

## Philosophical Themes in the Films of Ingmar Bergman et al

Fall 2017

Honors 362-01

MWF 11-11:50am; DH 146

*Prerequisite: acceptance into the University Honors Program, or consent of instructor.*

3 credits. Also counts for 7AI, 7SI, 7VI.

**Instructor: Charles Webel, Ph.D.** Delp-Wikinson Chair and Professor, Peace Studies.  
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Office Hours: Mon/Wed/Fr 1:00-2:20pm, & by appointment

### Catalog Description

The films of Ingmar Bergman offer a range of jumping-off points for some traditional debates in philosophy in areas such as the philosophy of religion, ethics, and value theory more broadly. Bergman's oeuvre also offers an entry point for a critical examination of existentialism. This course will investigate some of the philosophical questions posed and positions raised in these films within an auteurist framework. We will also examine the legitimacy of the auteurist framework for film criticism and the representational capacity of film for presenting philosophical arguments.

### Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will have:

- a. Understood a range of philosophical positions within the tradition of Western philosophy in general and the intellectual movement called "existentialism" in particular.
- b. Engaged in a critical analysis of Bergman's relationship to existentialism, based on synthesizing individual arguments and positions presented throughout his oeuvre.
- c. Engaged in critical analyses of various philosophical themes, traditions, and problematics, especially ethics, epistemology, philosophical psychology, and political philosophy.
- d. Understood arguments for and against the capacity of film to present philosophical arguments, focusing on the films of Ingmar Bergman, as well as selected films by other great directors.

### Honors Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completing a course in the University Honors Program students will have:

- a. Obtained a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;
- b. Sharpened their ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and through engagement in active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood);

- c. Understood how to apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding in the advancement of knowledge and in addressing complex challenges shaping the world;
- d. Developed effective communication skills, specifically in the areas of written and oral exposition and analysis.

#### Required Texts

- 1 Kalin, Jesse, *The films of Ingmar Bergman*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. (Abbreviated *K* on Class Calendar.)
- 2 Kaufmann, Walter, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*. New American Library, 1975. (Abbreviated *Ex* on Class Calendar.)
- 3 Litch, Mary and Amy Karofsky. *Philosophy through Film*. third edition. New York, NY: Routledge, 2015. (Abbreviated *PtF* on Class Calendar.)

#### Recommended Texts

1. Barash, David, and Webel, Charles, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018.
2. Bergman, Ingmar, *Four screenplays*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960.
3. Edgar, Robert, Marland, John, and Rawls, Steven, *The Language of Film*, Second Edition. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015.
4. Fumerton, Richard, and Jeske, Diane (eds.), *Introducing Philosophy through Film*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
5. Gibson, Arthur, *The silence of God: Creative response to the films of Ingmar Bergman*. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.
6. Glimore, Richard A., *Doing Philosophy at the Movies*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005.
7. Grant, Barry Keith (ed), *Auteurs and authorship: a film reader*. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell, 2008.
8. Melchert, Norman, *Philosophical Conversations A Concise Historical Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
9. Singer, Irving. *Ingmar Bergman, cinematic philosopher: Reflections on his creativity*. MIT Press. 2009
10. Steene, Brigitte (ed), *Focus on The Seventh Seal*. Prentice Hall, 1972.
11. Webel, Charles, *Terror, Terrorism, and the Human Condition*, Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007.

