

PHI 4884: PHILOSOPHY OF FILM

Spring 2019

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Scarbrough
GL 137, 6:25-9:05 pm

Office: Department of Philosophy, DM 340B
appointment

Email: escarbro@fiu.edu

Class location/time:

Office hours: W: 5-6:00pm &

Phone: 305-348-2485¹

Website: <http://myweb.fiu.edu/escarbro>
escarbro.appointy.com

Sing-up for office hours:

Course Description:

This class is an introduction to the philosophy of film. The course is designed to provide you with a broad overview of **some** of the topics in the philosophy of film. This is not a film theory course, nor is it a film history or film studies course.

Topics discussed include:

- What is film (ontological questions)?
- What is documentary film?
- Do films have narrators?
- Who is the author of a film?
- How can we respond emotionally to things in film we know are fake? (paradox of fiction)
- Why do we take pleasure in disgusting images? (horror / slasher films)
- How should we judge a film made by a moral monster? A film that glorifies Nazis? A film that advocates for immoral actions?
- Can porn films be artworks?
- Can films make arguments?
- Can a film be philosophy?

You will be required to read one article and watch one movie per week. **Although there are no prerequisites for this course, previous coursework in philosophy will be extremely beneficial.** The articles assigned are not designed for introductory students.

Learning Objectives:

It is the objective of this course to acquaint the student with aesthetic theory both as a way of enriching the student's exchange with art as well as the broader culture. Your skills will be developed and tested in three ways:

(1) **Reading Comprehension:** involves carefully, closely reading all the assigned texts;

¹ Email is a much more effective form of communication than phone.

(2) **Philosophical Writing:** involves completing a variety of written assignments designed to teach you how good philosophical writing differs from other familiar types of writing;

(3) **Class Discussion:** involves actively, respectfully engaging with your peers and instructor about philosophically complex, abstract theories that have implications for how we engage with motion pictures.

Success in this course requires you to prepare yourself for class discussion by reading critically, to defend your own views with reasons and arguments, and to give a good faith effort to develop your philosophical skills, both verbally and in writing.

Required Texts:

Carroll, Noel and Choi, Jinhee, ed. *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008).²

All other written text will be placed on CANVAS (PDF).

You are also required to watch one movie a week. These movies can either be found on Kanopy (a streaming service through our library), or through our course reserves (3-hour lending period through the library). I expect you to watch the movie even if you have seen it before. Good movies, like good books, reward multiple viewings.

Evaluation Criteria:

Late work will be penalized at -1 a day (or part of a day) unless you have made prior arrangements with me. You may not make up quizzes, journal entries, in-class presentation or participation grades without prior consent of instructor or documented illness/emergency. In cases of *documented* illness or emergency, contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements.

Attendance and Participation 10% (10 points): You are required to attend class sessions. Attendance includes being awake, alert, and prepared. If you miss more than 1 unexcused classes your participation grade will be lowered by 3 points (3%) per excessive absence. Participation is vital to your success in this class. You are being graded on the quality of your contribution to the class.

Weekly Journal Questions and Reflections 24% (24 points): Attendance includes being prepared with questions. You will be required to write in your on-line journal (on CANVAS). Each journal entry should have two questions about the text and a brief (1 paragraph) reflection on how the movie assigned does

² This book is required and you must bring it to class.

or does not relate to the author's argument. Journal entries are turned in on CANVAS by the start of class and **cannot be handed in late**. These are designed to encourage class participation and are designed to help you write your papers. You only have to complete 8 journal entries to receive full credit. There is no journal in our first week.

Leadership Project 6% (6points): Everyone in the class must sign up for a slot to be the discussion leader for a particular reading. As a discussion leader you will have prepared questions about the reading, and must relate the reading to the assigned meeting. You may even want to prepare an activity for the class. More information will be given in class.

Two Quizzes 20% (15% each) (30 points): There will be two in-class examinations. Each will be worth 15% of your final grade. The first will only cover 1/2 of the class materials and will occur in class on February 27th. The final quiz will be on the second half of our class and will occur during our examination period.

