

# DC 227-301/310(online) Film Philosophy

TUESDAY 9:35 AM - 12:50 PM

**Location:** Student Center 330, Lincoln Park Campus

**Instructor:** James Syrek Email: Jsyrek@depaul.edu

**Office Hours:** Student Center 332, Tues 1-2:30 PM

## Course Description

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

Note: This is a SURVEY course using films to develop a base understanding of philosophy topics.

## Prerequisites

None

## Learning Domain Description

DC 227 Film Philosophy is included in the Liberal Studies program as a course with credit in the Philosophical Inquiry domain. Philosophical Inquiry examines the most basic questions of human existence. It considers the fundamental beliefs and convictions that shape what it means to be human, our relationships with others, and the nature of the world itself. Its aim is to develop our critical, imaginative, and analytical abilities, and it enables students to understand various kinds of important intellectual problems from a variety of perspectives and approaches, interpret and assess historical and contemporary texts concerned with these issues, and articulate reasoned judgments about these most basic concerns of human life. Philosophical inquiry is thus committed to the task of reflecting on the ideas and events that make up the cultures, societies, and traditions within which we live and to enhancing our understanding of their significance and complexity. Courses in Philosophical Inquiry support the mission of the Liberal Studies Program by fostering deeper understanding and appreciation of the worlds of meaning and of value and of the enterprise of intellectual inquiry and social dialogue.

## Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Address, critically think about, and analyze philosophical questions and problems.
- Evaluate philosophical questions, issues and/or problems using informed judgment.
- Analyze and interpret the methods used by philosophers in addressing philosophical questions, issues, and/or problems.
- Engage with philosophical topics and figures in their historical context.
- Confront and interpret primary texts from the philosophical tradition.
- Write an analytic essay treating a philosophical question, issue and/or problem that forwards an identifiable thesis, argument, and conclusion.

## How Learning Outcomes Will Be Met

1. Through the assignment of screenings of multiple films, students will be provided common texts from which they can **address, critically think about, and analyze philosophical questions and problems.**
2. Through the assignment of multiple response papers, students will **evaluate philosophical questions, issues and/or problems using informed judgment. In these papers, students will analyze and interpret the methods used by philosophers in addressing philosophical questions, issues, and/or problems.**
3. Through the assignment of readings from the required textbook, students will **engage with philosophical topics and figures in their historical context.**
4. Through the assignment of excerpts from primary texts, students will **confront and interpret primary texts from the philosophical tradition.**

## **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 response papers, the midterm and an outline for your final oral presentation. At least one assignment should involve revision, which may count (but only once, not twice) towards the 10-page minimum.

## **How Writing Expectations Will Be Met**

1. Students will type 1-2 weekly one-page response papers on assigned readings and films, based on discussion question prompts.
2. One response paper will be revised.
3. Students will type a one-page outline to accompany their final oral presentation.

\*Total pages written for the course is approximately 15 to 17 pages

## **Course Management System**

D2L

Class films can be found on COLTube

Lecture slides I present are not available to download but each class video can be re-watched online where you can see the slides if you need to review them.

## **Textbooks and Printed Resources**

Required: Litch, Mary. *Philosophy Through Film*. Routledge, 3rd edition, 2014.

## **Attendance (begins class #1)**

Class attendance is mandatory. One unexcused absence will be allowed without penalty. Every unexcused absence thereafter will result in a 5% deduction of your final grade.

If you are tardy more than 15 minutes, you are counted as absent. Two tardies of any length = 1 absence.

If there's an extenuating issue affecting your course attendance, it's your responsibility to contact the Dean's office with proper documentation to state your case. I do not excuse absences at the class-level.

Note: Late-registering students who happen to miss week 1 are still counted absent for week 1.

**ONLINE STUDENTS MUST EMAIL ME A CHECK-IN BY THE END OF WEEK 1 TO VERIFY SYLLABUS IS READ; STUDENTS WHO DO NOT CHECK IN WILL BE REPORTED TO DEPAUL**

## **Assignments**

LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. No makeup work or side deals can be issued for credit on work due at any point this quarter.

## **Changes to Syllabus**

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary during the quarter. If a change occurs, it will be thoroughly addressed.

