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 Office Hours: Tues/Wed 10:00am – 11:30am
 (Phone or skype by appointment)

Course Information

DC 227 Section 412 Class Time: ONLINE

Course Website: D2L

Course Overview

This course is a seminar on the philosophical analysis of film art. We will examine how particular films and filmmakers have used the cinematic medium to explore some of the universal human questions that have occupied philosophers over the centuries. These topics may include, but are not limited to: appearance vs. reality, the limits of knowledge, the nature of personal identity, memory and the concept of the soul, ethics and the problem of evil, free will vs. determinism, humanity's relation to nature, the individual vs. society, the problem of violence. Individual philosophers and movements/schools will be addressed as their thinking relates to the films we will screen and discuss.

No previous knowledge of cinema or philosophy is assumed or necessary.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

To think both critically and creatively about major philosophical questions as they are expressed and explored in cinematic art. To articulate with clarity, in both written and verbal form, one's informed philosophical inquiry into the meaning of a particular film or filmmaker's work.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Using multiple perspectives, students will be able to address, critically think about, and analyze philosophical questions and problems.
- Students will be able to evaluate philosophical questions, issues and/or problems using informed judgment.
- Students will be able to analyze and interpret the methods used by philosophers in addressing philosophical questions, issues, and/or problems.
- Students will be able to develop an understanding of the historical context of philosophical topics, figures, and texts.
- Students will be able to write an analytic essay treating a philosophical question, issue and/or problem that forward an identifiable thesis, argument, and conclusion.
- Students will be able to address, critically think about, and analyze ethical issues, applying philosophical tools drawn from various ethical traditions to concrete cases pertinent to a variety of subject matters

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.

Requirements and Evaluation

Grades and/or written feedback will be given for each assignment. In order to be accepted for grading, assignments must be turned in on time. Late work will receive zero points for grading. An assignment worth 10 points (10%) is equal to one full letter grade. Failure to turn in even one assignment has a significant impact on your grade.

| PROJECT | POINTS |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| RESPONSES (4 x 2-3 PGS EACH) | 30% |
| QUIZZES | 30% |
| MIDTERM QUIZ | 10% |
| FINAL EXAM | 10% |
| ONLINE DISCUSSIONS & PARTICIPATION | 20% |
| Total Points | 100% |

Letter grades will be based on the minimum percentages of total points earned

| | | | | |
|----|-----|----|-----|----------------|
| A | 94% | A- | 90% | Excellent |
| B+ | 87% | B | 83% | Very Good |
| B- | 80% | C+ | 77% | Good |
| C | 73% | C- | 70% | Satisfactory |
| D | 60% | F | 0% | Unsatisfactory |

TEXTBOOK:

Litch, Mary. *Philosophy Through Film*. Routledge, 2015, 3rd Edition. Students should purchase the book at Amazon or MBS Direct.

HOW LEARNING OUTCOMES WILL BE MET

- Through the assignment of screenings of multiple films, students will be use multiple perspectives, and begin with a common text from which they can address, think critically about, and analyze philosophical questions and problems.
- 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.
- Through the assignment of readings from the required textbook, students will be able to develop an understanding of the historical context of philosophical topics, figures, and texts.
- In one particular assigned reading, film screening, and response paper, students will address, critically think about, and analyze ethical issues, applying philosophical tools drawn from various ethical traditions to concrete cases pertinent to a variety of subject matters.

HOW WRITING EXPECTATIONS WILL BE MET

1. Students will type bi-weekly 2-3 page response papers on assigned readings and films, based on discussion question prompts.
2. One response paper will be revised.