Two short papers 30% (15% each)(30 points): You must complete two short papers. The papers should have an introduction (with thesis statement), exegesis, argument, and conclusion. If you are having trouble coming up with a thesis statement, please come see me in office hours. You must complete one paper by MARCH 15th of our course (or before). This paper should be 5-7 pages in length (approx. 2500 words). Your second paper will be due the Monday of finals week. You have two options for the final paper: you may choose a new topic and write a new 2500 word paper OR you can turn your original paper into a longer term paper (15 pages). In order to choose the longer paper, you must meet with me via appointment by the 11th week of class and get approval. These papers will be turned in via Turn-It-In, a link to which can be found on your CANVAS page. Plagiarized papers (or parts of paper) will receive a 0 for that assignment.

Grading Scale:

A = 93-100%, A- = 90-92%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B- = 80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C = 73-76%, C- = 70-72%, D+ = 67-69%, D = 63-66%, D- = 60-62%, E = 59% and below

Missed Classes:

You can miss 1 class without penalty. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain lecture notes from another student. After 1 unexcused absence, your score will go down -3 pts (3%) per unexcused absence. If I have to miss a class due to illness, you will not be made to make up that class but I will hold a "make up" a class session where you can make up one of your absences.

Class Etiquette: I expect you not to disrupt me, or other students, during class. If you are disruptive, I will ask you to leave the class. Disruptions may include (but are not limited to) texting on your phone, surfing the internet, talking with other students (not about course material), reading the paper, watching videos, doing work for other classes, etc. Disruptions will lower your participation grade. Additionally, I expect you to treat other students (and their opinions) with respect.

You may not record the lecture (or any of my actions in class) without prior consent.

Academic Misconduct: Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, and unauthorized collaboration with other students on assignments. *Academic dishonesty disadvantages honest students, and is clearly unfair to hardworking students. Instructors have a duty, therefore, to protect honest students, and to insure that they are not disadvantaged by dishonest students.* For more information, see FIU's Academic Misconduct policy (Section 2.44). There are serious consequences for academic misconduct, including suspension and expulsion from the university. **All students suspected of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Academic Misconduct and receive a "0" on their assignment.**

Safe Zone Statement: I am part of the Safe Zone Ally community here at FIU. This means I am part of a network of trained FIU faculty/staff/students who are available to listen and support you in a safe and confidential manner. As a Safe Zone Ally, I can help connect you with resources on campus to address problems you may face that interfere with your academic and social success on campus as it relates to issues surrounding sexual orientation/gender identity. My goal is to help you be successful and to maintain a safe and equitable campus.

Commitment to Disability Access: It is my moral and legal obligation to provide students with disabilities accommodations to help them succeed in my classroom. I take this responsibility seriously. You need not disclose to me your disability, but I can work with you to provide accommodations to help you succeed. You may also choose to work with the Disability Resource Center. The Disability Resource Center collaborates with faculty to provide inclusive learning environments. More information may be found at the DRC's website: drc.fiu.edu.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

*All readings must be completed by the date they are listed in the syllabus.

**I reserve the right to change/adjust this schedule. Changes will be announced in class.

WEEK 1: Introduction (1/9)

Discussion on how to watch a movie.

Film:

F for Fake (Welles, 1975) - Kanopy (we will watch together)

WEEK 2: What is Film? (1/16)

Readings:

- Introduction Section II (text)
- Carroll “Defining the Moving Image” (text)³

Film:

The Story of Film: *Birth of the Cinema* (Cousins, 2011)- Kanopy

Required You-tube:

Wayang Kulit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfydro4X2t0>

WEEK 3: Documentary (1/23)

Readings:

- Introduction Section III (text)
- Carroll, “Fiction, Non-Fiction, and the Film of Presumptive Assertion: A Conceptual Analysis” (text)

Film:

The Act of Killing (Oppenheimer, 2012)– Streaming Online through our library (<https://filmplatform-net.ezproxy.fiu.edu/product/the-act-of-killing-2/>) AmazonPrime, On Reserve (5th floor library, DVD, several copies),

You-tube:

Lumiere Bro.: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldgLEDdFddk>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nj0vEO4Q6s>

Recommended:

I am Not Your Negro (Peck, 2016)
Paris is Burning (Livingston, 1990)
The Thin Blue Line (Morris, 1998)
Cave of Forgotten Dreams (Herzog, 2010)
The Up Series (Apted, 1964-2012)

³ This is a difficult text but gives you a good overview of the style of analytic philosophy of film.

