

Philosophy and Film.

9:00 am - 5 pm M-F | Sturm Hall 175
Spring Interterm 2014
PHIL 2701

Professor

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Office Hours: By Appointment



Course Description.

This course explores philosophy and film in popular culture. Film, like other art forms, deals with profound philosophical questions: What is the nature of reality? What is that we desire? What is God? What is the right thing to do? What is love? Film remains one of the most popular cultural expressions and dramatizations of these questions.

Required Readings and Films.

All texts are available as PDF's. Students are expected to print these texts and bring them to class every day. All films are available at coursemedia.du.edu. *The Animatrix* can be viewed online [here](#) and [here](#).

Course Requirements.

1. Participation	10%
2. Film Analysis	40%
5. Final Paper (6-9 pages)	40%

Participation/Attendance.

No absences are allowed. You are expected to participate actively in this class, which includes attending class, reading all assigned material prior to class, bringing all readings to class, and participating productively and professionally in class discussions. If you fail to bring the appropriate texts to class you will be counted as late. The quality and quantity of your participation in the class discussion will be evaluated in assigning 10% of your final grade.

Film Analysis.

For each film, you will write a short paper (1-2 pages or more) that responds to the film and to the reading coupled with it. Two responses will be due per day (except the first day). The lowest response grade will be dropped. The response paper will be graded on two criteria:

1. Demonstrate that you have seen the film and done the reading by responding to each.
 - a. What is the philosophical meaning of the film? What evidence?
 - b. Do you agree or disagree with the author's reading? Why?
2. Pose interesting questions for further reflection and discussion.
 - a. Write at least one question you had about the film.
 - b. Write at least one question you had about the reading.

Hard copies of your papers are due at the end of each class period. It is very important to NEVER include plot summary in your responses. Write as if your reader knows these films very well and has just seen them. Plot summaries will negatively effect your grade.

Final Paper.

In your final 6-9 page paper you will have the option between more than one prompt or writing on an independently chosen topic approved by the Professor.

Policies.

Incomplete Grades and Extensions.

None allowed.

Electronic Submission.

Your final papers will be submitted electronically through blackboard safe assign. Please retain copies of all work submitted and all work returned to you during the term until the final course grade has been posted. In the event of any question concerning whether grades have been accurately recorded, it is your responsibility to provide these copies as documentation.

Computers and Other Electronic Equipment.

Use of electronic equipment, including cell phones, MP3 players, AND LAPTOP COMPUTERS is prohibited during this class. Exceptions to the prohibition of laptops may be requested from the instructor and will be granted only for legitimate academic reasons. Use of laptops for academic reasons will be monitored throughout the term, and failure to restrict their use to this function will result in the revocation of any laptop privileges.

Email.

Please check your email regularly, I will be emailing you several times during the week.

Academic Honesty.

Please review and familiarize yourself with the provisions of the University of Denver Honor Code regarding academic honesty. You can find a summary in each term's Schedule of Classes or at: <http://www.du.edu/studentlife/ccs/2010--2011%20Honor%20Code.pdf>. Violations of academic honesty will be met with disciplinary action (the usual punishment is an "F" for the course). Definitions and examples of plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating are posted in the student life handbook.

Inclement Weather.

It is generally expected that class will meet unless the University is officially closed for inclement weather. If it becomes necessary to cancel class while the University remains open, this will be announced via email.

Individual Differences.

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don't hesitate to consult with me. If you have a documented disability that may prevent you from fully demonstrating your abilities, you should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure your full participation and facilitate your education process. The university offers a wide range of services to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements. Students may also contact the Disability Services Program (DSP) by email dsp@du.edu, phone (303-871-2278), or in person. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities and is located on the 4th floor of Ruffatto Hall, 1999 E. Evans Ave. DSP -- 303.871. 2278 / 7432 / 2455. Information is also available on line at <http://www.du.edu/disability/dsp>; see the Handbook for Students with Disabilities.

Schedule of Activities, Readings, and Assignments

Unit	Week	Date	Readings Due
Metaphysics	Day 1	3/17	Introductions, syllabus, course readings and expectations.
			Readings: Plato, <i>Republic</i> (cave allegory). Weberman, "The Matrix: Simulation and the Postmodern Age"
			Films: The Animatrix: The Second Renaissance, The Matrix
Psychoanalysis	Day 2	3/18	Readings: Slavoj Zizek, "Troubles with the Real: Lacan as a Viewer of Alien"; "The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime: On David Lynch's Lost Highway." (8-26).
			Films: Alien; Lost Highway
Religion	Day 3	3/19	Readings: Douglass and Walls "Takin it easy for all us sinners" Laziness as virtue in the Big Lebowski"; Garrett, <i>The Gospel According to Hollywood</i>
			Films: The Big Lebowski; Cool Hand Luke
Politics	Day 4	3/20	Readings: Marx, <i>Capital</i> , "The Industrial Reserve Army"; Agamben, "The Camp"; Jason Read, "Truth is Structured Like a (Science) Fiction: Notes on Moon and District 9"
			Films: Moon; District 9
Love	Day 5	3/21	Readings: Deleuze, "Proust and Signs"; Jollimore, "Miserably Ever After: Forgetting, Repeating and Affirming Love"
			Films: In the Mood for Love; Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind
		3/23	Final Essay due.