a student may contact the Dean of Students to request a formally approved absence from online participation. Upon receipt of this documentation, the dean's office will notify all instructors who have the student in a class that an approved absence has been granted. The notification that is sent out will maintain student privacy by not including the reasons for the absence. Contact information may be found at: <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/dos/contactus.html>.

Incomplete and Pass/D/Fail Grades

A grade of incomplete is given at the end of the quarter only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family or a serious illness. Any such reason must be documented. A request for an incomplete must be made at least two weeks prior to Finals (the week of November 15 - 21) and approved by the Dean of the College of Computing and Digital Media. Contact your instructor if you are considering requesting an incomplete. A student enrolled in courses belonging to the Cinema program during the Autumn term of the 2020-21 year may request that their final grade be assessed using the Pass/D/Fail option.

Academic Integrity Policy

This course will be subject to the faculty council rules on the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) web site. All work submitted by a student must be the student's own. Any online quiz must be taken by the student alone.

[Plagiarism](#)

The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course, as well as all other courses in which independent research or writing play a vital part in the course requirements should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report, or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

[Online Course Evaluations](#)

Evaluations are a way for students to provide valuable feedback regarding their instructor and the course. Detailed feedback will enable the instructor to continuously tailor teaching methods and course content to meet the learning goals of the course and the academic needs of the students. They are a requirement of the course and are key to providing you with the highest quality of teaching. The evaluations are anonymous; the instructor and administration do not track who entered what responses. A program is used to check if the student completed the evaluations, but the evaluation is separate from the student's identity. Since 100% participation is our goal, students are sent periodic reminders over three weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online in [Campus Connect](#).