PHL 365

Film and Philosophy

S2 External 2014

Philosophy

Contents

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
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Credit points
3

Prerequisites
39cp or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
What can philosophy teach us about cinema? What can film show us about philosophy? Can films do philosophy? This unit explores these questions across a range of writings dealing with philosophical, aesthetic and ethical aspects of our engagement with film. Rather than treating film as an illustration of various theories or ideas, we examine the ways in which film itself can explore philosophical problems in visual and narrative terms. We begin with the problems of cinematic representation, visual perception, and the ontology of the moving image. We consider how film represents our subjective experience by exploring the phenomenology of perception, movement, emotional engagement, and time- consciousness. We also analyse how films can explore philosophical ideas, focusing on the provocative claim that films can do philosophy by cinematic means. Finally, we examine some of the ethical, moral, and ideological implications of film in modern culture. Throughout the unit we analyse the work of philosophers who investigate the philosophical dimensions of film, or who construct new ways of thinking about film philosophically (eg, Stanley Cavell, Gilles Deleuze, and Stephen Mulhall). We also study various films and filmmakers from a philosophical point of view with the aim of demonstrating the creative intersection between film and philosophy.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

To find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.

To interpret and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical and cultural issues.

To analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary cinema and its link with philosophy.

To apply philosophical theories to specific film examples.

To locate and evaluate contemporary media discussions of film from a philosophical point of view.

To create or design a means of communicating your own reflections on philosophy of film.

To participate actively in group discussion and learning activities during tutorials.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Film-Philosophy Exercise	10%	Wed 27/08
First Essay	30%	Tues 18/09
Tutorial Participation	10%	Throughout semester
Film-Philosophy Journal	15%	Tues 5/11
Second Essay	35%	Tues 12/11

Film-Philosophy Exercise

Due: **Wed 27/08**
Weighting: **10%**

This exercise involves writing a short discussion of a recent film (a list will be suggested) linking it to one of the ideas studied in the course. Students will be asked to explain briefly a theoretical idea or issue, and to use a contemporary film/film scene as an example of how this idea might be relevant to our philosophical understanding of the film [e.g. a student might discuss scenes from the film *The Matrix* in relation to the idea of Plato's cave or Descartes' radical scepticism.] The writing exercise should be between 500 and 750 words in length.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- To interpret and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical and cultural issues.
- To analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary cinema and its link with philosophy.
- To apply philosophical theories to specific film examples.

First Essay

Due: **Tues 18/09**
Weighting: **30%**

The essays are designed to test your ability to engage with a topic in depth. Writing an essay tests your ability to express, analyse and organise key ideas clearly and systematically, and to develop an argument or point of view in a sustained and coherent manner. Essays are also the primary mode in which philosophical research is conducted; writing essays in philosophy units thus helps enhance students' abilities to analyse, interpret, and propose philosophical points of view on a variety of topics and problems.

The first essay deals with topics covered in the first half of the course (Week 1-Week 7). The essay questions for the first essay will be made available by Week 3. All essay questions can be downloaded via the PHL365 website. All essays will be submitted electronically via the PHL365 website (details to follow). Essays will be returned with marks and comments approximately three weeks after submission.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- To find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- To interpret and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical and cultural issues.
- To analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary cinema and its link with philosophy.
- To apply philosophical theories to specific film examples.

Tutorial Participation

Due: **Throughout semester**
Weighting: **10%**

Tutorials are an important site of individual and group learning. Philosophy tutorials involve students in active discussion with their tutor and fellow students, raising and responding to questions, analysing problems, and engaging in individual and group learning activities with their

tutor. Students will also prepare a brief essay plan/opening paragraph for their final essay as part of their tutorial participation. Students are expected to attend at least 75% of classes (9/12).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- To participate actively in group discussion and learning activities during tutorials.

Film-Philosophy Journal

Due: **Tues 5/11**
Weighting: **15%**

Students are required to submit a Film-Philosophy Journal covering weeks 2-12 of the course, with a brief entry for at least six weeks of the course (the written content of the journal should amount to approximately 1000-1500 words overall). The journal can be a workbook, scrapbook, diary, or other format of your own choosing (e.g. blog, webpage, photographs, artwork, video clip, etc). Students are asked to write their responses to the week's lecture material, readings, and tutorial discussion, and where appropriate to discuss examples of films that they have seen or discussed in class.

