

PHIL 360 PHILOSOPHY & FILM

Spring 2025
Mon/Thurs - 2:30-3:50
CLE C112
CRN: 22478

Dr. Nina Belmonte
CLE B326
belmonte@uvic.ca
Off. Hours: Tues. 1:30-2:30

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 as/in 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 Homework	
Assignments:	20%
Philosophical Film Analyses	
2 x 25% each	50%
Final Film Analysis	30%
	100%

Minimum Conditions for Passing This Course

In order to pass this course, you must complete at least one Philosophical Film Analysis as well as the Final Paper, and attain an overall final grade point average of 50% or greater.

Failure to complete one Philosophical Film Analysis and the Final Paper will result in a grade of “N” regardless of the cumulative percentage on other elements of the course. N is a failing grade and factors into GPA as a value of 0.

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

Homework Assignments: 20% (8 at 2.5% each)

Most weeks - excepting when papers are due - there will be short written answers to study questions due on Monday. These are designed to help you think about the films and gauge your understanding of the readings.

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		

Course Policies

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.”

Withdrawals and Deferrals

Students are to familiarize themselves with the [withdrawal dates in the academic calendar](#).

Students who miss substantial amounts of class and assignments without documentation will be asked to withdraw, as they will receive an N at the end of the semester. Students who miss more than nine classes for documented medical or personal reasons may still be asked to apply for a backdated withdrawal. ***However, even when the reasons for failing to meet course requirements are valid, it is neither academically sound nor fair to others in the course to allow students missing significant amounts of work to continue in the course and receive credit.***

Students may only apply for an Academic Concession if a) they have serious and documented medical or personal reasons for not completing some of the end-of-term requirements and b) they have already completed practically all the course requirements at the time of their application. Students should refer to the [Academic Concession Guidelines](#) for more information about these alternatives

Accessibility Statement

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the [Centre for Accessible Learning](#) as soon as possible. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

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. ***In all your course work, you must abide by [UVic's Academic Integrity Policy](#). Please make sure you are familiar with what is expected of you and contact your instructor if you have any questions. If you are interested in learning more about academic integrity, you can also self-enrol in the [Integrity Matters](#) course in Brightspace. Search for this course under the [Discover tab](#) on your Brightspace homepage.***

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. ***This includes generative artificial intelligence (AI, such as ChatGPT)!*** Students suspected of employing such methods may be asked to review their writing in a private meeting with the instructor. 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."

Classroom Conduct and Course Responsibilities

With regard to the learning environment, the [University Calendar's Policy on Creating a Respectful and Positive Learning Environment](#) states that UVic "is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and productive learning environment. All members of the university community have the right to experience, and the responsibility to help create, such an environment. In any course, the instructor has the primary responsibility for creating a respectful and productive learning environment in a manner consistent with other university policies and regulations."

In terms of expectations for students, the University Calendar's [Attendance Policy](#) states that "[a]n instructor may refuse a student admission to a lecture, laboratory, online course discussion or learning activity, tutorial or other learning activity set out in the course outline because of lateness, misconduct, inattention or failure to meet the responsibilities of the course set out in the course outline."

Students engaging in misconduct or failing to meet their course responsibilities can expect a communication from the instructor that outlines the concerning behavior, explains how such behavior is disrupting the learning environment, and requests that the student refrain from further disruptive behavior. Should such instances of misconduct continue, the student will receive a formal request to meet with the Department Chair in order to seek remediation between the parties. If necessary, further procedures to resolve the situation can be found in the [Policy on Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations](#).

Please keep in mind the overlapping policy on [Online Student Conduct](#) specifies standards of behavior in the online environment.

*****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.

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

27 How Does the Camera Immerse Us in the World?
 Read: Silverman, “All Things Shining”

30** How is Death a Part of our Being-in-the-World?
 Read: Heidegger, *Being & Time*, Sects. 52 & 53

****First Short Essay Due****

Watch: “Arrival” (Villeneuve, 2016)

*Study Questions #3 Due

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

***Study Questions #4 Due**

February 17-21 *Reading Break*

Watch: “Her” (Jonze, 2013)

***Study Questions #5 Due**

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

March	3	Can Entertainment be Social Commentary? Watch: Rawls' Theory of Justice (Youtube)
	6**	The Possibility of Justice

Watch: “Rear Window,” (Hitchcock, 1954)

Read: Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

Read: Mills, “Non-Cartesian Sums”

Telling the Truth about History

Last Class

Friday, April 10th

