General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Lecturer and Convenor
Robert Sinnerbrink
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Contact via 9850 0035
TBA
By appointment

Credit points
10

Prerequisites
130cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
What can philosophy teach us about cinema? What can cinema show us about philosophy? This unit explores these questions by investigating philosophical, aesthetic, and ethical aspects of our engagement with cinema. Rather than treating film as an illustration of ideas, we examine how 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 analyse how film represents our subjective experience by exploring the phenomenology of perception and movement, emotional engagement and time-consciousness, moral psychology and ethical transformation. We study how films can express moral ideas, stage philosophical ‘thought experiments’, focusing on the provocative claim that films can 'do philosophy' by cinematic means. We consider how narrative and documentary film can contribute to our understanding of love and happiness, personal and cultural identity, environmental challenges and globalisation. Finally, we examine recent developments in film-philosophy--spanning phenomenological and cognitivist approaches--responding to digital media and the aesthetics of long-form television series. Overall, the unit aims to show not only how philosophy can help us understand film but how cinema can help us become more imaginative and ethical thinkers.

Important Academic Dates
Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://students.mq.edu.au/important-dates
Learning Outcomes
On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: examine and appraise developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader ethical and cultural issues.
ULO2: analyse and evaluate the relationship between film and philosophy in contemporary culture.
ULO3: investigate and theorise primary and secondary sources and articulate a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
ULO4: apply and explore philosophical theories to specific film/TV examples.

Assessment Tasks

**Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update**
Assessment details are no longer provided here as a result of changes due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
Students should consult iLearn for revised unit information.
Find out more about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and potential impacts on staff and students

**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.

**Tutorial Participation**
**Due: Ongoing throughout semester Weighting: 15%**
Class discussions, whether online or in tutorials, provide students with opportunities to engage actively with what we are studying together. 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. Both lecture and tutorials are important sites of individual and group learning. External/online students are expected to prepare for their online tutorials each week having listened to the lectures, read the assigned reading, and being ready to raise questions and discuss the relevant ideas with their classmates. After working through the assigned material, external/online students should spend approximately one hour each week responding to the weekly tutorial questions and contributing to the online
discussion forums by actively engaging with their peers via the dedicated discussion forums. Participation will be assessed based on both the quality and quantity of students' contributions online or in tutorials, including engagement with their peers' responses.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- To understand and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical, ethical and cultural issues.
- To analyse and explore the relationship between film and philosophy in contemporary culture.
- To apply philosophical theories to specific film/TV examples.
- To locate and evaluate contemporary media discussions of film and television 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.

Online Quizzes

**Due: Weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, 11**

**Weighting: 20%**

In Weeks 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 students will complete short online quizzes based on the unit readings (5 quizzes in total). Quizzes start in week 3 and continue until week 12. Each quiz opens after the relevant lectures. Quizzes involve true/false or multiple choice options. All quizzes remain open until Week 13. The quizzes cannot be accessed after that date. Please don't leave all the quizzes to the last minute - you should complete the quizzes throughout the semester after the relevant lecture.

Criteria: These assessments will be evaluated on the accuracy of quiz responses to questions based on topics and texts. These quizzes are designed to encourage ongoing study and revision of the unit materials and to foster preparation for other assessment tasks (e.g. the essay).

On successful completion you will be able to: • To analyse and explore the relationship between film and philosophy in contemporary culture.

Film and Philosophy Journal

**Journal Due: Week 10**

**Weighting: 25%**

Students are required to submit a Film-Philosophy Journal covering weeks 1-10 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 2000 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/TV works/documentaries 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. 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 as well as to broader aesthetic, ethical 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 understand and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical, ethical and cultural issues.
- To analyse and explore the relationship between film and philosophy in contemporary culture.
- To find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- To apply philosophical theories to specific film/TV examples.
- To locate and evaluate contemporary media discussions of film and television from a philosophical point of view.

Film and Philosophy Essay

**Due: Week 13**

**Weighting: 40%**

In the Film and Philosophy Essay, students will use the critical methods and aesthetic insights discussed over the course of the term to respond to set questions based on the topics covered
during the semester and/or may analyse a film/TV work of their own choosing (in consultation with the Lecturer). Here you show us the critical questioning and philosophical knowledge you have learned over the unit. This essay will be workshopped by exchanging essay plans or sketches in a peer review exercise in Week 13. The final version of the Essay is due at the end of Week 13. Word Length: **2500 words**.