MODULE 1 | 9/6-9/12 Introduction to Philosophical Questions

Screening: *Waking Life*, Linklater

- Read the syllabus & intro email thoroughly due 9/7
- Take the syllabus quiz due 9/7
- Subscribe to the FAQ discussion board due 9/7
- Subscribe to News Items due 9/7
- Post your introduction due 9/7

- Watch the lecture *What is Philosophy?* due 9/7
- Take the quiz on *What is Philosophy?* due 9/7
- View *Waking Life* due 9/8
- Begin your discussion due 9/8 ** Discussion of the film ends 9/12 @ 11:59 pm CST **
- GROUP 1 - Submit your responses to *Waking Life* due 9/12

MODULE 2 | 9/13-9/19 Relativism

Screening: *Capturing the Friedmans*, Jarecki

- Read Litch Chapter 1 due 9/13
- Watch the lecture due 9/14
- Watch the *Allegory of the Cave* animation due 9/14
- Take the quiz on Relativism due 9/14
- View *Capturing the Friedmans* due 9/15
- Begin your discussion due 9/15 ** Discussion of the film ends 9/19 @ 11:59 pm **
- GROUP 2 - Submit your responses to *Capturing the Friedmans* due 9/19

MODULE 3 | 9/20-9/26 Skepticism

Screening: *The Matrix*, Wachowskis

- Read: Litch, Chapter 2 due 9/20
- Watch the lecture due 9/21
- Take the quiz on Skepticism due 9/21
- View *The Matrix* due 9/22
- Begin your discussion due 9/22 ** Discussion ends 9/26 @ 11:59 pm **
- GROUP 1 - Submit your Responses to *The Matrix* due 9/26

MODULE 4 | 9/27-10/3 Personal Identity

Screening: *Moon*, Jones

- Read Litch, Chapter 3 due 9/27
- Watch the lecture on Personal Identity due 9/28
- Take the quiz on Personal Identity due 9/28
- View *Moon* due 9/29
- Begin your discussion due 9/29 ** Discussion ends 10/3 @ 11:59 pm **
- GROUP 2 - Submit your Responses to the *Moon* due 10/3

- Prepare for midterm exam due 10/10 @ 11:59 pm CST

MODULE 5 | 10/4-10/10 Personhood

** MIDTERM DUE 10/10 @ 11:59 pm **

Screening: *Blade Runner*, Scott

- Read Litch, Chapter 4 due 10/4
- Watch the lecture on What Does It Mean To Be Human due 10/5
- View *Blade Runner* due 10/6
- Begin your discussion due 10/6 ** Discussion ends 10/10 @ 11:59 pm **

** MIDTERM DUE 10/10 @ 11:59 pm **

MODULE 6 | 10/11-10/17 Free Will vs. Determinism

Screening: *Run Lola Run*, Tykwer

- Read Litch, Chapter 5 due 10/11
- Watch the lecture on Free Will vs. Determinism due 10/12
- Take the quiz on Free Will vs. Determinism due 10/12
- View *Run Lola Run* due 10/13
- Begin your discussion due 10/13 ** Discussion ends 10/17 @ 11:59 pm **
- GROUP 1 - Submit your Responses to *Run Lola Run* due 10/17

MODULE 7 | 10/18-10/24 Ethics

- Read Litch, Chapter 6 due 10/18
- Watch the lecture on Ethics due 10/19
- Take the quiz on Ethics due 10/19
- View *TBD* due 10/21
- Begin your discussion due 10/21 ** Discussion ends 10/24 @ 11:59 pm **
- GROUP 2 – Submit your Responses to *TBD* due 10/24

MODULE 8 | 10/25-10/31 POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Screening: TBD - *Black Power Mixtape / I Am Not Your Negro*

- Read: Litch, Chapter 7 due 10/25
- Watch the lecture on Political Philosophy due 10/26
- Take the quiz on Political Philosophy due 10/26
- View *TBD* due 10/27
- Begin your discussion due 10/27 ** Discussion ends 10/31 @ 11:59 pm **
- GROUP 1 - Submit your Responses to the film discussion due 10/27

MODULE 9 | 11/1- 11/7 The Problem of Evil

Screening: TBD - *Act of Killing / The Killing Fields*

- Read: Litch, Chapter 8 due 11/1
- Watch the lecture on The Problem of Evil due 11/2
- Take the quiz on The Problem of Evil due 11/2
- View *TBD* due 11/3
- Begin your discussion due 11/3 ** Discussion ends 11/7 @ 11:59 pm **
- GROUP 2 - Submit your Responses to the film discussion due 11/7

