

PHIL 360 PHILOSOPHY & FILM

Spring 2023
Mon/Thurs - 2:30-3:50
McLaurin D207

Dr. Nina Belmonte
CLE B326
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Off. Hours: Tues. 1:00-2:00

Course Description:

Ever walk out of a theatre wishing you could convince everyone to stay and talk about the film? In this course we will investigate the appearance of philosophy in/as film. Each week we will analyze one philosophically significant film (old and new, from diverse countries and directors), and read from corresponding texts in philosophy, aesthetics, film theory, and fiction. We will explore how ideas can be conveyed in light, color, sound and motion as well as in narrative.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

In this course you will learn how to ‘read’ a film - with regard to editing, sound, narrative, character and *mise en scene* – all critical viewing skills for life in our culture of the screen (large & small). You will encounter key topics in film theory and philosophy, and identify their interplay on the screen. You will be challenged to become more attentive viewers, more critical readers, deeper thinkers and better writers, honing your skills at articulating your thoughts and writing more effectively – indispensable assets for all walks of life, from the living room to the boardroom.

Course Material:

All texts and recordings will be accessible via the UVic course website. Films will be available online or from UVic Library’s media, digital and streaming sources.

Assignments:

Class Participation and Bi-weekly Homework Assignments:	20%
Philosophical Film Analyses 2 x 25% each	50%
Final Film Analysis	30%
	100%

Course “Rhythm”

Each week you will:

Watch the assigned film.

Read the accompanying texts on film theory and philosophy.

Inquire further into the film and readings by attending and participating in class.

Review the week’s material and articulate your thoughts in class and in written answers to homework questions.

Description of Assignments

Bi-Weekly Homework Assignments: 20% (5 at 4% each)

Approximately every other week there will be short written answers to study questions due. These are designed to help you think about the films and gauge your understanding of the readings. There will be no study questions when papers are due.

Philosophical Film Analyses (1250-1750 Words): 50% (2 at 25% each)

There will be two short philosophical film analysis essays required in this course. Each provides an opportunity to improve the critical viewing and writing skills that will prepare you for your final essay. Essays will be evaluated on your understanding of and engagement with the course material; integration of ideas and visual details; the quality of your thought; and the clarity and presentation of your writing (including spelling, punctuation, and grammar).

I will post suggested paper topics at least one week before the due date, but you are free to choose a topic of your own, as long as you *speak with me before the due date*.

Final Film Analysis (1,750-2500 Words): 30%

There will be a more substantial essay due at the end of the semester in which you will analyze a single film not covered in the course. I will provide a list of possible films/topics, but you are free to write on a film of your own choosing, as long as you *speak with me at least 48 hours in advance*. This final project should draw from the course readings and include at least three secondary sources (academic papers, books, or film reviews) that were not included in course readings. Final projects will be evaluated on the following: your understanding of and engagement with the course material and the chosen outside sources; integration of ideas and visual details; the quality of your thought; and the clarity and presentation of your writing (including spelling, punctuation, and grammar).

Evaluation/Grades:

Percentages will convert to a letter grade according to the following scheme:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 65-69	D = 50-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 60-64	F = 0-49
A- = 80-84	B- = 70-72		

Policy on Late Assignments

Limited, short-term extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis, *as long as the request is made before the day the assignment is due*. Appropriate accommodations will be made for those with an accommodation letter from the Center for Accessible Learning, but *please note that these letters state specifically that such an accommodation is not “a blanket extension on all work, nor is it a license to submit work after the course has ended.”*

A Note on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Actions such as plagiarism, multiple submissions, falsifying materials used in academic evaluations, cheating, aiding others to cheat, or unauthorized use of an editor violate University policies on academic integrity and are considered serious offences.

You must inform yourself about the university regulations (see [UVic Policy on Academic Integrity](#)).

Unauthorized Use of an Editor

An editor is an individual or service, other than the instructor or supervisory committee, who manipulates, revises, corrects or alters a student’s written or non-written work. The use of an editor, whether paid or unpaid, is prohibited unless the instructor grants explicit written authorization. If you have questions, please ask!