In the journal you may write your thoughts and impressions of the material studied from week to week, provide summaries of readings, or reflections on the topics explored that week; you include images, photographs, film reviews, and other creative works of your own relevant to film and philosophy, if you wish. Students are also encouraged to use the journal to work through ideas that will be relevant in preparing their essays.

The journal is designed to promote ongoing reading and reflection on the weekly topics explored in the lectures, in set readings, and in tutorial discussion; it also aims to encourage students to apply ideas explored in the course to contemporary cinema s well as to broader social and cultural debates.

Over the course of the semester, the journal should show evidence of:

 a) reflection on weekly readings and topics raised in tutorial discussion (study notes, questions, written comments, etc.);

b) research into essay and tutorial topics (e.g. secondary readings, essay preparation, revision of lectures, reading, and tutorial material); and

c) application of the theories discussed in the course to contemporary films and wider social and cultural debates (personal reflection, critical analysis of particular films, theoretically informed use of images, and so on).

The journal is supposed to be a useful aid for ongoing study and research as well as providing

an opportunity to exercise more independent, creative, and critical thinking.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- To interpret and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical and cultural issues.
- To analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary cinema and its link with philosophy.
- To apply philosophical theories to specific film examples.
- To locate and evaluate contemporary media discussions of film from a philosophical point of view.
- To create or design a means of communicating your own reflections on philosophy of film.

Second Essay

Due: **Tues 12/11**
Weighting: **35%**

The second essay deals with topics covered in the second half of the course (Week 8-Week 13). The essay questions for the second essay will be made available by Week 9 (all essay questions can be downloaded via the PHL365 Blackboard website). All essays will be submitted electronically via the PHL365 website (details to follow). Essays will be returned with marks and comments approximately three weeks after submission.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- To find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- To interpret and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical and cultural issues.
- To analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary cinema and its link with philosophy.
- To apply philosophical theories to specific film examples.

Delivery and Resources

 Required and Recommended Texts and/or Materials

PHL365 Film and Philosophy will be using electronically available readings, either via e-reserve

at the library or via online open access websites.

The course is closely related to the following book, which is highly recommended reading:

Robert Sinnerbrink, *New Philosophies of Film: Thinking Images* (London and New York Continuum, 2011).

A copy of this book will be kept in the Reserve section of the Macquarie University library. Copies may also be purchased via the Co-op bookstore (http://www.coop-bookshop.com.au/bookshop/action/InstTextSelect?inst_name=macquarie-university).

Technology Used and Required

This unit uses an ilearn website and Echo360 lecture recordings (https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/login/MQ/). The website contains links to lecture notes, ilecture recordings, and other materials you might need for the course.

Attendance

Attendance and Participation Mark

For **internal students**, this will represent commitment to attending tutorials and participating in discussion. Attendance at a minimum of 75% of tutorials (9/12) is, under normal circumstances, a **requirement** for passing the unit.

For **external students**, this will represent commitment to the on-campus sessions, and to participating in the weekly online tutorial discussion via the website Discussion Board. External students who do not participate in the online tutorial discussion (responding to weekly tutorial questions and engaging with other students' responses) will be marked down accordingly.

Examination(s)

This unit has no formal examination.

Assignment submission

Bar-Coded Arts Coversheet

All written assignments will be submitted electronically (both for internal students and for external students). All students must attach a completed coversheet to all submitted work. A personalised assignment coversheet is generated from the student section of the Faculty of Arts website at:

http://www.arts.mq.edu.au/current_students/undergraduate/admin_central/coversheet

Please provide your student details and click the *Get my assignment coversheet* button to generate your personalised assignment cover sheet. No other coversheets will be provided by the Faculty.

All written work must also be submitted through Turnitin. A link for each assignment will be available on the PHL365 website.

Extensions and penalties

Requests for extensions must in normal circumstances be made in writing before the due date.

Extensions of less than one week may be granted by your tutor if reasonable grounds are given and some written documentation can be produced. All email extension requests must mention the Unit Code in the Subject Heading. Extensions of more than one week must be made in writing (or by email) to the unit convenor (Robert Sinnerbrink). Note that such applications for extensions must be accompanied by appropriate written documentation (medical certificates, etc.). Approvals for extensions will be noted on the essay cover page.

