



FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

PHIL 317 Lec 01 – Philosophy and Film

Fall Term 2010

Course Outline

Lectures: MW 16:00-17:15, EDC255

Instructor: Elizabeth Brake

Office: SS 1220

Phone: 403-220-3163

Email: brake@ucalgary.ca

Office Hours : Monday, 1 pm – 3 pm.

Course Description

This course will examine classic problems of philosophy through the medium of film. We will read excerpts from philosophers such as Plato, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Mill, Nietzsche, Sartre, and de Beauvoir. We will focus on three sets of philosophical problems: i) issues in epistemology (theory of knowledge), especially scepticism regarding the external world and other minds, ii) issues in ethics, especially the contrast between utilitarian and rights-based ethics, and iii) nihilist and existentialist responses to traditional value theory. We will also discuss how film, as a medium, is particularly apt to illustrate some of these problems.

Text: Course pack available from University Bookstore

Assessment:

<i>Weight</i>	<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due date</i>
20% each	2 short essays	October 4, November 15
20%	In-class test	October 20
10%	In-class final	December 8
30%	Final paper	December 13

To pass the class, you must complete all assignments. Detailed instructions will be given for each writing assignment. There will not be a Registrar-scheduled final exam.

I will not accept assignments by e-mail. Assignments handed in outside class must be submitted in the drop box on the 12th floor of Social Sciences. Late work will be penalized by 3 points each day it is overdue, unless there is a documented excuse.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any instance of plagiarism – downloading papers from the Internet, copying or paraphrasing material from any source – will be reported to the Faculty of Arts and I will assign an F for the course or the assignment.

As stated in the University Calendar, letter grades reflect the following standards:

A: Excellent — superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.

B: Good — clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.

C: Satisfactory — basic understanding of the subject matter.

D: Minimal pass — marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.

F: Fail — unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.

Grade scale:

A+	97-100	A	93-96	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	60-66		
F	59 and below				

Writing skills will be a factor in the evaluation of work.

There is a Blackboard site for this course. Log in at <http://blackboard.ucalgary.ca/> using your U of C e-mail username and password. I will use Blackboard

- to communicate grades
- to make announcements (including reading assignments)
- to post course documents (this outline, writing assignments, powerpoint slides)
- to link to philosophy web-sites.

Course outline

Week 1 (9/13): Film and ideas; critical thinking

Films: 'Night Mayor' (Guy Maddin), excerpts from 'My Dinner with Andre' (Louis Malle) (shown in class)

Week 2 (9/20): Scepticism about the external world

Film: 'Last Year at Marienbad' (Alain Resnais) (screening to be decided in class)

Plato, *The Republic*, excerpts

Descartes, *Meditations* I and II

Week 3 (9/27): Questions of knowledge and value

Film: 'The Truman Show' (Peter Weir)

Mill, *Utilitarianism*, Chapter 2

Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, 'The Experience Machine'

Week 4 (10/4): Perspectivalism about knowledge, relativism about ethics

Film: 'Rashomon' (Akira Kurosawa)

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, 3rd essay, par. 12

Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, II.ii.51-96

HOLIDAY, NO CLASS, 10/11

Weeks 5-6 (10/13, 10/18): The problem of other minds; gender and identity

Film: 'Vertigo' (Alfred Hitchcock)

de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, excerpt

MID-TERM 10/20

Week 7 (10/25): Response to scepticism

Film: 'The Lady Eve' (Preston Sturges)

G.E. Moore, 'Proof of an External World', *Philosophical Papers*, excerpt

Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness*, 'The Lady Eve'

Week 8 (11/1): Is it better to be unjust?

Film: 'Crimes and Misdemeanors' (Woody Allen)

Plato, *Republic*, excerpts

Week 9 (11/8): How ought one to act?

Film: 'The Rules of the Game' (Jean Renoir)

Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Section II

Week 10 (11/15): The limits of Kantian and utilitarian ethics

Film: 'The Awful Truth' (Leo McCarey)

Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness* and *Cities of Words*, 'The Awful Truth'

Week 11 (11/22): Existentialism

Film: 'The Third Man' (Carol Reed)

Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*

Week 12 (11/29): Nihilism and Freedom

Film: 'Breathless' (Jean-Luc Godard)

Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, excerpts

Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, *The Will to Power*, excerpts

Week 13 (12/6): Meaning

Film: 'Ikiru' (Akira Kurosawa)

Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus*

IN-CLASS FINAL 12/08

PHILOSOPHY IN FILM
PHIL 317
COURSE READER CONTENTS

- 1) Plato, *The Republic*, trans. D. Lee (New York: Penguin, 2003), pp. 3-29, 40-46, 240-248.
- 2) René Descartes, *A Discourse on Method; Meditations and Principles*, trans. J. Veitch (London: Everyman's Library, 1986), pp. 79-94.
- 3) John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (New York: Meridian, 1974), Chapter 2.
- 4) Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), pp. 42-45.
- 5) Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. M. Clark and A. Swensen (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), pp. 84-85.
- 6) William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida* (New York: New American Library, 1998), pp. 84-86.
- 7) Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Vintage, 1989), pp. 267-269, 642-645.
- 8) G. E. Moore, "Proof of an External World," in his *Philosophical Papers* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), pp. 127, 144-150.
- 9) Stanley Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness* (Cambridge: Harvard Film Studies, 1981), pp. 43, 47-70, 237-240.
- 10) Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy*, ed. M. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 72-81.
- 11) Stanley Cavell, *Cities of Words* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 373-383.
- 12) Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Existentialism is a Humanism', in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. W. Kaufmann (New York: Meridian, 1974), pp. 345-369.
- 13) G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 37-39.
- 14) Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. W. Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1968), pp. 93-102.
- 15) Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Giant, 1967), pp. 9-11, 14-18.
- 16) Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (New York: Knopf, 1964), pp. 119-123.

INTELLECTUAL HONESTY

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. As a result, cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination is regarded as **an extremely serious academic offence**, the penalty for which may be an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. The University Calendar states that plagiarism exists when:

- *the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test);*
- *parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;*
- *the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source; and/or*
- *a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.*

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodation. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

STUDENTS' UNION REPRESENTATIVES

The Faculty of Arts Representatives are Laura Golebiowski (arts1@su.ucalgary.ca), Bhuvana Sankaranarayanan (arts2@su.ucalgary.ca), Lara Schmitz (arts3@su.ucalgary.ca), and Vincent St. Pierre (arts4@su.ucalgary.ca) .

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY (FOIP) ACT

The University of Calgary is under the jurisdiction of the provincial FOIP Act in all aspects of its operations as a publicly funded institution. The Department of Philosophy ensures the student's right to privacy by requiring all graded assignments be returned to the student directly from the instructor unless other arrangements have been made in writing and filed with the Department Administrator.

SAFEWALK: PROMOTING CAMPUS SAFETY AND AWARENESS

Twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, Safewalk volunteers walk people safely to their destination on campus. This service is free and available to students, staff, and campus visitors. Safewalks are done in male/female pairs. The volunteers walk anywhere on campus (including McMahon Stadium, Health Sciences, Student Family Housing, the Alberta Children's Hospital and the University LRT station). To request a Safewalk volunteer to walk with you, call 403-220-5333 (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year) or use one of the Help Phones located across campus (they are not just for emergencies).