

Department of Philosophy
Fall 2026 [Class # 15176]
Tu., & Th.: 8:30-9:45am, EU 136
3 credits
Syllabus

PHILOSOPHY OF FILM AND LITERATURE (PHIL 314)

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Course web page: Go to the CSUN portal, enter CANVAS and search for our course

I. Course materials

All required class readings will be available through our course web page the Friday before the week in which they are due. Students are, however, required to bring to class a printed copy of the reading assigned for the day. That copy must respect exactly the same format (including same pagination) of the posted version. All or most of the required movies and documentaries will be available through the CSUN library's resources. If, for some reason, some are not, you will be responsible for finding them (in some cases, this may require also paying a few dollars to rent or buy them).

See Tentative Schedule of Classes below for the readings that will be made available for each class and for the required movies. In case of disparity between the order of materials as it appears in the Tentative Schedule and the order actually posted on our web page, follow always the latter. The information in our course webpage is always the most updated.

II. Course description

This course is an introduction to the philosophy of film and literature through the discussion and critical analysis of a selection of some of the philosophical texts which have shaped, and are shaping, this philosophical sub-discipline. We will discuss, among other issues, the nature of film and literature (what they are), what it means to "interpret" them (and what a good interpretation is), on which grounds we can consider them artforms (and how we should evaluate their aesthetic merit), how we should explain our behavior towards their fictional worlds (especially our emotional engagement with them), which degree of reality we should assign to fictional objects, what the main value of film and literature is for the reader/spectator (i.e. what we gain from them), and which relevance (if any) we should assign to our ethical judgment of the content of a movie or a book in order to evaluate them aesthetically (i.e., can there be beauty in a work that represents/expresses evil?).

III. Course objectives

Philosophy 314 is in GE Area 3A (Arts) and GE Area 3B (Humanities):

A) Course objectives (COs) for PHIL 314.

In this course, students will:

1. Explore the value of the philosophical inquiry as a way to develop a critical relationship with the world.
2. Develop the ability to identify in primary sources some of the main philosophical issues that arise in the realm of literature and film as well as their practical implications
3. Acquire the tools and skills to engage in a philosophical dialogue, both in oral and written form, that leads to the exploration of philosophical issues in literature and film and of the possible ways to address them
4. Exercise the ability to articulate and defend, in oral and written form, personal philosophical positions on authors and ideas that are influential in shaping our worldview (especially regarding literature and film).

B) GE Area 3A Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) addressed in PHIL 314:¹

1. [Number 1 in Catalog] Acquire knowledge and apply skills in various visual/performing arts or creative writing.
2. [Number 2 in Catalog] Produce individual or collaborative artistic work.
3. [Number 4 in Catalog] Describe and explain historical/cultural contexts within which diverse artistic traditions were created or emerged.
4. [Number 5 in Catalog] Analyze, interpret, and reflect critically upon the visual/performing arts or creative writing from a variety of diverse perspectives.

C) GE Area 3B Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) addressed by PHIL 314:

1. [Number 2 in Catalog] Analyze, interpret and reflect critically upon creative expression, discourse, or thought traditions from diverse perspectives.
2. [Number 3 in Catalog] Demonstrate the ability to engage and reflect upon their intellectual and creative development within the humanities.
3. [Number 5 in Catalog] Critically analyze how the humanities as disciplines of memory and imagination reflect upon the current conditions of the human experience and help envision progression as a society.

IV. Course web page and e-mail communication.A) *Course web page*

1. Access. In order to use this course's web page, you need to be enrolled in the class and have a CSUN account. To enter the page, go to the CSUN portal, enter the Canvas section using your CSUN ID and password, and then click on the name of our course. If you are not enrolled yet, allow twenty-four hours after registering for the course to be accessible to you.
2. Purpose. Our course web page will serve *mainly* as an updated schedule of activities and meetings, a storage for readings and other course materials, and a board for you to check your grades. This means the web page will *not* be a mirror of what happens in the classroom, that is, it will not serve as a substitute for our classes. Since the *content* of the course is determined by the assignments, the readings, and the material we cover in class (which includes class discussions on that material), and this will also be the content of our tests, it is your responsibility to be always fully informed about what occurs in the classroom regardless of whether it appears or not in our course webpage. This responsibility to be fully informed

¹ <https://catalog.csun.edu/general-education/student-learning-outcomes/>

applies also to *all* in-class announcements or decisions we might make as a class--all of which will always supersede any previous class decisions, announcements or syllabus stipulations that might be in conflict with them. This means that not being present in class during an announcement is *not* sufficient justification not to comply with class announcements. Be aware that *not* all in-class announcements may be also posted on our course webpage.

