

Film and Philosophy  
AS. 300. 201. 13  
The Humanities Center

Prof. Larry McGrath  
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OH: Th. 1-2pm

Meeting Times: MWTh 10am-1pm  
Location: Shaffer 300

This course offers an introduction to basic concepts in the theory of film and classic problems in the history of philosophy. Our goal is to stage a dialogue between the two in order to see the unique ways that cinema helps us to understand the nature of human consciousness. The central thesis of the course is that cinema is analogous to consciousness, and that the formal aspects of film illuminate the structure of consciousness. We will test this thesis by watching a variety of films that feature challenging narrative structures and cinematographic techniques. Students will be expected to have read and be ready to discuss assigned literature before each class. Students who are unable to attend a screening are expected to submit a one-page analysis of the film by the following class.

Grading: This course is graded pass/fail. Passing depends on three elements: participation (students are permitted one absence), a short unannounced exam, and a 7-minute presentation during the final two days of the course in which students present, appreciate, and critique a 3-minute clip of an assigned film.

All course readings can be found at [larrysmcgrath.com](http://larrysmcgrath.com) under the “teaching” tab.

- Jan. 5 Watch: *La Jetée* [*The Jetty*] (Chris Marker, 1962)  
Read: Siegfried Kracauer, “Basic Concepts” in *Theory of Film*, 1960. 27-40.
- Jan. 7 *Annie Hall* (Woody Allen, 1977)  
Thomas Nagel, “What Is It Like To Be A Bat?” *The Philosophical Review*, Oct. 1974.
- Jan. 8 *Reservoir Dogs* (Quentin Tarantino, 1992)  
William James, “The Stream of Thought,” in *Principles of Psychology*, 1890.
- Jan. 12 *Le Charme discret de la bourgeoisie* [*The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*] (Louis Buñuel, 1972)  
Friedrich Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense*. 1873.
- Jan. 14 *Persona* (Ingmar Bergman, 1966)  
Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology.” 1964.
- Jan. 15 *Holy Motors* (Leos Carax, 2012)
- Jan. 19 No Class: Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
- Jan. 21 Student Presentations
- Jan. 22 Student Presentations