Try to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost. -- *Henry James*

**Course Description:**

In its relatively brief history (scarcely more than a century), film has arguably become the most significant art form and medium for the origination and transmission of culture. Perhaps because of the brevity of its existence, or perhaps due to its dismissal as merely “popular” culture (a form of cultural production often deemed unworthy of serious reflection) it has received relatively little attention from philosophers. When, however, philosophers have attended to film, they have commonly sought only to adapt accepted “philosophical” problems to their study of the subject (traditional metaphysical and epistemological problems concerned with the relationship between experience and reality, for example, take the form of the examination of the relationship of film to reality), or worse still, they have regarded film as capable only of shallow, but perhaps more accessible, illustration of already charted philosophical ground (e.g. “The Truman Show” as crudely illustrative of Plato’s cave allegory).

This course, premised upon the view that philosophy is a disciplined practice of inquiry and evaluation that does not have its own particular subject matter (other than its own practice), will, instead, endeavor to develop films philosophically. That is to say, the films themselves will be regarded as subject matter for philosophical examination. They will be allowed to raise their own problems, advance their own claims, and propose their own solutions, all to be carefully examined, interrogated and evaluated.

**Required Texts:**

- *All required readings will be available for download on the course’s Blackboard page. Purchase of media (DVDs or access to Digital Video files) may be required.*

**Course Requirements and Grades:**

- **Two Film Development Essays**, ~5 pages in length: (40%)
- **Briefer film “Developments” and Responses**: (40%)
  
  *(Note that completion of this portion of the course requires registration at www.filmtank.org, a non-commercial, publicly accessible website/forum that has been developed, and offered to the world, out of this course at the University of Oregon.)*

- **Attendance and Participation**: (20%)
Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- View films with an increased attentiveness to, an understanding of, how their non-narrative aspects—what might be termed “film form” or “film thinking” (color, sound, perspective, transitions, etc.)—contribute to their meaning.
- Make use of films for the process of significant and substantial philosophical inquiry.
- Engage in philosophical inquiry that examines a broad range of topics such as human nature, meaning, the self and the community, political authority, morality, dignity, justice, recognition and identity.
- Demonstrate critical thinking, reading, and writing skills through academic format essays and the use of films and other primary sources in philosophical literature.

Assignment Guidelines:

All written work, unless otherwise specified, should be written independently. You are encouraged to discuss all aspects of this course with your fellow students, but the work you turn in must be entirely your own. Any academic dishonesty will result, at minimum, in course failure. University of Oregon Academic Misconduct Code:

[Link to Academic Misconduct Code]

All work is to be submitted in class, unless otherwise directed. No work may be submitted via email without prior arrangement. Late essays will be marked down according to degree of lateness. Smaller written assignments will not be accepted late.

Philosophy Department Grading Rubric:

A = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.
B = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.
C = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.
D = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.
F = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

Technology Guidelines:

No electronic devices (including laptops, tablets, and mobile phones) are to be used during class time. Email communication with your instructors is sincerely encouraged but proper language (spelling, punctuation, etc.) should be used. Your messages should also be addressed, signed, and have a subject heading which makes reference to the course (PHIL 332).

Classroom Guidelines:
Class attendance is required. You are expected to arrive before class begins, be respectful and polite to everyone in the room, and to stay until it ends. If you should need to leave before the end of class, please let me know before class begins.

**Accessibility:**

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if aspects of the instruction or course design result in barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Office of Accessible Education in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu

**Sexual Harassment and Assault:**

The University of Oregon is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that all UO employees are required reporters. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO’s 24-hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at http://safe.uoregon.edu/

**Schedule**

M (6/22): Introduction, Film Thinking
T (6/23): Film Thinking
W (6/24): screening: *WALL•E* (Andrew Stanton, 2008)
  Reading: Theodor Adorno, “Free Time”
R (6/25): discussion
  Group 1 Initial filmtank developments posted before class.
  Groups 2-7 filmtank responses posted before midnight.
F (6/26): discussion
M (6/29): *Koyaanisqatsi* (Godfrey Reggio, 1982)
Reading: Martin Heidegger, “Memorial Address”

T (6/30): discussion
Group 2 Initial filmtank developments posted before class.
Groups 1, 3-7 filmtank responses posted before midnight.

W (7/1): screening: *Moon* (Duncan Jones, 2009)
Reading: excerpts from Jürgen Habermas, "The Debate on the Ethical Self-Understanding of the Species"

R (7/2): discussion
Group 3 Initial filmtank developments posted before class.
Groups 1, 2, 4-7 filmtank responses posted before midnight.