Essays that are handed in later than the due date where no extension has been granted, or that are handed in later than the extension date, will be penalised for lateness by deducting

3% for each day late (e.g. if your raw mark is 70% (a Credit) but your essay is two days late, you will receive 64% (a Pass)).

All late essays must be submitted within 14 days of the essay due date. No essay will be accepted after this time unless there are deemed to be special circumstances.

Special Consideration Policy:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/policy.html

Applying for Special Consideration

Students applying for Special Consideration circumstances of three (3) consecutive days' duration, within a study period, and/or prevent completion of a formal examination must submit an on-line application with the Faculty of Arts. For an application to be valid, it must include a completed Application for Special Consideration form and all supporting documentation.

The on-line Special Consideration application is found at:

http://www.arts.mq.edu.au/current_students/undergraduate/admin_central/special_consideration.

Essays that are handed in later than the due date where no extension has been granted, or which are handed in later than the extension date, will be penalised for lateness by deducting 3% for each day late (e.g. if your raw mark is 70% (a Credit) but your essay is two days late, you will receive 64% (a Pass)).

All late essays must be submitted within 14 days of the essay due date. No essay will be accepted after this time unless there are deemed to be special circumstances.

Unit Schedule
PHL365 Film and Philosophy

Week 1 (Aug 5-6): **What is philosophy of film/film-philosophy?**

What is "philosophy of film"? Can films "philosophise"? The distinction between philosophy of film and 'film as philosophy' or 'film-philosophy'.

Week 2 (Aug 12-13): **Ontologies of the Moving Image**

Andre Bazin's ontology of the cinematographic image. Noel Carroll's critique and alternative account. Some questions about the phenomenology of moving images and our 'desire for

reality'.

Week 3 (Aug 19-20): **Understanding Film Narrative**

How and why do films makes sense? Theories of narrative and of narrative comprehension. Carroll's 'erotetic' model of narrative. Critical questions from an aesthetic and phenomenological point of view.

Week 4 (Aug 26-27): **Cognitivism Goes to the Movies**

The 'cognitivist turn' in film theory. What can cognitivist theories offer to philosophy of film? The challenge of cognitivist approaches to art cinema. Critical questions for cognitivism.

Week 5 (Sept 2-3): **Affect and Emotion in Cinema**

Theories of affect and emotion in the cinema. Cognivitist and phenomenological approaches: a rapprochement? *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (Julian Schnabel) as case study.

Week 6 (Sept 9-10): **Cinematic Ethics**

The relationship between emotion, morality, and cinema. Moral judgment and aesthetic manipulation. Can cinema 'do' ethics? The problem of theorising cinematic disgust.

Week 7 (Sept 16-17): **READING WEEK**

MID-SEMESTER BREAK (Sept 20-Oct 6)

Week 8 (Oct 7-8): **Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Film**

Deleuze's theses on movement and time. The concept of the movement-image and how they are composed into a filmic whole. The breakdown of the sensory-motor action schema and the discovery of the time-image. How time-images disrupt narrative and provoke thought.

Week 9 (Oct 14-15): **Stanley Cavell's Philosophy of Film**

Cavell's analysis of the cinematic image. Film and the metaphysics of representation. What happens to human figures when projected on the screen? How to 'read' a film philosophically.

Week 10 (Oct 21-22): **Film as Philosophy: Pro and Contra**

The 'film as philosophy' thesis. Livingston's critique of the strong version; Wartenberg's defense of a 'moderate' versions; Mulhall's and Smuts' defences of different kinds of 'bold' thesis. Critical questions about the relationship between philosophical theory and film criticism.

Week 11 (Oct 28-29): **Film-Philosophy Case study (1): *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*** (Michel Gondry)

Memory, morality, and self-overcoming in Michel Gondry's unorthodox love story.

Week 12 (Nov 4-5): **Film-Philosophy Case Study (2): *Fight Club*** (David Fincher)

Platonic, sceptical, critical, and Nietzschean themes in David Fincher's *Fight Club.*

Week 13 (Nov 11-12): **Film-Philosophy Case Study (3): *The New World*** (Terrence Malick)

Nature, culture, and the violent encounter between worlds in Terrence Malick's mythopoetic

historical drama.

