

FILM 237 Film Philosophy

DePaul University, Autumn 2021/22

Section 410 asynchronous online (D2L shared with Section 401, an in-classroom section)

Bernard Roddy, PhD, MFA

Email: broddy@depaul.edu; email messages will be answered within 24 hr.

Office Hours: Mon., CDM 635, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. and on Zoom, Wed., 11 - 12 noon

Date of this syllabus' last update: Aug. 23, 2021

Instructional Method

Lecture, in classroom and as Coltube recordings available at D2L. All students will have to visit D2L every week, take quizzes, post comments and upload writing. Required movies are available at Panopto and Coltube and will be linked to our D2L. Please adhere to standards of good English both in submissions and in written discussion on D2L.

Summary of Course

An introduction to philosophy using film as a lens through which philosophical ideas are examined. In discussion or written work students analyze narrative or documentary films (classic or contemporary) by engaging with enduring, philosophical questions, such as: What does it mean to know something, what is the significance of evil in the world, what is the morally right thing to do, and are human beings free?

Prerequisites

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

Textbooks

Online at D2L: Pdf files from Christopher Falzon, *Philosophy Goes to the Movies* (Routledge, 2015); and from Mary Litch and Amy Karofsky, *Philosophy through Film* (Routledge, 2015), have been uploaded to D2L site in each module. There are also excerpts from philosophical writing by historically important philosophers. No purchase of a textbook is required. Reading assignments will all refer to pdf files on D2L.

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.

Graded Materials

20 points – 10 Quizzes, multiple choice, 2 points each.

20 points – 10 type-written responses to Study Questions, 2 questions per module. An answer runs a third to half a page. Responses must be saved as a pdf file and uploaded into the appropriate Submissions folder by the deadline (Saturday midnight).

20 points – Midterm exam (Oct. 7 - 13). Short hand-written essays selecting 3 or 4 questions out of a choice of 5 or 6. Poor answers are written too quickly without preparation. Three or four strong answers will require an hour and studying ahead of time.

20 points – Final exam (Nov. 18 - 24). Short hand-written essays selecting 3 or 4 questions out of a choice of 5 or 6. See Midterm remarks. The final is not cumulative.

20 points - Discussion. For each module there are 2 points available for discussion. Depending on the section, these can be earned during classroom meetings or in posted comments on D2L discussion threads. Written discussion is recommended for all students but required only for those enrolled in an asynchronous section.

Grade Conversion Scale

A 94–100	B+ 87–89	C+ 77–79	D+ 67–69
A- 90–93	B 84–86	C 74–76	D 60–66
	B- 80–83	C- 70–73	F 0–59

Module 1

Movie: *Total Recall*

Reading: Falzon, 3- 5 (Introduction); 29 - 37 (ch. 1, Plato's cave and Descartes); René Descartes, the first of the *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Module 2

Movie: *Inception*

Reading: Falzon, 37 - 45; Litch and Karofsky upload, Ch. 2: Skepticism; Descartes' second meditation

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: Artificial Intelligence; Descartes' second meditation; Falzon, 234 - 240

Module 5

Movie: *Crimes and Misdemeanors*

Reading: Falzon, 121 - 137 (ch. 3, the ring of Gyges, virtue ethics, Aristotle, and Epicureanism); **Midterm Exam**: Oct. 11 - 14, testing center

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*, first two nights; Søren Kierkegaard, *Sickness Unto Death* excerpt

Module 8

Movie: *Memento*

Reading: John Perry, *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*, third night; Henri Bergson, excerpts from *Matter and Memory* and *Creative Evolution*

Module 9

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

Reading: Falzon, 166 - 173; Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism," and Zygmunt Bauman, "The Solitude of the Moral Subject," from *Postmodern Ethics*

Module 10

Movie: *Minority Report* (No reading assignment); **Final**: Mon., Nov. 22, 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

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 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/Student-Resources/Pages/Grading-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, but

contact your instructor early for guidance. A request for an incomplete must be made at least two weeks prior to Finals Week (November 18 - 24, 2021) and approved by the Dean of the College of Computing and Digital Media. Contact your instructor if you are considering requesting an incomplete.

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.