You can look at my list of recommended documentaries on Kanopy.

WEEK 4: Film Narrative / Narration (1/30)

Readings:

-Introduction Section IV (text)

-Currie, "Unreliability Refigured: Narrative in Literature and

Film" (text)

Film:

Rashomon (Kurosawa, 1950) – Kanopy

WEEK 5: Cinematic Authorship (2/6)

Readings:

Livingston, "Cinematic Authorship" (text)

Film:

8 ½ (Fellini, 1963) – Kanopy

WEEK 6: Emotions and Film: Playing make-believe (2/13)

Readings: Introduction, Section V (text)

Walton, "Fearing Fictions" (text)

Film:

Dogtooth (Lanthimos, 2011) – Kanopy

In class: *WORLD OF TOMORROW* (Hertzfeldt, 2015)

Recommended:

A Letter to Momo (Okiura, 2011)

Delicatessen (Jeunet, Caro 1991)

Akira, (Otomo, 1988)

Timecrimes (Vigalondo, 2007)

World on a Wire (Fassbinder, 1973)

Fantastic Planet (Laloux, 1973)

WEEK 7: Emotions and Film: Empathy (2/20)

Reading:

Neill, "Empathy and Film Fiction" (text)

Film:

Au Hasard Balthazar (Bresson, 1966) - Kanopy

WEEK 8: Emotions and Film: Identification* (2/27)

***Midterm Exam**

Reading:

Gaut, "Identification and Emotion in Narrative Film" (text)

Film:

Do the Right Thing (Spike Lee, 1989) – Course Reserves

Recommended:

Moonlight (Jenkins, 2016)

WEEK 9: Horror (3/6)*

***First paper due AT LATEST March 15th**

Readings:

Carroll, "Why Horror?" (PDF)

Movie:

The Host / Gwoemul (Joon-ho Bong, 2006) – Requested Course Reserves

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 11-15

WEEK 10: Horror (3/20)

Reading:

Gaut, "The Paradox of Horror" (PDF)

Movie:

A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night (Amirpour, 2014) - Kanopy

WEEK 11: Film and Ethics (3/27)

*If you'd like to work on PAPER 1 to turn it into a 15 page paper, you must come talk to me during WEEK 11. Schedule an appointment here: escarbroweb.com

Reading:

Article: Devereaux, "Beauty and Evil: The Case of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*" (text)

Movie:

Triumph of the Will (Riefenstahl, 1935) – Online:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVCUsKkXq3Y>

(Only watch the first 20 minutes)

Triumph of the Will and the Cinematic Language of Propaganda (Dan Olsen, 2017): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJlQm1Z_D7w
(20 minutes)

Recommended:

Au Revoir Les Enfants (Malle, 1987)

WEEK 12: Film and Ethics: The Case Against Pornography (4/3)

Please see my attached “Potentially Offensive Material” warning attached to the end of this syllabus. If explicit (though academic) discussions of sex, or unfamiliar and disturbing sexual practices, inhibit your learning, then you should reconsider whether this is a good course for you.

Reading:

Vadas, “A First Look at the Pornography/Civil Rights Ordinance: Could Pornography Be the Subordination of Women?” (text)

Required Youtube:

<http://www.makers.com/moments/pornography-phenomenon>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neQeea4rmLA>

Suggested Movies (from most explicit to least explicit):

In The Realm of the Senses (Oshima, 1976) – Kanopy

Nymphomaniac (Von Trier, 2013 *5 hours long) - course reserves

The Handmaiden (Park Chan-wook, 2016) - course reserves

*If you would like to write one of your papers on this topic, you must watch one of the suggested movie. If you do not wish to write your paper on this topic, you need not watch one of these movies. If you are presenting on this topic, you must watch one of the movies. If you feel uncomfortable watching sex acts or discussing sex I strongly advise you do not choose this topic for your paper, your presentation, or a journal entry.

