

**DC 227 FILM PHILOSOPHY**  
**SUMMER 2, 2016**  
**ONLINE SECTION**

**Professor: Shayna Connelly**  
**Office hours: phone or Skype by appointment**

**Email: [sconnelly@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:sconnelly@cdm.depaul.edu)**  
**Phone: 312.362.8907**  
**\*\*Email preferred\*\***

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

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.

**TEXTBOOK:**

Litch, Mary. *Philosophy Through Film*. Routledge, 2015, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

Students should purchase the book at Amazon or MBS Direct.

**GRADING**

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.

**GRADE BREAKDOWN:**

|                                     |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| ONLINE DISCUSSIONS                  | 30% |
| QUIZZES                             | 30% |
| MIDTERM <i>MOON</i> PAPER (4 PAGES) | 10% |
| FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL (1 -2 PAGES)   | 5%  |
| FINAL PAPER (7- 9 PAGES)            | 25% |

A = 100 – 93, A- = 92 – 90, B+ = 89 – 88, B = 87 – 83, B- = 82 – 80, C+ = 79 – 78, C = 77 – 73, C- = 72 – 70, D = 69 – 60, F = 59 – 0.

**CALENDAR WEEK 1, MODULES 1 AND 2****7/18 – 7/21 Introduction to Philosophical Questions**

- Read the syllabus & intro email thoroughly due 7/18
- Take the syllabus quiz due 7/18

- Subscribe to the FAQ discussion board due 7/18
- Subscribe to News Items due 7/18
- Post your introduction due 7/18

- Watch the lecture *What is Philosophy?* due 7/18
- Take the quiz on *What is Philosophy?* due 7/18
- View *Wings of Desire* due 7/19
- Post your 1<sup>st</sup> to *Wings of Desire* discussion due 7/19

\*\* Discussion of the film ends 7/21 @ 11:59 pm CST \*\*

**7/21 – 7/24 Skepticism**

\*\* Keep posting on the introduction discussion board until 7/24 @ 11:59\*\*

- Read Litch Chapter 2 due 7/21
- Watch the lecture on Skepticism due 7/21
- Watch the *Allegory of the Cave* animation due 7/21
- Take the quiz on Skepticism due 7/21
- View *The Matrix* due 7/22
- Begin your discussion due 7/22

\*\* Discussion of the film ends 7/24 @ 11:59 pm \*\*

**CALENDAR WEEK 2, MODULES 3 AND 4****7/25 – 7/28 Relativism**

- Read: Litch, Chapter 1 due 7/25
- Watch the lecture on Relativism due 7/25
- Take the quiz on Relativism due 7/25
- View *Hilary and Jackie* due 7/26
- Begin your discussion due 7/26

\*\* Discussion ends 7/28 @ 11:59 pm \*\*

**7/28 – 7/31 Personal Identity**

- Read Litch, Chapter 3 due 7/28
- Watch the lecture on Personal Identity due 7/28
- Take the quiz on Personal Identity due 7/28
- View *Moon* due 7/29
- Begin your discussion due 7/29

\*\* Discussion ends 7/31 @ 11:59 pm \*\*

- Start midterm essay on *Moon* due Thursday, 8/4 @ 11:59 pm CST

**CALENDAR WEEK 3, MODULES 5 AND 6****8/1 – 8/4 Free Will vs. Determinism**

- Read Final Paper Assignment, review the Proposal and deadline 8/1
- Read Litch, Chapter 5 due 8/1
- Watch the lecture on Free Will vs. Determinism due 8/1
- Take the quiz on Free Will vs. Determinism due 8/1
- View *The Adjustment Bureau* due 8/2
- Begin your discussion due 8/2

\*\* Discussion ends 8/4 @ 11:59 pm \*\*

- Submit midterm essay due Thursday, 8/4 @ 11:59

**8/4- 8/7 Ethics**

- Read Litch, Chapter 6 due 8/4
- Watch the lecture on Ethics due 8/4
- Take the quiz on Ethics due 8/4
- View *Crimes and Misdemeanors* due 8/5
- Begin your discussion due 8/5

\*\* Discussion ends 8/7 @ 11:59 pm \*\*

- Submit final paper proposal due 8/8 @ 11:59 pm CST

**CALENDAR WEEK 4, MODULES 7 AND 8****8/8 – 8/11 Case Study in Ethics: Capital Punishment**

\*\*\* NO READING, NO QUIZ THIS MODULE – WORK ON YOUR PAPERS\*\*\*

- Watch the lecture on Capital Punishment due 8/8
- View *The Thin Blue Line* due 8/8
- Begin your discussion due 8/8

\*\* Discussion ends 8/11 @ 11:59 pm \*\*

- Continue researching for final paper due Friday, 8/19 @ 11:59

**8/11 – 8/14 The Problem of Evil**

- Read: Litch, Chapter 8 due 8/11
- Watch the lecture on The Problem of Evil due 8/11
- Take the quiz on The Problem of Evil due 8/11
- View *No Country For Old Men* due 8/12
- Begin your discussion due 8/12

\*\* Discussion ends 8/14 @ 11:59 pm \*\*

- Finish researching & start writing final paper due Friday, 8/19 @ 11:59

**CALDENDAR WEEK 5, MODULE 9 AND FINAL PAPER****8/15 – 8/18 Existentialism**

- Read: Litch, Chapter 9 due 8/15
- Watch the lecture on Existentialism due 8/15
- Take the quiz on Existentialism due 8/15
- View *American Beauty* due 8/16
- Begin your discussion due 8/16

\*\* Discussion ends 8/18 @ 11:59 pm \*\*

- Finish rough draft & start revising final paper
- Submit final paper due Friday, 8/19 @ 11:59 pm CST

**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 d2l 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 30% 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 40% 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** for face-to-face, phone or skype meetings by appointment 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. I am early to bed, early to rise. If you need specific help with your work, give me at least 24 hours notice. I cannot help with last minutes 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 extra credit.

**ADDRESSING THE INSTRUCTOR** – I prefer students address me by my first name, Shayna, which rhymes with 'Dana', both in writing and in person.

**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.