



PHL 365

Film and Philosophy

S1 Day 2018

Dept of Philosophy

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	2
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	3
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	6
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	6
<u>Learning and Teaching Activities</u>	9
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	9
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	10

Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Michael Olson

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Hearing Hub, 2nd floor

By appointment

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

(39cp at 100 level or above) 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.

General Assessment Information

Late Submission Penalty

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Short Answer Quiz</u>	15%	No	Friday, 16/03
<u>First Essay</u>	30%	No	Friday, 13/04
<u>Tutorial Participation</u>	15%	No	Throughout semester
<u>Final Essay</u>	40%	No	Week 13

Short Answer Quiz

Due: **Friday, 16/03**

Weighting: **15%**

This short answer quiz will cover the material discussed in the first two weeks of the unit. The quiz will be distributed at the end of Week 2 and should be submitted via Turnitin by the end of Week 3.

Marks will be determined by the accuracy and completeness of your responses to the questions

provided.

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: **Friday, 13/04**

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 6). In the essay, you will be required to raise and develop an objection to one of the readings we have discussed in class. Successful essays will generously and succinctly explain an argument presented in one of our readings before introducing and defending the student's own objection to that argument and finally reflecting briefly on the broader implications of the objection. Essays should be approximately 750 words.

Marks will follow the rubric in Turnitin.

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

Tutorial Participation

Due: **Throughout semester**

Weighting: **15%**

Class discussions, whether online or in tutorials, are students' opportunities to engage with the material in the ways that most interest them. Students are expected to engage actively in weekly discussions of the unit material in a thoughtful manner that is informed by a careful engagement with the assigned films and readings. Internal students are expected to arrive at tutorials with discussion questions prepared, eager to discuss their own and others' ideas. After working through the assigned material, external students should spend approximately one hour each week reading and contributing to the online discussions forums. In general, external students should post discussion questions and respond to each others' questions in the same week of the semester in which the material is covered in lectures.

Participation will be assessed based on both the quality and quantity of students' contributions online or in tutorials

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Final Essay

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **40%**

In the final essay, students will use the critical methods and aesthetic insights discussed over the course of the term to analyse a work of art of her own choosing. This essay, which should be approximately 2000 words, will be workshopped in peer review exercises in Weeks 12 and 13. A complete draft will be due Monday, 4 June; comments on two classmates' papers are due Wednesday, 6 June; the final draft is due Sunday, 10 June.

This assessment will be evaluated based on the criteria explained on the rubric on iLearn. You will earn 10% of the marks for this assessment for participating in the peer reviewing exercise in Week 13.

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.
- 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.

Delivery and Resources

Required and Recommended Texts and/or Materials

PHL365 Film and Philosophy will be using electronically available readings with links provided on iLearn.

Technology Used and Required

This unit uses an iLearn website, Kanopy (an video streaming service available through the library) and Echo360 lecture recordings. Both internal and external students will accordingly require regular access to a computer and a reliable internet connection.

Class Meetings

For lecture times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetable website: <http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au>. This website will display up-to-date information on your classes and classroom locations.

Lectures are scheduled on Tuesdays from 2:00-3:00 and Wednesdays from 1:00-2:00.

Recordings will be available on iLearn for external students.

Tutorials are scheduled for either 2:00-3:00 or 3:00-4:00 on Wednesdays.

Unit Schedule

Part One. What is Film?

Week One

André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *What is Cinema?*, 2 vols., ed. and trans., Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), vol. 1, 9-16.

Arthur C. Danto, "Moving Pictures," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1979), 1-21.

Noël Carroll, "Defining the Moving Image," in *Theorizing the Moving Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 49-74.

Week Two

Rafe McGregor, "A New/Old Ontology of Film," *Film-Philosophy*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2013), 265-280

Trevor Ponech, "The Substance of Cinema," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 64, no. 1 (2006), 187-198.