Learning and Teaching Activities

Lecture

Two one hour lectures per week given Staff Lecturers. These will be recorded on Echo360 and available as downloadable recordings on the ilearn website for this unit. Powerpoint slides/notes will also be available via the website.

Tutorials

One one hour tutorial per week. Students will enrol in a tutorial class and engage in weekly discussion and learning activities relating to the weekly course material. Tutorials begin in Week 2 and students must attend at least 9/12 classes.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central. Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html

Grading Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html

Grade Appeal Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the Learning and Teaching Category of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://students.mq.edu.au/support/

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- To find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
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- To create or design a means of communicating your own reflections on philosophy of film.
- To participate actively in group discussion and learning activities during tutorials.

Assessment tasks

- Film-Philosophy Exercise
- First Essay
- Tutorial Participation
- Film-Philosophy Journal
- Second Essay

Learning and teaching activities

- Two one hour lectures per week given Staff Lecturers. These will be recorded on Echo360 and available as downloadable recordings on the ilearn website for this unit. Powerpoint slides/notes will also be available via the website.
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Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- To find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
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Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- To find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- To interpret and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical and cultural issues.
- To analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary cinema and its link with philosophy.
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Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- To find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- To interpret and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical and cultural issues.
- To analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary cinema and its link with philosophy.
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Learning and teaching activities

- Two one hour lectures per week given Staff Lecturers. These will be recorded on Echo360 and available as downloadable recordings on the ilearn website for this unit. Powerpoint slides/notes will also be available via the website.
- One one hour tutorial per week. Students will enrol in a tutorial class and engage in weekly discussion and learning activities relating to the weekly course material. Tutorials begin in Week 2 and students must attend at least 9/12 classes.

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- To find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- To interpret and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical and cultural issues.
- To analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary cinema and its link with philosophy.
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Learning and teaching activities

- Two one hour lectures per week given Staff Lecturers. These will be recorded on Echo360 and available as downloadable recordings on the ilearn website for this unit. Powerpoint slides/notes will also be available via the website.
- One one hour tutorial per week. Students will enrol in a tutorial class and engage in weekly discussion and learning activities relating to the weekly course material. Tutorials begin in Week 2 and students must attend at least 9/12 classes.

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- To find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- To interpret and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical and cultural issues.
- To analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary cinema and its link with philosophy.
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- To participate actively in group discussion and learning activities during tutorials.

Assessment tasks

- Film-Philosophy Exercise
- First Essay
- Tutorial Participation
- Film-Philosophy Journal
- Second Essay

Learning and teaching activities

- One one hour tutorial per week. Students will enrol in a tutorial class and engage in weekly discussion and learning activities relating to the weekly course material. Tutorials begin in Week 2 and students must attend at least 9/12 classes.

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- To find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- To interpret and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical and cultural issues.
- To analyse and explore the relationship between theory and practice in contemporary cinema and its link with philosophy.
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- To participate actively in group discussion and learning activities during tutorials.

Assessment tasks

- Film-Philosophy Exercise
- First Essay
- Tutorial Participation

- Film-Philosophy Journal
- Second Essay

Learning and teaching activities

- One one hour tutorial per week. Students will enrol in a tutorial class and engage in weekly discussion and learning activities relating to the weekly course material. Tutorials begin in Week 2 and students must attend at least 9/12 classes.

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- To interpret and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical and cultural issues.
- To locate and evaluate contemporary media discussions of film from a philosophical point of view.
- To create or design a means of communicating your own reflections on philosophy of film.
- To participate actively in group discussion and learning activities during tutorials.

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial Participation
- Film-Philosophy Journal

Learning and teaching activities

- Two one hour lectures per week given Staff Lecturers. These will be recorded on Echo360 and available as downloadable recordings on the ilearn website for this unit. Powerpoint slides/notes will also be available via the website.
- One one hour tutorial per week. Students will enrol in a tutorial class and engage in weekly discussion and learning activities relating to the weekly course material. Tutorials begin in Week 2 and students must attend at least 9/12 classes.

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- To participate actively in group discussion and learning activities during tutorials.

Assessment task

- Tutorial Participation

Learning and teaching activity

- One one hour tutorial per week. Students will enrol in a tutorial class and engage in weekly discussion and learning activities relating to the weekly course material. Tutorials begin in Week 2 and students must attend at least 9/12 classes.