

Philosophy 150: **Philosophy in the Cinema** Hybrid (5 Credits)

**Everett Community College, Winter Quarter 2012**

*What if everything is an illusion and nothing exists? In that case, I definitely overpaid for my carpet.*

– Woody Allen

**Instructor:** Mike VanQuickenborne; ‘Mike’ will be fine

**Contact Info:**

**Office:** Gray Wolf Hall 311

**Office Hours:** 9:40-10:35 T & Th and 2:35-4:55 on Th

**Message/Office Phone:** (425) DUTYFUL

**Email:** [mvanquickenborne@everettcc.edu](mailto:mvanquickenborne@everettcc.edu)<sup>1</sup>

**Twitter:** @VanQuickenborne (Sign up if you'd like to get philosophy-related tweets.)

**Snow Day Info:** to receive an sms or email in case the campus is closed sign up at:

<http://www.everettcc.edu/emergency/notification/>

**Room/Time/Item #:** Gray Wolf 280 / Thursdays 5:00-8:30 PM / Item # 6954

**The nearest bathrooms:** By the elevators

**Prerequisites:** None

**Distribution Information:** This course counts for Humanities or an Elective.

**Required Text:** Most articles in the course will be available to download for free and will be found at the course website, but some will be available for you to copy and will be on reserve in the library at the circulation desk.

**EvCC Library Hours:** M-Th 7:30 AM-8:00 PM, F 7:30 AM-4:00 PM, Sat 12:00 PM-4:00 PM

**Required Website:** [www.philosophyinthecinema.com](http://www.philosophyinthecinema.com)

**Website we will NOT be using:** ~~ANGEL~~

**The Course:**

Welcome to Philosophy in the Cinema. The course is a basic introduction to philosophy primarily through the medium of film. A wide variety of philosophical questions will be

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<sup>1</sup>Email is my preferred method of communication. Voicemail will be checked on Tu & Th, email M-F.

considered, such as, “What is the nature of reality?”, “What does it mean to be a person?”, “What is the nature of truth?”, etc.

### **Assessable Course Goals:**

Broadly stated, I expect that at the conclusion of this course you will be able to:

- analyze films for the philosophical questions that they raise
- explain a variety of responses to these questions
- critique the solutions posed for these questions
- demonstrate that you have mastered the above objectives through constructive dialogue with your classmates as well as in the form of written essays

### **Non-Assessable Course Goals:**

Broadly stated, I expect that by the conclusion of this course you will:

- Experience doubt
- Experience confusion
- Open your mind to new possibilities

### **My Expectations:**

In order to meet these goals I have the following expectations of you:

- This classroom is smaller than you think. Anyone who arrives to class late is necessarily disrupting the ability of their classmates to learn. Leaving early is just as much a distraction as arriving late. Such behavior is rude, and I expect you to avoid it unless absolutely necessary. Those students who are late or leave early will be noted in the attendance record and could find it very difficult to earn any extra credit in the course.
- You may not place your feet on the desktops.
- You must be familiar with the student code of conduct found in the student handbook.
- It is also required that you treat every member of the class with respect at all times, especially with regard to disrespectful comments and behaviors (facial expressions and other mannerisms). This also requires that you remain silent when the movie is being shown, I am talking, or another classmate is talking. We will have many opportunities for questions and comments about the material to be examined in this class, but I ask that you bring up any points for discussion to the whole class, not just those seated next to you. When raising a question, I ask that you only raise your hand when someone is finished speaking. Anyone who fails to exhibit respect for their classmates or myself or who talks during the films will be removed from the classroom.
- You may not bring children into the classroom, in accordance with college policy.
- You must turn off any cell phones or pagers for the duration of the class.
- Do not text during class.
- Take notes during the films.
- Every hour in class requires 2 hours of work outside of class.
- Please, I appreciate the thought, but no gifts for the instructor.

### **Your Expectations:**

In turn, you may have the following expectations of me:

- I will treat you with respect.
- I will start and end class on time.
- I will grade your assignments fairly.
- I will listen to your comments and questions patiently, and respond to them to the best of my ability.

### **Adult Content Disclaimer:**

A requirement of this course involves watching films which may offend some people. While a film may have content of a violent, sexual and/or vulgar manner, I feel that none of the films we will watch includes such elements gratuitously. There will be no option for alternative films if you feel that one of those that we will view is offensive.