Thomas E. Wartenberg, "Foregrounding the background: *Empire* and *The Flicker*," in *Thinking on*

Screen: Film as Philosophy (London: Routledge, 2007), 117-132.

Part Two. Film and Philosophy

Week Three

Paisley Livingston, "Theses on Cinema as Philosophy," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 64, no. 1 (2006), 11-18.

Murray Smith, "Film Art, Argument, and Ambiguity," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 64, no. 1 (2006), 33-42.

Week Four

Aaron Smuts, "Film as Philosophy: In Defense of a Bold Thesis," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 67, no 4 (2009), 409-420.

Noël Carroll, "Movie-Made Philosophy," in *Film as Philosophy*, ed. Bernd Herzogenrath (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 265-285.

Part 3. Film and the Emotions

Week 5

Noël Carroll, "The Ties that Bind: Characters, the Emotions, and Popular Fictions," in *Minerva's Night Out*, 40-63.

Carl Plantinga, "Notes on Spectator Emotion and Ideological Film Criticism," in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, eds. Richard Allen and Murray Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 372-393.

Week 6

Murray Smith, "Gangsters, Cannibals, Aesthetes, or Apparently Perverse Allegiances," in *Passionate Views: Film, Cognition, and Emotion*, eds. Carl Plantinga and Greg M. Smith (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 217-238.

Aaron Smuts, "The Paradox of Painful Art," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 41, no. 3 (2007), 59-76.

Week 7

Reading week

Part 4. Case Studies

Week 8

Rear Window, dir. Alfred Hitchcock (1954)

John Belton, "The Space of Rear Window," *MLN*, vol 103, no. 5 (1988), 1121-1138.

"George E. Toles, "Alfred Hitchcock's Rear Window as Critical Allegory," *boundary 2*, vol. 16, no. 2/3 (1989), 225-245.

Robert Stam and Roberta Pearson, "Hitchcock's Rear Window: Reflexivity and the Critique of Voyeurism," *Enclitic*, vol, 7, no. 1 (1983), 136-145.

Week 9

Alien, dir. Ridley Scott (1979)

Stephen Mulhall, "Kane's Son, Cain's Daughter," in *On Film*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 13-45.

Peter Lev, "'Star Wars,' 'Alien,' and 'Blade Runner,'" *Literature/Film Quarterly*, Vol. 26, no. 1 (1998), 30-37.

Jackie Byars et al., "Symposium on 'Alien,'" *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3 (1980), 278-304.

Week 10

Memento, dir. Christopher Nolan (2000)

Noël Carroll, "*Memento* and the Phenomenology of Comprehending Motion Picture Narration," in *Minerva's Night Out: Philosophy, Pop Culture, and Moving Pictures* (London: Blackwell, 2013), 203-219.

Andy Clark, "*Memento*'s Revenge: Objections and Replies to the Extended Mind," in *The Extended Mind*, ed. Richard Menary (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 43-66.

Phil Hutchinson and Rupert Read, "*Memento*: A Philosophical Investigation," in *Film as Philosophy: Essays in Cinema After Wittgenstein and Cavell*, eds. Rupert Read and Jerry Goodenough (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 72-93.

Week 11

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, dir. Michel Gondry (2004)

Thomas E. Wartenberg, "Arguing against utilitarianism: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*," in *Thinking on Screen*, 76-93.

C.D.C Reeve, "Two Blue Ruins: Love and Memory in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*," in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, ed. Christopher Grau (London: Routledge, 2009), 15-30.

Week 12

Final paper workshop

Week 13

Peer review

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](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your

student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](#).

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://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

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.
- 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

- Short Answer Quiz
- First Essay
- Tutorial Participation
- Final 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.

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:

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

Assessment tasks

- Short Answer Quiz
- First Essay
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- Final 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.
- 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.

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

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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:

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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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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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- 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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Assessment tasks

- Short Answer Quiz
- First Essay
- Tutorial Participation

- Final 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 task

- Tutorial Participation

Learning and teaching activity

- 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.