WEEK 13: Film and Ethics: The Case for Pornography (4/10)

Article:

Prinz and Brabandt, “Why Do Porn Films Suck?” (PDF)

Movies:

Dirty Diaries (Various Directors, 2009)* - Kanopy

OR Dirty Diaries manifesto

*Your article mentions *Dirty Diaries* (2009) as a successful art porn film. I have chosen two of the films below for your viewing: *Skin* and *Dildoman*. These are **not** required, merely recommended as they are pornographic. If you would prefer not to watch these films, you may read the “Manifesto” instead (found here): <http://www.dirtydiaries.org/manifesto>

WEEK 14: Film and Philosophy (4/17) *

Article: Intro to Part VIII (text)

Article: Hanson, “Minerva in the Movies: Relations Between Philosophy and Film” (text)

Film: *The Seventh Seal* (Bergman, 1957) – Kanopy

*Your final paper is due **MONDAY AT MIDNIGHT**. I will give you a rubric score and brief comments UNLESS you write “FULL COMMENTS” on your paper and then I will include full comments.

WEEK 15: FINAL EXAM PERIOD

Final exam: Your final exam is scheduled for **GL 137 on 4/24/2018 from 5-7 pm**. You will be distributed a list of potential questions beforehand. Please bring a bluebook to the exam.

Philosophy of Film Potentially Offensive Materials⁴

There will be a unit on pornography in this class. You will not be required to read or watch anything pornographic, although we will be discussing pornographic material. The purpose discussing such materials (in this class) is to educate ourselves about their content and potential effects, so that we can intelligently debate the moral, political, artistic, and philosophical issues they raise.

There are three primary rules that we need to observe when we view or share potentially offensive, shocking, and sexually graphic materials. First, *the reason for viewing them should be evident or explained* (for example, the image may illustrate or provide an example of a practice that we are discussing). Second, *viewers should be warned of potentially disturbing materials* so they can decide whether to view them and how much. Third, *we cannot share illegal (or questionably legal) materials*. We have a constitutionally protected right, as adults, to view and discuss "adult" materials and practices, and in this class, we will exercise this right in a responsible way.

Also, because of the topics in this course, we need to be aware of and observe legal and university policies on sexual harassment. So while we will be discussing pornography, we should be able to do this for educational purposes without engaging in sexually predatory behaviors (unwanted and persistent sexual requests or contact) and without creating a hostile work or learning environment. If explicit (though academic) discussions of sex, or unfamiliar and disturbing sexual practices, inhibit your learning, then you should reconsider whether this is a good course for you.

I welcome suggestions about how to meet the educational goals of the course while observing the basic rules of civil discourse, as well as all relevant university and legal policies. Please engage your classmates respectfully, even if you disagree strongly with their views, and also please do not forward any messages or presentation materials posted on this website to people outside the class without the permission of the author of those messages or materials. Additionally, no recordings can be made without the express consent of both the professor and the student presenter.

These course policies are intended to enable us to pursue the course materials and topics for educational purposes, without embarrassment and with due respect for our rights as citizens and students.

⁴ Adapted from Dr. Laurie Shrage's policy for "Philosophy of Love and Sex."

PHILOSOPHY OF FILM
More information on assignments

ASSIGNMENT NAME: **WEEKLY JOURNALS**

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATE: 8 journals, each due before class

WHERE TO HAND IN THE ASSIGNMENT: Journal can be found on CANVAS

ASSIGNMENT GOAL: The point of these journal entries is to get you to engage with the text before we have our discussion in class. The journals should also help you brainstorm topics for your midterm and final papers.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS:

- You must complete 8 journal entries in this 15-week semester. There is no opportunity to complete a journal entry our first week so this leaves you with 14 possibilities for journal entries.
- Your journal entries **MUST** be handed in before class the day we discuss the reading. No credit will be given for late journals.
- Each journal entry should contain two essential parts: a description of the argument in your text (or what I will refer to as a rehearsal of the argument), and two questions about the text.
 - You should aim at writing more than 250 words about the article for each of your journal entries. This is about half a page single spaced.
 - Your question may ask clarifying questions about the text but they should not be questions that are easily answerable (e.g., “What does the word ‘ontological’ mean?”). I would prefer you ask questions about the theories the text provides (e.g., “Would the philosopher’s account imply X?”) One way to come up with questions is to try to apply our reading to the movie I have assigned you for class.