University Policy on Human Rights, Equity, and Fairness

According to the [Policy on Human Rights, Equity, and Fairness](#), the “University promotes a safe, respectful and supportive learning and working environment for all members of the university community. The University fosters an environment characterized by fairness, openness, equity, and respect for the dignity and diversity of its members. The University strives to be a place that is free of discrimination and harassment, injustice and violence. The strength and vibrancy of the University is found in the diverse life experiences, backgrounds, and worldviews of all its members.”

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****Territory Acknowledgement****

We acknowledge with respect the Lkwungen-speaking peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Schedule of Classes

WEEK ONE: Introductions – “Kinema-to-graphy”

Watch: Cousins, “The Story of Film” (Cousins, 2011)
(Intro and Chpt. One)

- January 9 Philosophy and/as/in Film?
12 Beginnings: “A Lie to Tell the Truth”
Read: Bazin, “The Ontology of the Image”

WEEK TWO: Philosophy in Film

Watch: “Waking Life” (Linklater, 2001)

- 16 The Holy Moment
Read: Grabiner, “The Holy Moment”
19 Can Film “Do” Philosophy?
Read: Carroll, “Movie Made Philosophy”

WEEK THREE: Philosophy as Film: *Lights*

Watch: “The Seventh Seal,” (Bergman, 1957)

- 23 How Can Film Show Our Inner Life?
Read: Bálazs, “Visible Man”
26* Inwardness as Truth ***Study Questions #1 Due**
Read: Kierkegaard, “Truth is Subjectivity”
and “Dread”

WEEK FOUR: Philosophy as Film: *Camera*

Watch: “The Thin Red Line,” (Malick, 1998)

- 30 How Can the Camera Immerse Us in the World?
Read: Silverman, “All Things Shining”
February 2** How is Death a Part of our Being-in-the-World?
Read: Heidegger, *Being & Time*, Sects. 52 & 53
****First Short Essay Due****

WEEK FIVE: Philosophy as Film: “Camera”

Watch: “Arrival” (Villeneuve, 2016)

- 6 How Can Cinematography Create A Reality?
 Read: Manovich, “Digital Cinema and the History of a
 Moving Image”
- 9 Can Language Alter Perception?
 Read: Whorf, “Science & Linguistics”

WEEK SIX: Philosophy as Film: *Action*

Watch: “The Bourne Identity” (Liman, 2002)

- 13 How Does “Bourne” Portray Action-in-Action?
 Read: O’Brien, *Cinema of Striking Back*, Introduction
- 16* Do I Have a “Self” or Do I Create One?
 Read: Velleman, “Self as Narrator”

***Study Questions #2 Due**

WEEK SEVEN: Intermission

February 20-24 *Reading Break*

WEEK EIGHT: Philosophy as Film: *Sound*

Watch: “Her” (Jonze, 2013)

- 27 Can There Be a Person without a Body?
 Read: Jollimore, “The Endless Space Between Words”
- March** 2* What Does Love Have to do with “Personhood”?
 Read: Foster, “Love and Personal Identity”

***Study Questions #3 Due**

WEEK NINE: Philosophy as Film: *Concept*

Watch: “Parasite” (Bong Joon Ho, 2019)

- 6 Can Entertainment be Social Commentary?
 Read: TBA
- 9** The Possibility of Justice
 Watch: Rawls’ Theory of Justice (Youtube)

****Second Short Essay Due****

WEEK TEN: Philosophy of Film: *Affect*

Watch: "Rear Window," (Hitchcock, 1954)

- 13** Why Do We Love to Watch?
Read: Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"
***Study Questions #4 Due
(Peer Critiques)**
- 16 How does Film Manipulate Us?
Read: Fawell, "Fashion Dreams"

WEEK ELEVEN: Philosophy of Film: *Representation & Identity*

Watch: "To Sleep with Anger" (Burnett, 1990)

- 27 How Does Burnett Show Us Identity as Myth?
Read: Naremore, *Charles Burnett*, Chp. 5
- 30 Race, Representation and Existence
Read: Mills, "Non-Cartesian Sums"

WEEK TWELVE: Politics of Film: *Self-Reflection*

Watch: "Even the Rain," (Bollaín, 2010)

- April** 3 How Can the Screen become a Mirror?
Read: Cilanto, "'Even the Rain': Confluence of Cinematic
and Historic Temporalities"
- 6 **Last Class** ***Study Questions #5 Due**

****Final Paper Due****
April 14th