### **Requirements:**

- In order to reach the course goals I have assigned films for us to watch together in class, and will have you read philosophical essays **before** watching the films that raise some of the issues discussed in the writings.
- This course is being presented in Hybrid format. This means that part of the course will involve the internet. Each week, you will listen to an audio file which will consist of a 50 minute lecture on the readings for that week. Go to the "Weekly Posts" section of the course website to find these. Each lecture will cover the material you are to have read by the next class.
- In order to ensure that you are in fact listening to the podcast lectures, I will be giving you at least one assignment/task/problem/question to work on in each podcast. I will be collecting your assignments at the beginning of class each week. These assignments will not be individually graded, however they are worth a total of 60 points. **If you are late to class you will not be able to hand the assignment in.** You may miss two assignments without any penalty, but if you miss three or four you will only get 30 points, and if you miss more than four assignments you will not receive any credit for these assignments. **Some podcasts may contain more than one assignment.**
- At the end of class each week I will assign a question which will ask you to write about the movie in relation to the essays you've read for that day and which will be turned in during the next class meeting. Your answers should be about one page in length (approximately 350 words) and I will give you 0-20 points for your work, depending on its quality. **You must write on one before the first exam and one in the second half of the course.** The reason I'm assigning these short essays is to give you a taste of what the essays on the exams will be like.

- There will also be 4 short in-class written assignments which will be worth a total of 40 points. (10 points each.) These will be assigned at various times during the quarter.
- Two exams, each of which will have two parts: 30 multiple choice questions (30 points), and two essay questions (50 points for each essay). For important information on the exams, see the Exam Guide which is posted on the course homepage.
- A term paper which will be worth 100 points. (See the Term Paper Guide posted on the course homepage.)

Course Grade Breakdown:	Percentage Weight	Points
• Podcast assignments:	12%	60
• Short Essays (2 x 20 points):	8%	40
• In-class assignments (4 x 10 points):	8%	40
• Exam 1: 30 Multiple Choice Questions	6%	30
Essay Questions (2 x 50 points)	20%	100
• Exam 2: 30 Multiple Choice Questions	6%	30
Essay Questions (2 x 50 points)	20%	100
• Term Paper:	20%	100
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>500</b>

### Grading:

A course grade is...an inadequate report of an inaccurate judgement by a biased and variable judge of the extent to which a student has attained an undefined level of mastery of an unknown proportion of an indefinable material.

–Paul Dressel

Your grade is based solely on the quantity and quality of your work done on time, not your intentions, personality, or even how hard you worked on a particular assignment. I will not curve the course in any way. The grading scale is as follows (in percentages):

A: 463-500	C: 363-382	Basic Translation:
A-: 448-462	C-: 348-362	(An “A” indicates “excellent” coursework)
B+: 433-447	D+: 333-347	(A “B” indicates “good” coursework)
B: 413-432	D: 313-332	(A “C” indicates “average” coursework)
B-: 398-412	D-: 298-312	(A “D” indicates “minimally passing” coursework)
C+: 383-397	E: 0-297	(An “E” indicates “failing” coursework)

If you stop coming to class, it is entirely your responsibility to complete the paperwork to withdraw from the course. Anyone fails to complete any of the coursework and who stops attending without officially withdrawing from the class will receive a “V” grade which

negatively affects your ability to transfer to the university of your choice and can possibly cause problems with financial aid.

**(NOTE CAREFULLY!) Late Assignments/Missed Quizzes or Exams:**

If you miss class the day of an assignment, you cannot make it up, except in cases of illness or an emergency. **Note that an unexpected request to work during class is not an emergency.** You have to make a choice between making school or work the higher priority. Your chances for succeeding in this class will increase if you make school the higher priority. If you feel ill or there is an emergency I will require **two** things: **1)** you, or someone who is acting on your behalf, must contact my office (via email or voicemail) on the same day that you have missed class, **and 2)** when you return to class you must provide written documentation supporting your claim. If you fail to meet either of these conditions, I will not allow you to take a make up, or give you credit for your assignment. **DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE FEELING ILL.**

**Definition of Plagiarism & Penalties:**

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed., defines "plagiarism" as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own." Plagiarism is completely unacceptable and any student who cheats on an assignment will receive a score of zero for that assignment **and all future assignments in the course.** I will also report the incident to the Behavioral Intervention Team which may take further disciplinary action.

**Extra Credit:**

Engaged class participation is crucial for your success as a student. As an incentive I will boost any student's grade by one quarter (e.g. a "B+" would become an "A-") if they are actively engaged in the course. The following behaviors will result in less extra credit being awarded to a student: showing up to class sick, poor attendance not due to illness, arriving late after the first week, leaving early, talking when I or another student is talking, being disruptive, texting, sleeping in class, or not paying attention. Extra credit can be a significant boost to your grade in the class, so I encourage you to take it seriously.

**Mental Health Statement:**

An article entitled "Mental Health Needs Seen Growing at Colleges," published in the NY Times on Dec. 19, 2010 and written by Trip Gabriel, stated that: "Forty-six percent of college students said they felt "things were hopeless" at least once in the previous 12 months, and nearly a third had been so depressed that it was difficult to function, according to a 2009 survey by the American College Health Association." If you find yourself feeling that things are hopeless, please know that things are never hopeless and I am glad to talk to you. We also have professional counselors employed at the college who are there to serve all students. They are located on the third floor of Parks and can be contacted by phone: 425.388.9263 or email: [counseling@everettcc.edu](mailto:counseling@everettcc.edu).