

## PHIL 133: Intro to Philosophy of Film, Fall 2010

TuTh 8:30-9:45 a.m., Candler Library 120

Instructor: Catherine Homan

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Office Hours: Bowden 313, Tu 10-11:30 a.m., W 10:30-11:30 a.m.

**Course Description:** Although relatively young, film has exploded into an incredibly rich, diverse, and at times, problematic field. The purpose of this course is to explore the philosophical questions surrounding film. The course will be organized into four different topics addressing the nature of film. We first ask what film is. Is it art? Is it different from photography or other media? Next we address issues of authorship and narration. Is there an inherent author of film? How is film narrated? Based on this we will explore in the third section the relationships among genre, emotion, and narration. How does film affect us? How does the genre employed affect the narration and reception? Lastly we will ask questions about the relation between film and society. Can film be a form of social criticism? What can we know from films? The course will include a variety of articles with film clips shown in class. Throughout the semester we will also be watching several films in their entirety. These mandatory screenings will occur outside of class time and will replace one of the scheduled class sessions for that week.

### Course Texts:

*The Philosophy of Film: Introductory Text and Readings*, ed. Thomas E. Wartenberg and Angela Curran. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005. ISBN 1405114428

Other texts will be posted on *ReservesDirect*

### Assignments and Grading:

Three 2-3 page analysis papers, 10% each

Three exams, 20% each

Participation, 10%

Attendance is mandatory.

*Papers:* There will be three shorter critical analysis papers of 2-3 typed, double-spaced pages worth 10% each. The papers provide you the opportunity to demonstrate familiarity with the texts by answering a particular prompt, which will be distributed a week before the deadline. You must cite sources for both direct quotations and paraphrases. Please use the MLA parenthetical style. A guide to this can be found online at <http://writingcenter.emory.edu/writing/mla.html> or <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01>. When it comes to citation, it is always better to err on the side of caution. Correct grammar, style, and usage are important for expressing yourself clearly, so please see the Writing Center if you need help in these areas. If you have further questions, please consult me.

Papers may be submitted via the Assignments site on Blackboard or in hard copy *by the start of class on the day it is due*. Late papers will be marked down one grade step for each day late, e.g. a “B” paper one day late will be a “B-,” unless *prior* arrangements have been made.

*Exams:* 60%. There will be three exams. Each will be in-class and will be made up of true and false, short answer, and essay questions. A study guide will be provided before the exams.

*Participation:* 10%. Participation in class is important. I expect students to come to class having completed the assigned readings and with the texts in hand. Participation means not simply speaking for the sake of speaking, but contributing to the development of class discussion on comments or questions. As a fairly shy person, I understand that it can be difficult to participate verbally. I urge you to try anyway and I will also make a special note of active listening. Please also remember that participation includes respect, so disruptive behavior such as talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early, and the use of cell phones will not be tolerated.

Attendance will be taken each class. Because we will be covering material in class that is not necessarily in the readings, it is to your definite advantage to attend each session. The viewings outside of class are intended to be shared, so please plan on attending each of these. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your final grade. When you miss class, it is *your* responsibility to inquire about the material covered or assignments missed.

#### **Grading Scale for Written Assignments**

A+	99-100	
A	93-98	clear, concise, excellent grasp of the material, free of errors
A-	90-92	
B+	88-89	
B	83-87	mostly clear, good understanding, mostly well-written
B-	80-82	
C+	78-79	
C	73-77	somewhat clear, basic understanding, several errors or issues
C-	70-72	
D+	68-69	
D	60-68	unclear, lack of understanding, significant number of errors
F	59 and below	very unclear, little to no grasp of the material, plagued by errors

No extra credit will be awarded.

#### **Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to follow the Emory College Honor Code. You may consult your peers when working on papers or studying for exams, but all work and wording must be your own. All work that is not your own must be cited, as outlined above. I will submit all cases of suspected academic dishonesty to the Honor Council. If you have any questions, please contact me or consult the Honor Code: [http://college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor\\_code.html](http://college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html)

#### **Disability and Access**

If you require any particular accommodations, please speak to me so we can work together to make optimal arrangements. You may also contact and register with the Office of Disability Services, Administration Building, Suite 110 and at (404) 727-9877.

## Schedule

8/25 Introduction, *Un Chien Andalou*

### I. *What is Film?*

8/31 "What is the Nature of Film?" p. 39-42; Münsterberg, "Defining the Photoplay," p. 43-9

9/2 Arnheim, "The Artistry of Silent Film," p. 50-8

Viewing: *Citizen Kane*

9/7 Bazin, "Cinematic Realism," p. 59-69

9/9 Walton, "Film, Photography, and Transparency," p. 70-6; Selection from Plato's *Republic*,  
*ReservesDirect*

9/14 Cavell, "The World Viewed," *ReservesDirect*; **Paper 1 Due**

9/16 Danto, "Moving Pictures," *ReservesDirect*

### II. *Film, Authorship, and Narration*

9/21 "Do Films Have Authors?" p. 91-4; Truffaut, "La Politique des Auteurs," p. 95-8;

Sarris, "Auteur Theory and Film Evaluation," p. 99-107

9/23 Kael, "The Idea of Film Criticism," p. 108-17; Heath, "Against Authorship," p. 118-22

Viewing: *Rear Window*

9/28 "Must Films Have Narrators?" p. 179-92; Bordwell, "Principles of Film Narration," p. 183-9

9/30 **Exam 1**

Viewing: *Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes*

10/5 Chatman, "The Cinematic Narrator," 190-7

10/7 Wilson, "Narration as Showing," 198-207

Viewing: *The Philadelphia Story*

10/12 Fall Break

10/14 Cavell, "The Importance of Importance," *ReservesDirect*; **Paper 2 Due**

### III. *Film, Emotion, and Genre*

Viewing: *Do the Right Thing*

10/19 "How Do Films Engage Our Emotions?" p. 133-7; Currie, "Narrative Desire," p. 139-47

10/21 Platinga, "Spectator Emotion and Ideological Film Criticism," p. 148-59

Viewing: *Rosemary's Baby*

10/26 Carroll, "The Paradox of Horror," p. 170-7

10/28 Freeland, "Realist Horror," 260-9

11/2 Levinson, "Film Music and Narrative Agency," *ReservesDirect*

11/4 **Exam 2**

#### IV. *Film, Knowledge, and Society*

Viewing: *Stella Dallas*

- 11/9 Cavell, "Stella's Taste: Reading *Stella Dallas*," *ReservesDirect*  
11/11 Curran, "Stella at the Movies: Class, Critical Spectatorship, and Melodrama in *Stella Dallas*," p. 235-45

Viewing: *Triumph of the Will*

- 11/16 Devereaux, "Beauty and Evil: the case of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*," *ReservesDirect*  
11/18 Dwyer, "Pornography," *ReservesDirect*; Wallace, "Big Red Son," *ReservesDirect*

Viewing: *It Happened One Night*

- 11/23 Cavell, "Knowledge as Transgression," p. 253-9 **Paper 3 Due**  
11/25 Thanksgiving  
11/30 Hanson, "Minerva in the Movies: Relations Between Philosophy and Film," *ReservesDirect*;  
Deleuze "Philosophy of Film as the Creation of Concepts," p. 33-37  
12/2 Review and Final Discussion

**Final Exam: Friday, Dec. 10, 8:30-11:00 a.m.**