

Film and Philosophy  
FRES 1010  
Fall 2001  
Syllabus

Professor Edward Halper  
Office: Peabody Hall #127  
Hours: 4:45–5:15 T, R  
Other times by appointment  
Telephone: 542-0668

**Description and Objective:** Many films have explicit philosophical content. Some explore conflicts in values; others consider different ways of knowing and interpreting reality. Still more films have implicit philosophical content. This class will examine philosophical questions by using film as a medium to present philosophical issues and provoke discussion. Considering films in this way will also enhance our appreciation of them as artistic works. Most of the films we will see raise questions in the branches of philosophy usually called metaphysics and epistemology. In each session we will view a film and discuss the philosophical issues it raises.

Each film we will view this semester deals directly or indirectly with the nature of reality in general and, more particularly, with human nature. Some suppose that reality consists of a form or structure that may be akin to mathematics; others take reality to be something that may receive this structure but is independent of it; and still others explore the possibility that reality may have both dimensions. In each case we will consider both the film's interpretation of reality and how it aims to make a case for that interpretation.

**Requirements:** Class will meet every other week. Because the films are of varying lengths, some class sessions could exceed the allotted time period. **You must attend every film and every discussion** in order to pass the course. Requiring attendance is appropriate because the class meets relatively infrequently and because it is the only requirement. In the event of an unexcused absence, the professor may, at his discretion, allow you to earn credit for the missed class by viewing the film on your own and writing a three page paper on an assigned topic.

**Schedule:**

August	16	<i>Shane</i>
	30	<i>The Thirteenth Floor</i>
September	13	<i>My Dinner with Andre</i>
	20	<i>Pi</i>
October	4	<i>Seventh Seal</i>
	18	<i>Rashomon</i>
November	1	<i>Wild Child</i>
	15	<i>Blade Runner</i>
	29	<i>Being There</i>