HOW THIS ASSIGNMENT WILL BE GRADED:

The assignment is worth 3 points.

2 points: Rehearsal of the argument

1 point: questions

-1 point taken off for missed citations **PER CITATION** (this includes citations which do not give me page numbers). Please use in-text citations using MLA style (help here:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>)

WHAT FEEDBACK WILL YOU RECEIVE FROM ME:

Every week I will give you written feedback on your journals. I will try to answer the questions you write. At the very minimum, you will receive a “Well done!” from me. Where you have points taken off, I will justify why you lost points in my comments.

ASSIGNMENT NAME: **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATE: 10 points, 10% of your grade

WHERE TO HAND IN THE ASSIGNMENT: You do not need to hand in anything.

ASSIGNMENT GOAL: You are required to attend class sessions. Attendance includes being awake, alert, and prepared. If you miss more than 1 unexcused classes your participation grade will be lowered by 3 points (3%) per excessive absence. Participation is vital to your success in this class. You are being graded on the quality of your contribution to the class.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS:

*Remember that your grade will receive -3 for every non-excused absence over one absence.

A (9-10) Exemplary: Has missed 1 or fewer classes AND *always contributes* to the discussion BY raising thoughtful questions, bringing up relevant issues or examples, builds on classmates’ ideas, synthesizes readings, expands the class’ perspective, is an active member in group work activities AND treats fellow classmates with respect. “You can disagree without being disagreeable.”

B (8) Competent: Has missed 1 or fewer classes AND *sometimes contributes* to the discussion AND is an active member in group work activities AND treats fellow classmates with respect. “You can disagree without being disagreeable.”

C (7) Developing: Has missed 1 or fewer classes AND *rarely contributes* to discussion AND participates in group work but *is often the student who is unprepared* AND treats fellow classmates with respect. “You can disagree without being disagreeable.”

D (0-6) Not satisfactory: Has missed too many classes to receive a grade in participation OR attends class but never contributes to the discussion OR attends class but is disruptive and/or takes away from class discussion.

HOW THIS ASSIGNMENT WILL BE GRADED:

The assignment is worth 10 points. I will be happy to update you as to your current participation grade at any point during the class.

WHAT FEEDBACK WILL YOU RECEIVE FROM ME:

You will not receive feedback from me on participation unless you make an appointment with me and ask about your participation score (and how you can improve it).

ASSIGNMENT NAME:

LEADERSHIP PROJECT

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATE: 6 points

WHERE TO HAND IN THE ASSIGNMENT: I will hand out a sign-up sheet the first week of class. You will sign up for presentation EITHER WEEK1 or WEEK2. It is your responsibility to sign up for a presentation. There will be a folder for you to submit your “artifact” on CANVAS.

ASSIGNMENT GOAL: Learning goal: To synthesize written and visual material and present it in a fun, educational manner. Assignment goal: To engage your fellow classmates in discussion.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS:

You will sign up for a presentation. In some cases you will be part of a team. If you are part of a team, you must submit a document detailing your contribution to the project.

The goal of the assignment is to engage your fellow classmates in a discussion about the required reading as it applies to the film assigned for the week. You can do this in any number of way: a game, a quiz, a set of discussion question, an activity. A good website to brainstorm activities can be found here:

http://www.queensu.ca/teachingandlearning/modules/active/12_exmples_of_active_learning_activities.html

The one thing you cannot do is READ FROM A POWERPOINT SLIDE. The goal of this assignment is to get your fellow students TALKING and THINKING. You do not have to present the article or explain it. Your goal is to apply the knowledge gained from the article.

