

PHIL 130: Philosophy & Pop Culture (News)

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Office Hours: M;T 10-11am
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Course Description:

It is generally assumed that philosophy and popular culture have little to do with one another. Philosophers' lives do not become fodder for tabloid magazines, while philosophies themselves are obtuse and resist popular representations. Although both are cultural expressions, philosophy requires critical thinking and an affinity for rationality and argumentation, while popular culture calls for an unthinking immersion—it inspires feelings and opinions. By focusing on the news, this course aims at undermining these distinctions by making news events the object of critical thought and by exploring the representations of philosophical ideas in the news.

Each week we will be reading the news while keeping in mind a particular philosophical essay. Although each week has a topic, we will not limit our discussions to the topic; rather, discussions of other relevant events in the news will be regularly encouraged. Every Thursday will be set aside for in-class presentations on current news events. Presentations will be around ten minutes long (five minutes: summary of a news event/connection to philosophical texts; five minutes: questions and discussion). As a final project for the course, each student will construct a blog that consists of five well-crafted 'think pieces'.

Requirements:

10% In-Class Presentation
40% Weekly Synopsis (7; 1-2 pg)
30% Final Project (Blog)
20% Participation/Attendance

100%

Required Texts:

You are required to bring the assigned texts to each class. A course reader for the class is available at the Copy Shop.

Classroom Policies

Electronics	<u>Please turn off all electronic equipment prior to the start of class.</u> Use of laptop computers during class is prohibited except as part of a classroom exercise. 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.
Academic Misconduct	The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly

Individual Differences

acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don't hesitate to consult with me. If you have a 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, including the following:

- *Teaching & Learning Center (TLC)*: TLC provides numerous resources (including courses, workshops, and tutoring) to help UO students succeed. They work with a diverse student body with a wide range of needs. If you are unsure which resources would work best, they are happy to answer questions and share suggestions.

Web: <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/> – Phone: 541-346-2184.

- *University Counseling and Testing Center (UCTC)*: The UCTC provides comprehensive mental health care and testing services to the University of Oregon campus. The primary mission of the UCTC is to provide quality clinical/therapeutic services, psychological testing and assessment, psychoeducational workshops and outreach as well as emergency services. Web: <http://counseling.uoregon.edu/dnn/> – Phone: 541-346-3227

- *Disability Services (DS)*: DS coordinates services, provides advocacy and support to students with documented physical, learning, and psychological disabilities and provides assistance to the general campus community in responding appropriately to requests for accommodations based on disability. Web: <http://ds.uoregon.edu/> Phone: 541-346-6013

Course Schedule

Week One	From Stories to Newspapers Benjamin, "The Storyteller"
Week Two	News Photography Barthes, "Part One," <i>Camera Lucida</i>
Week Three	War Butler, "Violence, Mourning, Politics," <i>Precarious Life</i>
Week Four	Police Shootings in the US Fanon, <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i>
Week Five	School Shootings in the US Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i>
Week Six	Death Penalty Derrida, <i>Death Penalty</i>

Guenther, *Solitary Confinement*

- Week Seven American Dream
 TBD
- Week Eight Entertainment
 Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*
- Week Nine Sports
 Young, "Throwing Like a Girl"
- Week Ten Astrology
 Adorno, *Stars Down to Earth*