## **Grading**

A: 93-100, A-: 90-92, B+: 87-89, B: 83-86, B-: 80-82, C+: 77-79, C: 73-76, C-: 70-72, D+: 67-69, D: 63-66, D-: 60-62

**Reading Quizzes:** 5%

**Participation:** 10%

**Film Analyses:** 15%

**Peer-to-Peer Assignment Feedback:** 15%

**Midterm:** 25%

**Final:** 30%

### **Participation (in-class students)**

-Here on time at beginning of every class/in assigned groups/complete group work proactively/volunteer responses throughout each class/great energy & enthusiasm throughout quarter/laptop & cellphone away at all times

Grade awarded at end of quarter: "A" (outstanding): 5 pts; "B" (above average): 4 pts; "C" (bare minimum): 3 pts; "D" (multiple concerns): 2 pts; "F" (serious issues across the board): 0 pts

### **Participation (online students only)**

-All lectures recorded are posted by **TUESDAY EVENINGS**. For this course, you are required to view each week's video on D2L within 72 hours (3 days) of it being posted. To verify you've viewed each class, are "in attendance" remotely and ready to engage & participate, you'll be turning in individual answers to the writing prompts I post throughout each class by the weekly deadline on D2L, in one weekly document. It's an all-or-nothing weekly participation grade. An "A" online student will plan their time accordingly, view each class every week within 3 days of its posting, and while viewing complete the prompts I give on the video...then turn this in for credit by the deadline. Demonstrates you're following along and most importantly, you maintain an active part of the classroom experience online, which I care about for each of you!

### **Film Analyses (in-class & online students)**

-Two films each week will be assigned that correlate w/assigned readings in text. Each film will carry its own specific writing prompt(s) that ask you to consider and extrapolate messages, themes & philosophies embedded on many different levels of each movie and place under the microscope via your writing. Each response paper is 1-2 pages, double-spaced. There's an "A" movie and a "B" movie assigned every week. Both are equally important to your understanding the scope of each week's philosophical topic. Papers are turned in each week on D2L before class begins. I will demonstrate this procedure in class on week 1. No late assignments or make-up work accepted at all this quarter. All deadlines are final.

### **Peer-to-Peer Assignment Feedback (in-class & online students)**

-Starting week 2, you'll be paired up with a partner. Each of you will have weekly deadline to go online and read through each other's work and provide specific, pointed feedback at my direction. I am simply grading your weekly philosophical analyses assignments as being completed. I am assessing your learning via quizzes. Writing feedback will come from your partner on a weekly basis. This will allow further sharing of ideas and open up ideas and discoveries to each other that otherwise might not have been accessible had the instructor been the sole reader of your work. Partners will be switched up after the midterm.

### **Midterm (in-class & online students)**

Exam-based in week 6

## Final (in-class & online students)

Exam-based (final exam dates can be found here: <https://goo.gl/N7IPvb>)

### -Calendar-

#### **Week 1:** Intro to course & set-up

Read for next week: Litch introduction, chapter 1 and the “Allegory of the Cave” in the back of the book

Assignment: View *The Usual Suspects* & *Rashomon* on COLTube - then- complete Analysis #1/partner feedback

#### **Week 2:** Truth

Read for next week: Litch ch 2 & assigned supplemental, primary source excerpt (assigned in class)

Assignment: View *Doubt*; *The Matrix* -then- complete Analysis #2/partner feedback

#### **Week 3:** Skepticism

Read for next week: Litch ch 3 & assigned supplemental, primary source excerpt (assigned in class)

Assignment: View *Memento*; *Moon* -then- complete Analysis #3/partner feedback

#### **Week 4:** Identity

Read for next week: Litch ch 5 & assigned supplemental, primary source excerpt (assigned in class)

Assignment: View *Pariah*; *second film to be announced* -then- complete Analysis #5/partner feedback

#### **Week 5:** Free Will, Determinism & Moral Responsibility

For next week: Study for Midterm exam

#### **Week 6:** MIDTERM EXAM

Read for next week: Litch ch 6 & assigned supplemental, primary source excerpt (assigned in class)

Assignment: View *Gone Baby Gone*; *Dead Man Walking* -then- complete Analysis #6/partner feedback

#### **Week 7:** Ethics

Read for next week: Litch ch 7 & assigned supplemental, primary source excerpt (assigned in class)

Assignment: View *Never Let Me Go*; *13th* -then- complete Analysis #6/partner feedback

#### **Week 8:** Political Philosophy

Read for next week: Litch ch 8 & assigned supplemental, primary source excerpt (assigned in class)

Assignment: View *No Country For Old Men*; *Tree of Life* -then- complete Analysis #7/partner feedback

### **Week 9:** Problem of Evil

Read for next week: Litch ch 9 & assigned supplemental, primary source excerpt (assigned in class)

Last assignment: View *Moonlight; Synechdoche, New York* -then- complete Analysis #8/partner feedback

### **Week 10:** Existentialism

## **College Policies**

### **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 continue to provide 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 completely 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 [CampusConnect](#).

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with your professor.

### **Academic Policies**

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: [cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment](http://cdm.depaul.edu/enrollment).

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at: [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

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