

Philosophy Through Film (Phil 1340F) Summer Evening: May 8 - June 16, 2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

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CLASS INFORMATION

Classroom: BR136

Lab (film viewing):

Tuesday 6-9 pm

Lectures:

Wednesday: 6-8 pm

Thursday: 6-9 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Do you like going to movies? Do you find yourself trying to understand the world and your place within it? If your answer is “Yes!” to both questions, then this is a course for you.

This course introduces students to philosophical inquiry through film. Certain films can be interpreted as attempting to answer our deepest questions. We will view films in order to explore basic philosophical questions such as the nature of truth, knowledge, time, self, evil and life’s meaning.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Philosophy awakens us to deep questions about who we are, the way we relate to the world and how we should to act. It expands our set of personal interests and promotes openness to competing perspectives as well as life decisions based upon critical and reflective thinking.

This course will help students to:

1. Describe major philosophical theories that impact our discourse about such topics as truth, knowledge, time, self, evil and life’s meaning.
2. Understand and demonstrate how abstract philosophical theories are applied in concrete settings.
3. Compare conflicting philosophical arguments in the relevant literature.
4. Develop well-reasoned solutions to practical dilemmas.
5. Discuss and be open to competing points of view.
6. Persuade others of a well-reasoned stance or action.
7. Demonstrate effective writing and critical thinking skills.

ANTIREQUISITE(S) and PREREQUISITE(S)

None.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

Students will view a popular film in Monday's lab. At the outset of the lab a philosophical question will be raised for students to answer based on the film. In Tuesday and Wednesday's lectures these answers will be analyzed and debated in light of answers put forth by famous philosophers.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required texts:

Philosophy Through Film (3rd ed.), Litch, Mary M. and Karofsky, Amy, Routledge (2015). (paperback).

Custom course pack, available at The Bookstore at Western.

Writing Philosophy: A Guide for Canadian ~~Students~~ (Students) Vaughn, Lewis and Scott McIntosh, Jillian, Oxford University Press (2012). (paperback)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Lab and Class Participation	20%
First Paper	20%
Second Paper	30%
Final Exam	30%

EVALUATION

Lab and Class Participation

The participation grade will be divided equally between a lab and a class component:

1. Students are expected to attend each lab to watch a film and to submit written answers to a philosophical question about the film at the beginning of the following class.

2. Students are expected to attend classes having read assigned readings and contributing to a discussion of each film's philosophical significance.

Papers

Format: 5 double-spaced pages, i.e. approximately 1250 words. Hardcopy to be submitted in class on the due date.

Plagiarism Check: Essays must be submitted electronically to OWL on the due date.

Late Penalties: Hardcopies submitted after the due date will receive a 5% penalty per calendar day. Essays will not be graded until they have been submitted to OWL; essays not submitted to OWL by the date of the final exam will not receive a grade.

Marking Criteria: Each paper will be graded out of 50 according to the following criteria:

Understanding: How well does the author understand and make judicious use of the relevant course material? How well does s/he understand the complexity of the issues involved? [15 marks]

Argument: Does the author use cogent arguments to support his or her position? Do the claims made in different parts of the paper follow from one another and are they consistent? [15 marks]

Clarity: Is the author's position clear, with an explicitly articulated thesis, and is the paper clearly written overall? Does the paper answer the questions asked? Could another student at the same level who is not enrolled in the course understand the paper? [10 marks]

Organization: Does the author reveal a plan for the paper at the outset and does s/he follow that plan? Does the paper have an explicit overall direction? [5 marks]

Style: Does the author's paper use correct grammar and syntax? Have the guidelines for proper format been followed? Has the author cited sources where necessary, following a recognized style? [5 marks]

Final Exam

The format will be multiple choice, short answer and essay. Further details will be provided to the class later in the term.