HOW THIS ASSIGNMENT WILL BE GRADED:

The assignment is worth 6 points:

3 points: Knowledge: depth of knowledge presented (did you understand and use the information in the article?)

3 points: Active: did you get your fellow students engaged?

WHAT FEEDBACK WILL YOU RECEIVE FROM ME:

I will write you a quick statement justifying my grade on our CANVAS site where you hand in your “artifact.” The artifact is either your quiz, PowerPoint, series of discussion questions, etc. You must hand in an artifact to be graded on this assignment. Every member of the group must hand in this artifact and must include a statement on their contribution to the assignment.

ASSIGNMENT NAME: MIDTERM AND FINAL QUIZ

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATE: 15 points each, 30 points total

WHERE TO HAND IN THE ASSIGNMENT: You will need to bring a BLUE BOOK to class for these exams. You will hand in your blue book.

ASSIGNMENT GOAL: To demonstrate understanding of our philosophical texts.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS:

Every week you will receive "Questions for Understanding" to guide you in our weekly reading. Your midterm and final questions will be taken from these questions. A week before your exam, I will present you with a subset of these "Questions for Understanding" to focus on.

On the day of the exam, you will receive a list of 5 questions, taken from this smaller list of "Questions for Understanding." You will have to answer all five of these questions and you will have 60 minutes to provide a 3-5 sentence response to these questions.

HOW THIS ASSIGNMENT WILL BE GRADED:

Each question is worth 3 points. Please try to answer all five questions.

WHAT FEEDBACK WILL YOU RECEIVE FROM ME:

I will write on your BLUE BOOK where points were taken away (and what for).

ASSIGNMENT NAME: PAPERS

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATE: 15 points each, 30 points total

WHERE TO HAND IN THE ASSIGNMENT: CANVAS (through a link to TURNITIN)

ASSIGNMENT GOAL: To write a persuasive essay arguing for one philosophical position over another.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS:

You must complete two short papers. The papers should have an introduction (with thesis statement), exegesis, argument, and conclusion. If you are having trouble coming up with a thesis statement, please come see me in office hours. You must complete one paper by MARCH 15th of our course (or before). This paper should be 5-7 pages in length (approx. 2500 words). Your second paper will be due the Monday of finals week. You have two options for the final paper: you may choose a new topic and write a new 2500 word paper OR you can turn your original paper into a longer term paper (15 pages). In order to choose the longer paper, you must meet with me via appointment by the 11th week of class and get approval.

If this is your first philosophy class, I strongly advise you come see me with an outline and we can walk through your paper before you submit it. Please make an appointment here: escarbroweb.com

General help on writing philosophy papers can be found here:
<http://myweb.fiu.edu/escarbroweb/tips-for-writing-a-philosophy-paper/>

Help on writing an introduction can be found here:
<http://myweb.fiu.edu/escarbroweb/wp-content/uploads/sites/427/2016/10/TEMPLATE-FOR-YOUR-FIRST-PAPER-INTRODUCTIONS.pdf>

HOW THIS ASSIGNMENT WILL BE GRADED:

This paper reserves 50% of the points for your exegesis of TWO positions we've discussed in class (so 25% per exegesis), 20% allocated toward your original argument, 15% for paper structure, and 15% for communication. A rubric explaining these categories can be found on TURNITIN. I advise you to look through this rubric before submitting your paper.

Plagiarized papers (or parts of paper) will receive a 0 for that assignment.

Missed citations will be marked off at (up to) -1 per citation! When in doubt, over-cite, don't under cite! A brief guide to citations can be found here:
http://myweb.fiu.edu/escarbroweb/wp-content/uploads/sites/427/2016/10/citing_and_plagiarism_pwc.pdf

WHAT FEEDBACK WILL YOU RECEIVE FROM ME:

On your first paper, I will give you a rubric score and I will give you in-text comments on your language and clarity. I will also give you audio comments. In order to access this feedback you **MUST** go to TURNITIN. If you are having a hard time accessing your feedback, come to office hours with your computer OR ask a fellow classmate.