PHIL 565.01
Philosophy Through Film

Wednesdays, 2:40 – 5:30 HS 42
Instructor: Dowd
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MIND AND EYE

Through film and traditional texts, we will think through a variety of philosophical issues. We will hone our inquires by taking the admittedly broad themes of Being, Reason, and the Good Life. In a sort of schematic form, these themes address the questions: What really is? How do we know it? And, how shall we live? Some of the topics we will address in our exploration of Being, Reason, and the Good Life include:

Moral Freedom and Obligation
Work and Creativity
Revolution, Obedience, Community

The Nature of the Holy and Religious Experience
Mystery, Knowledge, Nihilism
Gender and Identity

Film will be an integral means of addressing these philosophical issues. As such, we will want to ask what makes these films philosophical? Is film a mere supplement to philosophy, offering only examples of philosophical ideas? Or is there something that film offers to our philosophical understanding that no words on a printed page could muster?

Possible Texts
Vivian Carol Sobchack, The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience

Possible Essays and Selections
Augustine, The City of God, Bk VIII, 1-16; Bk XIV, 1-16
Karl Marx “Estranged Labor”
Friedrich Nietzsche, Selections The Gay Science
Martin Luther “On Christian Liberty”
Jean Calvin “Every Vocation is a Post Assigned by the Lord”

Possible Films Include
π (pi) (Darren Aronofsky, 1998)
Tree of Life (Terrence Malick, 2011)
Breakfast of Champions (Alan Rudolph)
Office Space (Mike Judge, 1999)
Hedwig and the Angry Inch (John Cameron Mitchell, 2001)
Brazil (Terry Gilliam, 1985)

Requirements Include
2 Film Response Papers; 2 Exegetical Papers; 1 Thematic Paper

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