MODULE 10 | 11/8-11/15 Existentialism

- Read: Litch, Chapter 9 due 11/8
- Watch the lecture on Existentialism due 11/9
- Take the quiz on Existentialism due 11/9
- View TBD due 11/10
- Begin your discussion due 11/10

** Discussion ends 11/14 @ 11:59 pm **

**** FINAL DUE 11/15 @ 11:59 pm ****

COURSE POLICIES:

In addition to the DePaul University course policies (see student handbook), the following policies apply to this course:

DESIRE TO LEARN – The course uses D2I to post notes and assignments. Please visit <https://d2i.depaul.edu> and use your campus connect ID to enter the site.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES – Each student is responsible for being pro-active, managing their time well and meeting the expectations stated on the syllabus and checklists.

INTERNET ACCESS AND EMAIL – Students must have 24-hour internet access and are responsible for reading all communications from the professor via email, news items and discussion boards. Update your email address in campus connect and check your junkmail box regularly.

ONLINE LEARNING – Online learning takes more maturity, focus and self-motivation to do well than a face-to-face class.

DEADLINES – Assignments must be uploaded to d2i regardless of power and internet outages, the clock on your computer, your work schedule, etc, etc. Do not wait until the last minute to upload your work since the site may be slow due to high volumes of traffic. It is recommended that you upload your work with enough time to get yourself to a library or other location where you can upload.

You will not be eligible for an 'A' in the class unless you turn in all assignments. Late work will not be graded.

STALLING TACTICS – Submitting a blank document, incorrect document or corrupted document on d2i are thinly veiled ways to buy more time for an assignment. This will not be tolerated. If I cannot open your assignment, it is the same as not turning it in and it will receive zero credit.

ACCEPTED FORMATS – PDF and Word documents only. No JPEG, PNG or Pages files will be accepted.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY – Plagiarism on assignments is a serious offense and will result in an academic integrity violation along with one or both of the following penalties: failing grade on an assignment and/or failing grade for the class. Penalties will be determined on an individual basis. Many students believe they understand what plagiarism is, but it includes:

- Failing to use quotation marks around a quote;
- Paraphrasing any idea that is not yours without citing the original including the discussion boards or lectures;
- Self-plagiarism is submitting one assignment to fulfill two grades. If you have previously taken this course, you may not resubmit work from the prior iteration. All work must be original to the class.

The professor assumes students in this class know how to write a proper research paper; when and how to attribute ideas to outside sources and how to use correct citation and bibliography format. All submissions are evaluated for plagiarism using turnitin.com.

You may use APA, MLA or other standard formatting as long as you are consistent and correct. As an example you can go to <http://www.apastyle.org/> to ensure that your in-text and bibliography citations are in the correct format. Incorrect form will result in a grade reduction between ½ and 2 letter grades, depending on the severity of the issue.

DISCUSSION RULES –

- 1) EVERYONE NEEDS TO PARTICIPATE.
- 2) FOCUS ON IMPROVING OVER TIME.
- 3) BE PREPARED, WHICH MEANS HAVING DONE THE READING, GETTING ADEQUATE NUTRITION AND REST, GETTING RID OF DISTRACTIONS.
- 4) THERE ARE NO 'RIGHT' AND 'WRONG' ANSWERS IN PHILOSOPHY, ONLY LOGICAL OR ILLOGICAL ARGUMENTS. WHAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND IS USUALLY THE BEST STARTING POINT FOR DISCUSSION.
- 5) CONNECT IDEAS FROM THE COURSE WITH VERIFIABLE OUTSIDE SOURCES.
- 6) KEEP THE DISCUSSION FLOWING LIKE A NON-ACADEMIC CONVERSATION.
- 7) DON'T JUDGE.
- 8) THIS IS A SAFE SPACE – WILLINGNESS TO EXPLORE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN BEING 'CORRECT'.
- 9) YOU WILL GET WHAT YOU NEED OUT OF THE CLASS.

GRADED DISCUSSIONS –

Discussion questions will be posted on d2l in the discussion area. Every student is required to make at least two (2) contributions to each discussion, which will be graded as followed. In order for your post to count, you must engage prior posts by responding to them rather than merely answering the question posed.

