PHL 365
Film and Philosophy
S1 Day 2019
Dept of Philosophy

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Disclaimer
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https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/96510/unit_guide/print
General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Convenor and Lecturer
Robert Sinnerbrink
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Contact via 9850 9935
The Australian Hearing Hub, 16 University Ave, Macquarie University
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 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 theories or 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

1. To understand and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical, ethical and cultural issues.
2. To analyse and explore the relationship between film and philosophy in contemporary culture.
3. To find, analyse and evaluate primary and secondary sources and present a well-argued philosophical discussion in an essay format.
4. To apply philosophical theories to specific film/TV examples.
5. To locate and evaluate contemporary media discussions of film and television from a philosophical point of view.
6. To create or design a means of communicating your own reflections on philosophy of film.
7. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Hurdle</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Ongoing throughout semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film and Philosophy Journal</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film and Philosophy Essay</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tutorial Participation

Due: **Ongoing throughout semester**

Weighting: 15%

Class discussions, whether online or in tutorials, are students' 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. Internal students are expected to come to tutorial each week having listened to the lectures, read the assigned reading, and 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.

Participation will be assessed based on both the quality and quantity of students' contributions online or in tutorials, including engagement with their peers' responses.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- 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.

**Film and Philosophy 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 1800-2000 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.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

• 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.

**Online Quizzes**

**Due:** Week 13  
**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, Friday June 7. 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).

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

• To analyse and explore the relationship between film and philosophy in contemporary culture.
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, which should be approximately 2000 words, will be workshopped in peer review exercises in Week 13. A draft will be due at the start of Week 13 to be ready to bring to class; the final version of the Essay is due at the end of Week 13.

Length: 2000-2500 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.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

• 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.
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• 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 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). Copies
can be bought or ordered from the Co-Op Bookshop. There are a number of other good film and philosophy volumes available via the Library.

**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 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 10:00-11:00am and Fridays from 12:00-1:00pm. Recordings will be available on iLearn for external/online students.

Tutorials are scheduled for either 1:00-2:00pm or 2:00-3:00pm on Fridays.

**Unit Schedule**

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

**Required Readings:**


**Week 2: Ontologies of the Moving Image**

**Required Readings:**


**Week 3: Understanding Film Narrative**

**Required Readings**:


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

**Required Readings**:


Unit guide PHL 365 Film and Philosophy


Background Reading: R. Sinnerbrink, New Philosophies of Film: Thinking Images, Chapter 4, ‘Cognitivism Goes to the Movies’, pp. 67-89.

Week 5: Affect and Emotion in Cinema

Required Readings:


Background Reading: R. Sinnerbrink, New Philosophies of Film: Thinking Images, Chapter 4, ‘Cognitivism Goes to the Movies’, pp. 67-89.

Week 6: Cinematic Ethics

Required Readings:


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

**Required Readings:**


**Background Reading:** R. Sinnerbrink, *New Philosophies of Film*, Chapter Five ‘Bande a part: Deleuze and Cavell as Film-Philosophers’, pp. 90-116.

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

**Required Readings:**


**Background Reading:** R. Sinnerbrink, *New Philosophies of Film: Thinking Images*, Chapter Five ‘Bande a part: Deleuze and Cavell as Film-Philosophers’, pp. 90-116.
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:

- Julia Driver, ‘Memory, Desire, and Value in Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, in Christopher Grau (ed), Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind: Philosophers on Film (London: Routledge, 2009),

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/)


**Required Readings:**


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). 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). 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).
**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 improve your marks and take control of your study.

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

**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](http://ask.mq.edu.au) 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.

**Graduate Capabilities**

**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 understand and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical, ethical and cultural issues.
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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**

- Tutorial Participation
- Film and Philosophy Journal
- Online Quizzes
- Film and Philosophy 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.

**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:

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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 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
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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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**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 understand and examine developments in philosophy of film that deal with theoretical problems as well as broader philosophical, ethical and cultural issues.
- 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.
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.

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 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.
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**Assessment tasks**

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**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 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.
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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 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
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**Learning and teaching activities**
- Two one hour lectures per week given by 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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**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 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.
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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.

Changes from Previous Offering

• A number of more recent readings have been included for various weekly topics.
• New case study films have been added.
• Leganto readings available online.