

FILM 237 Film Philosophy

DePaul University, Winter 2022 - 2023, Jan. 2 - Mar. 19, 2023

Section 801: Thursday, 6:00 p.m. - 9:15 p.m. (Section 810 is asynchronous online)

Student Center 330, Lincoln Park Campus

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Office Hours: Monday, 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., location to be announced

Date of this syllabus' last update: Jan. 7, 2023

Instructional Method

Lecture, in classroom and as Coltube recordings available at D2L. All students will have to visit D2L every week, 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: Reading assignments include excerpts from historically important philosophical texts (Descartes, Hume, Kant, Bergson) as well as a couple from contemporary philosophy (Searle, Perry). There are also a couple assignments from Christopher Falzon, *Philosophy Goes to the Movies* (Routledge, 2015) using files uploaded onto 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

Discussion: 25 points

Paper 1: 25 points due Sat., Jan. 28 (end of module 4, topic of skepticism)

Paper 2: 25 points due Sat., Feb. 18 (end of module 7, topic of mind)

Paper 3: 25 points due Sat., Mar. 11 (end of module 10, topic of free will)

A paper runs 3 - 4 pages, double-spaced and in 12-point font. These are not research papers. Writing requires careful study only of assigned readings.

There is no final in this class.

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

Academic Calendar 2021-2022: <https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx>

Module 1

Movie: *The Truman Show*

Reading: René Descartes, the first of the *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Module 2

Movie: *Inception*

Reading: Descartes' second meditation; Christopher Falzon, *Philosophy Goes to the Movies*, 29 - 45

Module 3

Movies: *The Seventh Seal*

Reading: David Hume, excerpts from sections IX - XI of the *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Mon., Jan. 16, DePaul University Closed)

Module 4

Movie: *Ex Machina*

Reading: Descartes' second meditation; John Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs"

Module 5

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, excerpt from *Sickness Unto Death*

Module 6

Movie: *Memento* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

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

Module 7

Movie: *Crimes and Misdemeanors*

Reading: Falzon, 121 - 137 (ch. 3, the ring of Gyges, virtue ethics, Aristotle, and Epicureanism)

Module 8

Movie: *Gone Baby Gone*

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

Module 9

Movie: *Breaking the Waves*

Reading: Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism"

Module 10

Movie: *Minority Report*

Reading: Bergson, excerpts from *Time and Free Will*

Covid-19 Health and Safety Precautions

Students, faculty and staff are expected to (1) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (2) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions policy; (3) stay home if sick; (4) participate in any required COVID-19 testing. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with a requirement should register with DePaul's Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

Respect for Diversity and Inclusion

At DePaul our mission calls on us to explore "what must be done" in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We thrive on diversity because it is central to what we refer to as our Vincentian values. Faculty at DePaul see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning. In my courses I strive to include a diversity of philosophical perspectives, films, and pedagogies. I encourage open dialogue and the space needed for students to express their unique identities and perspectives on ideas raised in the course. I am open to having difficult conversations and will strive to create an inclusive classroom environment that values all perspectives. If at any time the classroom experience does not live up to your expectations for such diversity, please feel free to contact me via email or during office hours.

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. 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.

Sexual and Relationship Violence

Classroom relationships are based on trust and communication. Material raised in class may bring up issues for students related to sexual and relationship violence. Faculty are required to report information students give about sexual or relationship violence among students. However, disclosing information about sexual violence during discussion or in course work will not initiate the process of reporting it to DePaul University. A student who would like to report such violence should contact public safety (773 325-7777 on Lincoln Park Campus; 312 362-8400 on Loop Campus). More information is available at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/hpw/shvp.html>.

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 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. Each submission of written work must be exclusively the student's own effort. This means that any consultation with another person over written work has to be about a document the student is taking full responsibility for.

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.

School of Cinematic Arts (SCA) Production Office

The Production office is located in lower level of Daley Building and at the email address, production@cdm.depaul.edu. The office is an essential resource for DePaul student filmmakers. The office can answer general questions about filming inside or outside of DePaul University property, use of SCA facilities and equipment, and issues concerning casting, insurance, crew calls, etc. Office hours are listed on the CDM Production Resources page [here](#).

SCA Central

Run by The Production Office, SCA Central is our online information hub. It is filled with resources, including the SCA Production Handbook, pre-production templates, waivers and contract forms, job listings, SCA events, local production news, internship opportunities, etc. Find it on D2L and make it your home page.

SCA Production Handbook

Required reading for all SCA Students prior to equipment/stage/studio reservations, The SCA Production Handbook is an invaluable resource to all DePaul student filmmakers.

Guidelines, policies, and procedures for filming at DePaul; using SCA facilities and equipment; and answers to questions regarding SCA resources and building contacts, are found inside. The handbook is updated regularly on [SCA Central](#).

Talent Waivers

Talent waivers must be signed by any outside talent (non-DePaul students) and submitted to The Production Office *prior* to camera rolling for any projects. Waivers and other commonly used forms can be found on [SCA Central](#) under "Info & Forms".

DePaul Production Insurance

DePaul production insurance **does not cover** the use of fire (including pyrotechnics and fireplaces), use of vehicles for shooting (moving or stationary), or animals of any kind and is therefore not permitted for SCA projects unless proof of personal production insurance is provided. Read more about DePaul's requirements via the SCA Production Handbook. Any questions about DePaul's insurance should be directed to The Production Office *well before* shooting begins (production@cdm.depaul.edu).

Use of Prop Weapons in Productions

Rules and regulations **MUST** be followed when using prop weapons, including firearms. The instructor must approve the appearance of a prop weapon in any student film, including class syllabus assignments. An approved/signed Prop Weapon Request Form must be submitted to the Production Office prior to filming (find it on [SCA Central](#) under "Info & Forms"). For safety purposes, The Production Office may also review the filmmaker's plan for transportation of prop firearms prior to receiving approval for use.

Always Be Careful during Shoots

Film and video production shoots can be hazardous. Above all, work safely in all situations and always think before you act. Please don't hesitate to ask faculty if you're unsure about anything regarding your shoot, in or out of class.

Changes to Syllabus

Although it is unlikely, this syllabus is subject to change. In the event of a change, students will be notified by means of D2L and email.