**Course Description**

This course utilizes movies as thought experiments, to explore themes and problems in philosophy. Movies provide imaginative ways to think about some of the important questions in philosophy, including the nature of knowledge and reality, the existence of human freedom, and the moral status of humans and nonhuman creatures. **Plus zombies!** The theme for each week will be illustrated in the film, and discussed in the reading assignments and lectures for that week.

**Course Learning Objectives**

- Students will be able to identify and describe major philosophical theories and ideas and apply them to specific issues and problems presented in the films viewed.
- Students will be able to write analytical papers that address a philosophical question. They will consult and utilize the relevant literature, and demonstrate their ability to apply reasoning to the question and its resolution.
- Students will be able to discuss their perspectives in open class discussion and demonstrate appropriate respect for other students, including those whose values and perspectives differ from their own.

**Course Schedule**

This course meets three times a week in Walker 134:

Monday 7:05pm: Movie Screening
WF: 11:05-11:55am

* Three Friday class sessions will not be held. Two of those sessions will be rescheduled for Monday at 7:05pm. Consult the schedule at the end of the syllabus for details.

**Course Resources**

**Course website on Canvas:** https://mtu.instructure.com/courses/655349

**Required Course Texts:**

- *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings, 6e,* by Perry, Bratman & Fisher
Grading
Grading is based on points. Your final grade will be determined by the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short paper</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Tech grading scale will be used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade points/credit</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% - 100%</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>88% - 92%</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82% - 86%</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>76% - 81%</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% - 75%</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>65% - 69%</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 64%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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I: Incomplete; given only when a student is unable to complete a segment of the course because of circumstances beyond the student's control. A grade of incomplete may be given only when approved in writing by the department chair or school dean.

X: Conditional, with no grade points per credit; given only when the student is at fault in failing to complete a minor segment of a course, but in the judgment of the instructor does not need to repeat the course. It must be made up within the next semester in residence or the grade becomes a failure (F). A (X) grade is computed into the grade point average as a (F) grade.

Course Policies

Late assignments
Late assignments will be penalized by one full letter grade (A to B, B to C, etc) for every day they are late. This includes weekends and partial days. E.g., if your paper is due on Monday, and you turn it in on Tuesday, you will be penalized one full letter grade. If you turn your paper in on Wednesday morning, you will be penalized two full letter grades. In exceptional circumstances, extensions may be granted if requested. All requests must be made in advance of the due date via email.

Cheating and Plagiarism
Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their college work. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses, and subject to disciplinary action. A failing grade in this course is the minimum penalty you can expect for academic dishonesty. Students are advised that the professor is on the Academic Integrity Committee and takes plagiarism and cheating very seriously.

University Policies

Student work products (exams, essays, projects, etc.) may be used for purposes of university, program, or course assessment. All work used for assessment purposes will not include any individual student identification.

Michigan Tech has standard policies on academic misconduct and complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with
Disabilities Act of 1990. For more information about reasonable accommodation for, or equal access to, education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office, at (906) 487-2212 or go to: http://www.mtu.edu/provost/faculty-resources/syllabus-policies/

**Required Coursework**

- **Film Screening & Reading**
  The film will be screened at the beginning of the week. It is recommended that you finish the assigned readings before you watch the film, so the ideas therein can be bubbling in the back of your mind as you watch. Taking notes during the films is recommended, paying special attention to interesting philosophical issues or questions that come up. You'll need these notes for your papers and quizzes.

- **Lectures & Class participation**
  Attendance at all class sessions is expected. Excessive absences without reasonable excuse will result in a reduction of the final grade. All students are encouraged and expected to participate in class discussions, to ask questions, and to bring their personal insights to the discourse. Lively, civil conversation and debate have a long, important, and colorful history in philosophy, and play a crucial role in the development and refinement of philosophical thinking.

- **Short paper (3-4 pages), due October 25 by 5pm**
  The topic for the Short Paper will be posted to Canvas.

- **Quizzes**
  There will be two short essay quizzes.

- **Final Paper (5-6 pages); due December 17 by 5pm**
  Paper topics will be posted to Canvas. Additional details about the paper assignment will be available then.
Schedule of Topics and Assignments

All readings from Intro to Philosophy, except as noted. (C) indicates article available on Canvas, located in Files.

Week 1 Sept 3-6
Theme: What?
Reading:
3-14 Intro
18-21 Russell
22-37 Plato

Week 2 Sept 9-13
Theme: Whaddaya know?
Movie: Rear Window
Reading:
133-135 Gettier
216-238 Salmon

Sept 11 is the last day to drop course with refund

Week 3 Sept 16-20
Theme: Is it real?
Movie: The Matrix
Reading:
136-160 Descartes

Sept 20 is last day to drop without a grade

Week 4 Sept 23-27 QUIZ
Movie: No movie. Makeup class.
Theme: More real. Or less.
Reading:
160-167 Grau
(C): Nozick: Experience Machine

No Class on 27th

Week 5 Sept 30-Oct 4
Theme: Who are you?
Movie: Being John Malkovich
Reading:
343-356 Parfit
368-376 Dennett
(C): Locke on Personal Identity

Week 6 Oct 7-11
Theme: Philosophers' secret revealed! Enhance your memory using this one simple method!
Movie: Memento
Reading:
239-242 Intro
277-281 Churchland
(C): Clark & Chalmers

Week 7 Oct 14-18
Theme: Don't do that.
Movie: I, Robot
Reading:
457-460 Bentham
460-476 Mill
477-479 Carritt
837-838 Trolley Problem

Week 8 Oct 21-25
Theme: Really, don't do that. I mean it.
Movie: Gone Baby Gone
Reading:
504-520 Kant
538-544 O'Neill

No class on 25th; Short papers due
Week 9 Oct 28-Nov 1
Theme: Are zombies people, too?
Movie: Shaun of the Dead
Reading:
(C): Warren: excerpt on Moral Status
813-817 Nagel

Zombie Symposium Nov. 1, 7pm

Week 10 Nov 4-8
Theme: Who matters?
Movie: Never Let Me Go
Reading:
(C): Singer
(C): Kant, Obligations to Animals
✓ No class on 8th
✓ Nov 8 is last day to drop with W

Week 11 Nov 11-15
Theme: Can you do that?
Movie: Zero Dark Thirty
Reading:
(C): Plato: Ring of Gyges
(C): Allhoff: Terrorism & Torture
487-495 Williams

Week 12 Nov 18-22 QUIZ
Theme: Why would I do that?
Movie: No movie; makeup class on Monday
Reading:
700-707 Gauthier
832 Prisoner’s Dilemma
495-503 Singer

Thanksgiving Recess Nov 25-29

Week 13 Dec 2-6
Theme: Super jumbo prawns!
Movie: District 9
Reading:
628-638 Appiah
609-613 Mill

Week 14 Dec 9-13
Theme: It’s not my fault.
Movie: Minority Report
Reading:
244-246 Freedom & Determinism
385-396 Inwagen
(C) Strawson: Moral Responsibility

Dec 17 5pm: Final Papers due