F (7/3): discussion

M (7/6): screening: *Her* (Spike Jonze, 2013)
Reading: tba

**Film Development Essay #1 due**

T (7/7): discussion
Group 4 Initial filmtank developments posted before class.
Groups 1-3, 5-7 filmtank responses posted before midnight.

Reading: tba

R (7/9): discussion
Group 5 Initial filmtank developments posted before class.
Groups 1-4, 6, 7 filmtank responses posted before midnight.

F (7/10): discussion

Reading: tba

T (6/14): discussion
Group 6 Initial filmtank developments posted before class.
Groups 1-5, 7 filmtank responses posted before midnight.

Reading: excerpts from Jean-Paul Sartre, “Existentialism as Humanism”

R (7/16): discussion
Group 7 Initial filmtank developments posted before class.
Groups 1-6 filmtank responses posted before midnight.

F (7/17): discussion

M: (7/20), Noon: **Film Development Essay #2 due**

*Bring your completed essays by the Philosophy Dept. office (2nd Floor, Susan Campbell Hall) before Noon.*
Using filmtank.org

Registration:

1) Go to http://filmtank.org/forum/
2) Click on the "Register" button at the bottom left of the main banner.
3) Check the box to agree to the forum rules, and click the "Register" button.
4) Enter a username consisting of your first initial and last name (e.g. S.Brence) and a password of your own choosing (be sure to write this password down).
5) Enter your University of Oregon email address.
6) Enter "ducks" in the anti-spam question box, and click the "Complete Registration" button.
6) Return the confirmation email sent to you by the site.

Film Development Prompts:

Both Pre-viewing and Post-viewing Prompts are contained in the second block of forums on the main forum page (http://filmtank.org/forum/), or directly through this link: http://filmtank.org/forum/forumdisplay.php?f=7

Consult the pre-viewing prompts before the screening of each film, and then the post-viewing prompts after the screening. You may need to go to the second page to find relevant threads for a film; those for "Office Space", for example, are on page two. You may also use the search feature (the box at the top-center of the page), of course.

Creating Thread for a New Film Development:

1) Compose the text of your development off-line so you may spell-check and otherwise proofread it. For a general treatment of the process of "film development", see the following guide: http://filmtank.org/forum/showthread.php?t=9

2) Make sure you are properly logged in after following the registration steps outline above.

3) From the main forum page (http://filmtank.org/forum/) the Film Development forums are the first block of forums at the top of the page. We will be using the "Films" forum at the top of the block, accessible directly via this link: http://filmtank.org/forum/forumdisplay.php?f=3

4) Click the "New Thread" button at the top left of the forum.
5) Title your thread according to the following format: Film Title (Director name, Date) - your own unique title--e.g. The Maltese Falcon (John Huston, 1941) - The Temptation of Sam Spade

6) Paste the text of your post composed offline. Enter a blank space between each paragraph.

7) Add the film title and director name in the "Tags' box at the bottom, separating each by a comma.

8) Double-check that your title is as it should be and click the "Submit New Thread" button.

Adding a Reply in an Existing Thread:

1) From the main forum page (http://filmtank.org/forum/) the Film Development forums are the first block of forums at the top of the page. We will be using the "Films" forum at the top of the block, accessible directly via this link: http://filmtank.org/forum/forumdisplay.php?f=3

2) In the empty box at the top-center of the page, enter the title of the film (e.g. Office Space) and switch the pull-down menu to the right to "Search Titles Only". Click the "Search" button.

3) Find a threads of recent date. Read them all and then choose one to which you would wish to add a reply.

4) Compose your reply offline so you may spell-check and otherwise proofread your post.

5) Make sure you are properly logged in after following the registration steps outline above.

6) At the top of the thread to which you are adding a reply, click the "Post Reply" button at the top-left of the thread. Paste the text of your reply, adding a space between paragraphs.

7) There is no need for a new title to your reply, but you may add one if you wish.

8) Click the "Submit Reply" button.

For Creating New Threads and Posting Replies in Existing Threads, you may also review the following two documents (Both "stickied" at the top of the "Films" forum):

"Posting Guidelines for 'Films' sub-forum": http://filmtank.org/forum/showthread.php?t=33
"About Film Development": http://filmtank.org/forum/showthread.php?t=9

If you have any questions or concerns, please email me and I will try to help as quickly as I can.

Steven Brence -- brences@uoregon.edu or stevenbrence@filmtank.org