**Class Calendar (subject to change)**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>READING*</b>	<b>FILM**</b>
Aug. 28	Introduction to the Course & to Philosophy	----	<i>The Nature of Existence</i>
Aug. 30	Philosophy through Film	<i>PtF</i> 1-8	<i>The Nature of Existence</i>
Sept. 1	Introduction to Bergman	<i>K</i> 1-29; 187-191	<i>Wild Strawberries</i>
Sept. 6	Introduction to Existentialism (1)	Ex 1-33; <i>K</i> 67-85	<i>Wild Strawberries</i>
Sept. 8	Introduction to Existentialism (2)	Ex 33-51; <i>PtF</i> 198-210, 223-227	<i>Wild Strawberries</i>
SEPT. 11	Existential Terror and Political Terrorism; Bergman & Existentialism	<i>K</i> 111-133, 191-202  Recommended: Webel, <i>Terror, Terrorism, and The Human Condition</i>	<i>Shame</i>  <i>Recommended: United 93; World Trade Center</i>
Sept. 13	Existentialism as Historical Movement (1)	Ex 83-121 Kierkegaard	<i>Kierkegaard sequence in Sea of Faith</i>
Sept. 15	Existentialism as Historical Movement (2)	Ex 121-133 Nietzsche	<i>Nietzsche: Human All Too Human</i>
Sept. 18	Existentialism as Historical Movement (3)	Ex. 233-279 Heidegger	<i>Heidegger: Thinking the Unthinkable</i>
Sept. 20	Peace and Conflicts	TBA Recommended: Barash and Webel, <i>Peace &amp; Conflict Studies</i> , 4 <sup>th</sup> Ed.	<i>The Day After Peace</i>
Sept. 22	War without Peace?	TBA	<i>Ivan's Childhood; The Killing Fields</i>
Sept. 25	Existentialism as Historical Movement (4)	Dostoyevsky and Kafka Ex. 52-82; 142-152	<i>The Castle (Haneke, 1997,)</i> or <i>The Trial (Welles, 1962, or; Notes from the Underground (1995)</i>
Sept. 27	Existentialism as Historical Movement (5)	Ex. 280-328 Sartre	<i>Sartre: The Road to Freedom</i>
Sept. 29	Existentialism as Historical Movement (6)	Ex. 329-374 Sartre (2)	<i>The Wall (1967) or No Exit (1962)</i>

Oct. 2	Existentialism as Historical Movement (7)	Ex. 375-378 Camus	<i>The Stranger (Visconti 1967)</i>
Oct. 4	Ethics (1)	<i>PtF</i> 145-152; K 202-203	<i>Crimes and Misdemeanors (Allen)</i>
Oct. 6	Ethics (2)	<i>PtF</i> 152-161	<i>Crimes and Misdemeanors</i>
Oct. 9	Ethics (3)	<i>PtF</i> 161-171, 223-238	<i>The Seventh Seal</i>
Oct. 11	The Problem of Evil (1)	<i>PtF</i> 198-204	<i>The Seventh Seal</i>
Oct. 13	The Problem of Evil (1)	<i>PtF</i> 204-218	<i>The Seventh Seal</i>
Oct. 16	Ethics Revisited (1)	TBA	<i>Bulletproof Heart</i>
Oct. 18	Ethics Revisited (2)	TBA	<i>Bulletproof Heart</i>
Oct. 20	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	----	
Oct. 23	Meaning in Human Relationships	K 86-111	<i>Smiles of a Summer Night</i>
Oct. 25	Meaning in Human Relationships (2)	TBA	<i>The Silence</i>
Oct. 27	Meaning in Human Relationships (3)	TBA	<i>All These Women</i>
Oct. 30	Meaning in Human Relationships (4)	TBA	<i>The Magician</i>
Nov. 1	Meaning in Human Relationships (5)	TBA	<i>Persona</i>
Nov. 3	Meaning in Human Relationships (6)	K 134-151	<i>Cries and Whispers</i>
Nov. 6	Meaning in Human Relationships (7)	K 151-161	<i>Scenes from a Marriage</i>
Nov. 8	God, Meaning, or Meaninglessness?	TBA	<i>Winter Light</i>
Nov. 10	God or Nothing(ness)?	TBA	<i>The Rapture</i>
Nov. 12	God or Nothing(ness)?	TBA	<i>The Rapture</i>
Nov. 15	Personal Identity	TBA	<i>The Matrix (I)</i>

