

PHIL 3260: Philosophy and Film (3 credits)

SECTION 001: LA 370, T 6-8:45

Contact
Information

Instructor: Dr. Mark Phillips
Office: UNO: LA 391
Office Hours: MWF 12:50-2; 2:50-3:40 (and by appointment)
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Course Webpages: [Moodle](#) login page

Required Texts

[1] *Philosophy Through Film*, 3rd ed., Mary M. Litch & Amy Karofsky, Routledge, 2015; *The Power of Movies: How Screen and Mind Interact*, Colin McGinn, 2005; *Routledge Companion to Philosophy & Film*, Livingston, Paisley, Plantinga, 2008.

[2] Additional readings will be posted on Moodle.

Also recommended: Hugo Bedau - *Thinking and Writing about Philosophy* and/or Zachary Seech - *Writing Philosophy Papers* (both in UNO Library).

Course Description

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: This course is a critical study of the relation between philosophical concepts and the medium of film, which examines the unique manner in which film conveys concepts arguably too intricate for more traditional media. Through a survey of films whose content illustrate philosophical ideas, as well as a variety of philosophical sources, students learn about the palpable ways in which film can "bring to life" philosophical concepts like no other medium (as well as about how potential filmmakers might utilize philosophical ideas in the production of their own work).

COURSE OVERVIEW: In an earlier time, philosophical thoughts were encountered either on the printed page or through word of mouth. Today, more and more people are being exposed to the world's deepest thoughts through the medium of film. In this more modern age, the role played by the book has become subservient to the more rapid and graphic depictions of motion pictures. While their first critics may have seen moving pictures as an interesting novelty, and though some today may see them as simply a form of entertainment or escapism, movies have rapidly become the way in which a vast number of people encounter many of humanity's greatest insights. In this course, we will try to get a sense of why this medium has so rapidly increased not only in popularity, but in its ability to convey the most profound of ideas, as well as why many people prefer the medium of film to any other.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to do the following:

- to recognize philosophical questions.
- to know the various subfields of philosophy and the sorts of questions dealt with by philosophers in those areas.
- to identify certain figures in the history of philosophical thought in the West.
- to define key concepts in the domains of philosophical thought.
- to understand the philosophical problems associated with artistic media.
- to present and to defend your own views regarding the issues above.
- to read philosophical texts.
- to lead philosophical discussions.
- to develop criticism for various positions, including your own.
- to raise and to handle objections fairly and sympathetically.
- to defend your own claims in writing with respect to the philosophical issues raised in this course
- to write a text-based argumentative essay.
- to have a clear sense of the applicability of philosophical ideas to contemporary concerns.
- to better understand the relation between philosophical thoughts and visual representations.

Grades will be based on a 100 point scale distributed as follows:

Requirement		Final grade	
Exam 1	(25%) 25 points	A	100 – 90 points
Exam 2	(25%) 25 points	B	89 – 80 points
Exam 3	(25%) 25 points	C	79 – 70 points
Term Paper	(25%) 25 points	D	69 – 60 points
		F	59 — 0 points

Course Requirements

Readings: Students will be expected to keep up on the weekly reading assignments for the course, both those from the textbook and those posted on Moodle.

Exams: There will be 3 examinations on material from the readings and lectures, and there will be no make-up exams.

Term Paper: Each student will also be required to write a term paper of not less than 2,500 words on a philosophical subject of his or her choice. The paper is due on or before the last day of class, and will not be accepted late.

Theory & Practice: Students will also be requested to pay close attention to current news issues (both in order to determine the relevance of philosophy of religion to our contemporary issues, and to generate a variety of possible paper topics).

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic honesty is fundamental to the process of learning and to evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, disseminating any part of an exam, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available on Moodle and online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>.

AUDITS: If you would like to audit the course, please let me know as soon as possible.

DISABILITIES: It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.

INCOMPLETES: If you are unable to finish the work, and need to take an incomplete, please let me know as soon as possible.

MAKE-UPS: There are no make-up exams.

PROCTORING: To ensure academic integrity, all students enrolled in distance learning courses at the University of New Orleans may be required to participate in additional student identification procedures. At the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course, these measures may include on-campus proctored examinations, off-site or online proctored examinations, or other reasonable measures to ensure student identity. Authentication measures for this course may include Proctor U and any fees associated are the responsibility of the student. University of New Orleans partners with Proctor U, a live, online proctoring service that allows students to complete exams from any location using a computer, webcam, and reliable internet connection.

WITHDRAWALS: You may withdraw from this course for any reason. Please consult the course listings for the last day to withdraw without penalty (a 'W' appearing on your transcript).

PHIL 3260 – Fall 2014 Timeline

(subject to revision)

DAY	TOPIC/READING
Week 1 8/26	Introduction: Syllabus
Week 2 9/2	McGinn, Chapter One – (<i>The Purple Rose of Cairo</i>)
Week 3 9/9	McGinn, Chapter Two – (<i>The Truth</i>)
Week 4 9/16	Litch, Chapter One: Truth – (<i>Inception</i>)
Week 5 9/23	Litch, Chapter Two: Skepticism – (<i>The Truman Show</i>)
Week 6 9/30	Litch, Chapter Three: Personal Identity – (<i>Memento</i>)
Week 7 10/7	Litch, Chapter Four: Artificial Intelligence – (<i>Blade Runner</i>)
Week 8* 10/14	Midterm/Midsemester Break/Term Paper Work
Week 9 10/21	Litch, Chapter Five: Free Will & Determinism: Biological – (<i>Gattaca</i>)
Week 10 10/28	Litch, Chapter Five: Free Will & Determinism: Physical – (<i>12 Monkeys</i>)
Week 11 11/4	Litch, Chapter Six: Ethics and Morality – (<i>Bullets Over Broadway</i>)
Week 12 11/11	Litch, Chapter Seven: Political Philosophy – (<i>Pleasantville</i>)
Week 13 11/18	Litch, Chapter Eight: The Problem of Evil – (<i>The Seventh Seal</i>)
Week 14 11/25	Litch, Chapter Nine: Religion (<i>I Am</i>)
Week 15 12/2	Litch, Chapter Nine: Existentialism – (<i>Life is Beautiful</i>)
Finals Week 12/9	<i>Final/Term Paper Due (8 pm)</i>
*	Final date to drop courses or resign from the University: 10/15