Excellent (2 points):

Two or more posts per discussion that demonstrate excellence in grasping key philosophical concepts; thoughtfully critique the work of other students; provide ample evidence of support for opinions; readily offer new interpretations of discussion material; thoughtfully respond to prior remarks.

Average (1.5 points):

Two or more posts that show evidence of understanding most major philosophical concepts; is able to agree or disagree when prompted; is skilled in basic level of support for opinions; offers an occasional divergent viewpoint.

Below average (1 point):

May post two or more times, but has mostly shallow grasp of the material; rarely takes a stand on issues or uses emotion-based arguments rather than offers inadequate levels of support or does not post two or more times; posts do not acknowledge prior discussion.

No credit:

Shows no significant understanding of material or does not post.

In addition:

- Points will be deducted for poor spelling and grammar.
- Do not attach prior post when replying.
- Extra credit is given to students who thoughtfully encourage those who are normally quiet to participate.
- Each discussion is worth 2 points. There will be 10 threaded discussions including the introduction. **Remember, discussion is mandatory – it is 20% of your course grade (weighted).**

QUIZZES – In modules where a quiz is given, students must receive 80% on the quiz in order to gain access to the discussion boards. Quizzes are designed to be taken on the first day of the module and are locked at the same time as the discussion boards. You may retake the quizzes until you earn 80% or higher, though the questions will vary each time. Quizzes are 30% of the course grade.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS – Total of 30% of the course grade.

Excellent (A range):

Demonstrates expert understanding of philosophical arguments and nuances relevant to the film; chooses an appropriate film for the topic and uses the film to exemplify philosophical arguments; uses proper research methods, correct citation and bibliography format; well organized paper with clear thesis; highly skilled writing that flows easily; meets all technical specifications.

Above average (B range)

Demonstrates good understanding of philosophical arguments relevant to the film; chooses an appropriate film for the topic and integrates the film into philosophical arguments; uses proper research methods, correct citation and bibliography format; organized paper with thesis; good writing; meets all technical specifications.

Average (C range):

Shows basic understanding of philosophical arguments; film choice is appropriate for the topic and somewhat integrated into the paper; uses proper research methods, correct citation and bibliography format; paper’s organization, thesis and writing level shows it is still a rough draft; meets most technical specifications.

Below average (D):

Misrepresents philosophical one or more philosophical arguments or contains confirmation bias; film example tangentially connected to philosophical arguments; sloppy research methods, citation or bibliography format; disorganized paper; thesis unclear or missing; writing level indicates paper is an early draft; omits bibliography; does not meet minimum page count with standard margins; does not meet technical specifications.

No credit (F):

Does not meet the assignment criteria; paper is unfinished or not turned in; paper is plagiarized in part or in whole.

ILLNESS – Students who miss a significant amount of time or a pivotal assignment should contact the Dean of Students office to inquire about a medical withdrawal.

INCOMPLETES – No incompletes will be given.

INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY – I am available during my office hours for phone or skype meetings and you may email me at any time. Please note that I check my email and d2l several times a day however I do not keep student hours. If you need specific help on an assignment, give me 24 hours notice. I cannot help with last minute questions. If you notice a problem on d2l (incorrect deadline recorded, something locks before it should, etc.) or if you have a general question about an assignment or policy, post in the **FAQ discussion board**. Students who answer questions on the FAQ board earn up to 1 point extra credit.

ADDRESSING THE INSTRUCTOR – I prefer students address me by my first name, Anu.

CONTENT CHANGES – This syllabus may be amended as the course proceeds. You will be notified of all changes. As the quarter progresses, some items may change at the instructor’s discretion, but the overall workload will not. Make sure you pace yourself accordingly.

IMPORTANT WITHDRAWAL & DROP DEADLINES

| | |
|--------------|---|
| September 13 | Last day to add/swap classes (8:00am) |
| September 19 | Last day to drop classes with no penalty Last day to select pass/fail option |
| September 20 | Grades of “W” assigned for WI 2014 classes dropped on or after this day |
| October 24 | Last day to withdraw from WI 2014 classes |