Criteria: An excellent essay will demonstrate knowledge of the relevant content; a clear structure and argument; creativity, proper expression, spelling, punctuation and grammar; an easy to read presentation; proper integration and referencing of research and other sources. This assessment will be evaluated based on the criteria explained on the rubric that will posted on iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- To find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
- To apply philosophical theories to specific film/TV examples.
- To locate and evaluate contemporary media discussions of film and television from a philosophical point of view.
- To create or design a means of communicating your own reflections on philosophy of film.

**Delivery and Resources**

*Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update*

Any references to on-campus delivery below may no longer be relevant due to COVID-19. Please check here for updated delivery information: [https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/pub/display/unit_status](https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/pub/display/unit_status)

**Required and Recommended Texts and/or Materials**

PHL3065 Film and Philosophy will be using electronically available readings available via Leganto on the iLearn website. My book will also be a valuable resource and is a recommended background reading: Robert Sinnerbrink, *New Philosophies of Film: Thinking Images* (Continuum/Bloomsbury, 2011).

Textbooks for this unit can be purchased online from Booktopia [https://www.booktopia.com.au/coop](https://www.booktopia.com.au/coop). The list of Macquarie University S1 2020 units and texts can be found on the Booktopia website.
Technology Used and Required

This unit uses an iLearn website, Leganto online resources, 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 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 in a two-hour block on Mondays from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. Recordings will be available on iLearn for all external/online/OUA students.

Learning and Teaching Activities

Lectures

A two-hour weekly Lecture block given by the Unit Convenor. These Lectures 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

Online tutorial discussions will be conducted using a dedicated Tutorial Discussion Forum on the iLearn website. Weekly Tutorial Questions will be posted and students asked to respond to these questions and engage their peers in online discussion. The Essay Plan Workshop will also be conducted online in the final week, with students posting a sketch or plan of their essay and giving each other feedback via a dedicated Forum.

Tutorials begin in Week 2 and students must participate in at least 9/12 classes.

Unit Schedule

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

The unit schedule/topics and any references to on-campus delivery below may no longer be relevant due to COVID-19. Please consult iLearn for latest details, and check here for updated delivery information: https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/pub/display/unit_status

Week 1: What is Philosophy of Film/Film-Philosophy?

Required Readings:

- Thomas E. Wartenberg, ‘Can Philosophy be Screened?’ in T.E. Wartenberg, Thinking on Screen: Film as Philosophy (Routledge, 2007), 1-14.
- Robert Sinnerbrink, ‘Film-Philosophy’, in Edward Branigan and Warren Buckland
Week 2: Ontologies of the Moving Image

Required Readings:

  - http://voyager.mq.edu.au/wwebv/holdingsInfo?&bibId=1467524&searchId=488&recPointer=0&recCount=50


Week 3: Understanding Film Narrative

Required Readings:


**Week 4: Cognitivism Goes to the Movies**

**Required Readings:**


**Week 5: Affect and Emotion in Cinema**

**Required Readings:**


**Week 6: Cinematic Ethics**
Required Readings:


**Week 7: Gilles Deleuze’s Cine-philosophy**

Required Readings:


**Week 8: Stanley Cavell’s Film Philosophy**
Required Readings:


Week 9: Film as Philosophy: Pro and Contra

Required Readings:


Background Reading: Christopher Falzon, ‘Philosophy through Film’, *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: https://www.iep.utm.edu/phi-film/


Week 10: Film as Philosophy Case Study 1: Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (Kaufman/Gondry, 2004)
Required Readings:


**Week 11: Film as Philosophy Case Study 2: Melancholia** (Lars von Trier, 2011)

Required Readings:

- Steven Shaviro, 'MELANCHOLIA or, the Romantic Anti-Sublime', *Sequence* 1.1 (2012): [http://reframe.sussex.ac.uk/sequence1/1-1-melancholia-or-the-romantic-anti-sublime/](http://reframe.sussex.ac.uk/sequence1/1-1-melancholia-or-the-romantic-anti-sublime/)


**Week 12: Film as Philosophy Case Study 3: The Act of Killing /The Look of Silence** (Joshua Oppenheimer and Anonymous, 2012/2014)

Required Readings:

- R. Sinnerbrink, ‘Gangster Film: Cinematic Ethics in The Act of Killing’, in R. Sinnerbrink, *Cinematic Ethics: Exploring Ethical Experience through Film* (London and
Week 13 Essay Draft Workshop

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). 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.)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit the 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://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/124777/unit_guide/print
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](https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct)

Results

Results published on platform other than eStudent, (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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](http://ask.mq.edu.au) or if you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@mq.edu.au)

Student Support

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

Learning Skills

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

- Getting help with your assignment
- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- Subject and Research Guides
- Ask a Librarian

Student Enquiry Service

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

If you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@mq.edu.au)

Equity 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.

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/](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](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).
The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.