

<b>CAPILANO UNIVERSITY COURSE OUTLINES</b>		
<b>TERM:</b> Fall 2015	<b>COURSE NO:</b> PHIL 305	
<b>INSTRUCTOR:</b>	<b>COURSE NAME:</b> Philosophy through Film	
<b>OFFICE:</b> <b>E-MAIL:</b>	<b>SECTION NO(S):</b>	<b>CREDITS:</b> 3
<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>		

**COURSE FORMAT:**

Three hours of class time, plus an additional hour delivered through Moodle-based on-line or other activities for a 15 week semester, which includes two weeks for final exams. Students will be expected to watch designated films each week.

**COURSE PREREQUISITES:**

45 credits of 100-level or higher coursework including 6 credits of 100- or 200-level PHIL

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Most films aim to entertain us, but some also or even primarily aim to get us to question and think. Indeed, arguably, film is the most popular medium through which traditional philosophical issues are encountered in today's world and provides the most vivid medium for presenting philosophical thought experiments. This course aims to examine and critically evaluate some of the central philosophical themes and problems by means of the visual medium of film.

Philosophical topics examined through the medium of film are as broad and various as philosophy itself, but themes that have been more extensively explored include the nature of personal identity, what it is to be human, the existence and limits of free will, the existence of God, the meaning of life, as well as a plethora of issues in ethics and political philosophy. The course content and the films through which such issues are explored are tailored to focus on such issues through both classic and contemporary films.

Philosophical texts and essays will be integrated with the viewing of the films in order to bring additional focus to the philosophical examination of the films and to stimulate debate. In class, excerpts from films will further augment the discussions.

**COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have:

- An ability to accurately and clearly explain the key philosophical themes of the course by reference to film.
- An enhanced understanding of the major philosophical theories and the positions covered in the course.
- An ability to thoughtfully and critically discuss abstract philosophical questions through film.

- An enhanced appreciation of film thought experiments as a medium for philosophical enquiry.
- An enhanced confidence and ability at critically challenging often uncritically accepted assumptions, including their own assumptions or beliefs.
- An enhanced general ability to understand and critically examine complex lines of reasoning.
- An enhanced general ability to construct and express, verbally and in writing, complex lines of reasoning.

### **COURSE WEBSITE:**

The course will be managed through Moodle. Passkey: mementomori

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Litch, Mary, M. *Philosophy Through Film* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). London: Routledge, 2010.  
Supplementary essays made available online or via photocopies

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

Students will be expected to contribute critically and constructively to in class discussion and debate and to challenge, where appropriate, the arguments and claims of others. Online activities will allow students to demonstrate both their understanding of the course material and a capacity for critical and original thinking through a series of forum-based responses to questions raised through the course. Essays (or an extended term research paper) will further examine these skills in much greater depth.

### **EVALUATION PROFILE:**

The final grade for the course will be made up of the following: class attendance and participation, online activities, and two essays.

- Attendance and participation:- 10%
- Online Activities:- 30%
- 2 x ~1400 word essays:- 30% each

### **GRADE PROFILE:**

A+ = 90 - 100%	B+ = 77 - 79%	C+ = 67 - 69%	D = 50 - 59%
A = 85 - 89	B = 73 - 76	C = 63 - 66	F = 0 - 49
A- = 80 - 84	B- = 70 - 72	C- = 60 - 62	

### **OPERATIONAL DETAILS:**

Capilano University has policies on Academic Appeals (including appeal of final grade), Student Conduct, Cheating and Plagiarism, Academic Probation and other educational issues. These and other policies are available on the University website.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend regularly, to be punctual, to contribute to discussions, and to behave appropriately in the classroom.

Also, students are responsible for all announcements made and for noting all assessment deadlines and test dates. Any broadcast email messages will be sent to students' @my.capilanou.ca email addresses. It is the student's responsibility to check for messages.

Late Assignments/Missed exams: Make-up exams or assignment extensions are given at the discretion of the instructor and generally only in medical emergencies or cases of severe personal crisis. Documentation (e.g., doctor's note) establishing the reasons for the missed assignment or exam will usually be required. You should notify the instructor *in advance* if you will miss an assignment deadline or an exam. Any reasons given after a missed exam or assignment deadline that could have been given beforehand will not be accepted as grounds for make-up exam or assignment extension. Unless otherwise arranged, no work will be accepted after the final lecture.

English Usage: It is the responsibility of students to proof-read all written work for any grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors. Proper English usage is essential to the clear presentation of one's ideas. Thus, poor grammar, spelling, punctuation, or lack of structure seriously affect the clarity and readability of the submitted work, and will result in a lower grade.

Incomplete Grades: Given at the discretion of the instructor. Generally given only in medical emergencies or severe personal crises. If given, a minimum of 50% of assessed work must be completed by the final exam.

Electronic Devices: No personal electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, calculators, electronic dictionaries, etc...) may be used during an examination without prior approval from the instructor. During an exam, turn off all cell phones and pagers and remove them from the desk.

Emergency Procedures: Students are expected to familiarise themselves with the emergency procedures posted on the wall of the classroom.

**Schedule\***

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Films</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Lecture 1	Introduction	<i>Waking Life</i>	Litch: 1-7
Lecture 2	Appearance and Reality	<i>The Matrix</i> <i>Vanilla Sky</i>	Litch: 8-37 Descartes: <i>Meditations 1.</i> (Litch, 269-272)
Lecture 3	Appearance and Reality	<i>The Truman Show</i>	Berkeley: Excerpt from <i>A Treatise Concerning Human Knowledge</i> (Litch 273-284) Kant: Excerpt from <i>Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics</i>
Lecture 4	Personal Identity	<i>The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind</i> , <i>Memento</i>	Litch: 68-91 Locke: <i>Of Identity and Diversity</i> (Litch, 292-297)
Lecture 5	Personal Identity	<i>Bladerunner</i>	Williams: <i>The Self and the Future</i>
Lecture 6	Consciousness and Personhood	<i>AI</i> <i>Bladerunner</i>	Searle: <i>Minds, Brains and Programs</i> Litch: 92-117
Lecture 7	The Extended Mind	<i>Memento</i>	Clark: <i>Memento's Revenge</i> Bauer, M. <i>We All Need Mirrors to Remind Us Who We Are: Inherited Meaning and Inherited Selves in Memento</i>
Lecture 8	Free Will	<i>The Matrix</i> , <i>Gattaca</i>	Michael McKenna, <i>Neo's Freedom ... Whoa!</i>
Lecture 9	Free Will	<i>Minority Report</i> , <i>Memento</i>	Eisikovits, N & Shai Biderman, <i>So Tired of the Future: Freedom and Determinism in Minority Report</i>
Lecture 10	Moral Responsibility	<i>Minority Report</i> , <i>Memento</i>	George Bragues: <i>Memory and Moral in Memento</i>
Lecture 11	Morality and Relativism	<i>Crimes and Misdemeanors</i> , <i>The Seventh Seal</i>	Litch: 143-166
Lecture 12	The Problem of Evil	<i>The Seventh Seal</i>	Litch: 188-208
Lecture 13	Existentialism	<i>The Seventh Seal</i>	Litch: 209-226
<b>Weeks 14 &amp; 15</b>	<b>Exam Period</b>		

\*Some topics may be discussed in either the week before or the week after they are listed, depending on how much time we spend on each topic