Nov. 17	Personal Identity	TBA	<i>The Third Man</i>
Nov. 27	Personal Identity	TBA	<i>Solaris (Tarkovsky)</i>
Nov. 29	The Nature or Illusion of “Reality”	TBA	<i>Vertigo</i>
Dec. 1	The Nature or Illusion of “Reality”	TBA	<i>Vertigo</i>
Dec. 4	The Politics of Dystopia	TBA	<i>1984; Antz</i>
Dec. 6	The Beginning of the End? Or	TBA	<i>Autumn Sonata</i>
Dec. 8	The End of the Beginning?	TBA	<i>Sarabande</i>

Copies of all required films should be available on DVD for 6-hour checkout from Leatherby Libraries Reserve.

#### Instructional Strategies

A variety of instructional strategies will be used, including lectures, classroom discussions, written assignments, and prepared oral presentations by students employing appropriate presentation technology.

#### Methods of Evaluation (20% each of the final grade)

Class participation

Presentation(s)

Short writings

Midterm

Final research essay

**NOTE:** Additional instructions for the assignments will be posted online and discussed in class.

**Attendance Policy:** You are expected to be present and on time for every class. However, you are allowed two full-course-period absences without any explanation necessary. I do not grant additional “excused” absences. You are encouraged to save your permitted absences in case of illnesses, adding the course late, oversleeping, car trouble, doctor’s appointments, sporting or other campus events, family obligations, and any other reason you might miss class. Repeated tardiness counts as an absence. After those two absences, your final grade will be lowered for every unexcused absence.

**NB: the “University recommends as a minimal policy that students who are absent 20 percent of the course should be failed.”** You should also sit in the classroom for the full period unless it is truly urgent; repeated departures from class(es) will count as absences.

#### Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy

Chapman University is a community of scholars which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university.

#### Students with Disabilities Policy

In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. The University, through the Center for Academic Success, will work with the appropriate faculty member who is asked to provide the accommodations for a student in determining what accommodations are suitable based on the documentation and the individual student needs. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

**Chapman University’s Equity and Diversity Policy:** “Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman’s Harassment and Discrimination Policy. Please see the full description of this policy at <http://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/eoo.aspx>. Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the dean of students and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy.”

#### **Additional Expectations and Standards:**

- Late assignments will be penalized by a grade for each business day it is late (i.e. from an A to an A-, an A- to a B+, a B+ to a B, etc.). Assignments will not be accepted more than one week late.
- Grade appeals must be made IN WRITING no more than one week after the assignment is returned. Explain why you think the grade is unfair and include the graded assignment.
- Assignments must be word-processed and handed in on paper in class. NO ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE SENT AS EMAIL ATTACHMENTS WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT OF THE INSTRUCTOR!!! IF YOU DO SO WITHOUT PERMISSION, THEY WILL BE DELETED UNREAD.
- This class will discuss difficult issues, and people will occasionally say things that you are likely to disagree with, sometimes even passionately. I encourage the expression of viewpoints that differ from my own and other students- whether it is how you think or how you have heard others discuss an issue. It is important that everyone’s ideas be considered seriously and that we do our best to understand and respect each other, even if we disagree with their point of view. This requires students (and the professor) to treat one another with respect and not engage in personal attacks.

- I encourage students to make use of office hours. If my posted times do not work with your schedule, please feel free to make an appointment for another time. I am here to help you succeed! If you stop by my office without an appointment outside office hours, I may not be able to help you immediately (I have deadlines, too!), but I will try to find another time that will work for both of us.
- Email responses may not be immediate, especially outside normal university business hours. On weekends and school breaks they may take significantly longer. You will have ample opportunity to ask questions in class, and you should not expect responses to last-minute difficulties with assignments.
- Cell phones must be off during class unless you have an emergency that you discussed with me prior to class. Computers may be used, but only for purposes directly related to this course. Repeated use of computers for any other purpose(s) will result in their not being allowed at all in class.

Submitted by: Charles Webel

Last updated: May 2017