B) E-mail communication

1. Requirements. (a) All course-related email communication must be maintained from and to your csun.edu address. Messages from other addresses will be treated as spam and will not be replied. (If you do not regularly check your csun.edu account, set it up immediately so that messages will be automatically forwarded to the email account you use more often.) And (b) any communication (via e-mail or otherwise) that fails to respect CSUN's Student Conduct Code (<https://catalog.csun.edu/policies/student-conduct-code/>) will be interrupted immediately and reported to the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs.
 - There are, at least, three important reasons for the requirement to use your csun.edu address. First, it will help guarantee confidentiality (i.e., keep information about you as a student in your hands) as well as keep our communication within the limits proper of an academic environment. Second, your CSUN address is the one always at hand for me, the one linked to you through the course web page, and the one in the officially updated e-mail class list (which means that every message sent to the whole class will go to that address only). Third, this will avoid the possible confusion that may be created if I receive messages from an address unknown to me or without your name on it. And fourth, as a CSUN student, you are responsible for checking (and expected to do so) your csun.edu e-mail account regularly. I cannot expect the same of any other addresses you may use.
2. What to expect. I will attempt to reply to any e-mail messages within twenty-four working-day hours. As a general rule, students' messages that are very long (more than three paragraphs), or complex will only receive a brief reply in the form of an invitation to discuss the matter in person during office hours. As to AI-generated e-mails, be aware that insofar as it comes from your e-mail account, you are still *fully responsible* for its content and, in particular, for its compliance with CSUN's Student Conduct Code (<https://catalog.csun.edu/policies/student-conduct-code/>). On my part, I will avoid as much as possible e-mailing the whole class, and certainly not on issues that have already been announced properly (in class or on our web page)—and I will especially avoid doing this during weekends and holidays.
3. A note of caution. Despite its enormous utility, e-mail is not always the best means of communication. In fact, it is quite often a source of misunderstandings, of unnecessary anxiety (especially if they are excessive and/or generate a false sense of urgency to take action) or can consume a disproportionate amount of time. To avoid some of these obstacles, we can take advantage of the numerous opportunities to talk in person we have throughout the term (in class and during office hours). Let us use e-mail when e-mail is the most efficient or appropriate means to deal with the issue in question and let us meet in person when meeting in person is more efficient or appropriate.

V. Course requirements

Your final grade will be based on the total amount of points you will have obtained by the end of the term in the different course assignments. All the assignments combined (except the extra credit) will sum to a total of 400 points. This is how the points will be assigned to each assignment:

- a) Two short tests (100 points, 50 each): Test I on Tu., Sep. 29 and Test III on Th., Nov. 19.

Each of these tests will consist of 25 multiple-choice questions (2 points each). You will have about 25 minutes to complete them. Test I will include the material covered from the beginning of the term until the last class before the test, and Test III the material covered from Test II until the last class before Test III is scheduled.

- b) Two major tests (160 points, 80 each): Test II on Th., Oct. 22, and Test IV on Th., Dec. 10.

Both tests will have the same format and length: 25 multiple-choice questions (2 points each) and 3 essay questions (10 points each). You will have all the class time (75 minutes) to complete them. Test II (midterm) will be on all the material from the beginning of the term until (and including) the last class before the day when the test is scheduled. Test IV will include all (and *only*) the material covered since Test II (i.e., Test IV is not accumulative).

- c) Quizzes on readings (40 points, 10 points each)

There will be at least four quizzes on readings. Each quiz will consist of 5 questions (2 points each), which will be either multiple-choice or questions which can be answered in a few lines. These quizzes might occasionally include additional extra-credit questions. We will do these quizzes at the very beginning of the class in about 7-10 minutes. Questions to prepare for these quizzes will be posted on our course web page at the same time the corresponding reading or movie for the day will be made available or announced. No make-ups will be done for these quizzes (see policy on make-ups below) and no extra time will be granted for arriving late while the quiz is in progress (or for leaving early if that were the case).

- d) Contribution to class discussion (25 points).

You may receive up to 25 points for your contribution to class discussions. These points will be assigned in two parts of 12.5 points for each half of the term (before and after Test II). Whether that contribution helps us (the class) think *about the course material* will be the main grading criterion. This means that just saying something aloud in class is not enough to obtain credit. *Text-supported* and/ or *reflective comments* on the class material (specially on the content of the readings) are the type of participation that most directly fall under this category—as opposed, for example, to simply asking questions (which does not necessarily qualify as this type of contribution) or bringing ideas to the discussion which might *not* be directly related to the issues we are dealing with. In a class which meets twice a week, at least two contributions of this sort on two different topics every three classes would be necessary (although might not be sufficient, depending on the quality of the contributions) to obtain full credit for this assignment. In classes meeting only once a week one or two contributions (depending on the size of the class) in every class would be, in principle, necessary. In any case, if the number of students or other factors make any of these expectations unreasonable, other alternatives will be offered.

- e) In-class use of the readings (25 points).

Up to 25 points will be assigned to each student based on the *frequency* and *quality* of the *use* of the readings during class discussions. Unlike the “contribution to class discussion” above, this grade will reflect, specifically and only, the *frequency* and *quality* with which you bring *relevant passages* (or scenes from movies or documentaries) from the class readings (indicating where exactly we all can find them) to our class discussion—as opposed to just mentioning ideas that you may recall having read, or making comments on the readings or movies (which would fall under “contribution to class discussion”). This means that this assignment *does* require that (1) you actually point out and read

passages from the readings (or dialogues from movies in class), and that (2) you justify their relevance and significance for the specific class discussion in which you may decide to bring them up. These points will be assigned in two parts of 12.5 points each for each half of the term (before and after Test II). In a class meeting twice a week, at least two contributions of this sort on two different topics every three classes would be necessary (although might not be sufficient, depending on the quality of the contributions) to obtain full credit for this assignment. In classes meeting only once a week one or two contributions (depending on the size of the class) in every class would be, in principle, necessary. In any case, if the number of students or other factors make any of these expectations unreasonable, other alternatives will be offered.

f) Attendance (50 points).

At the end of the term each student will receive up to 50 points for attendance. The attendance grade will be the number of points resulting from dividing by two the percentage of classes you have attended (e.g., if you have attended 80% of the classes you will get 40 points for attendance). Credit for attendance will be assigned according to the number of *valid* signatures in the attendance sheets which will be passed at the very beginning of each class. A valid signature is one (a) that is personal, (b) which closely resembles the other signatures (by the same student) throughout the term, (c) which is registered in the first ten minutes of class, and (d) which corresponds to presence in the classroom *throughout the whole class*. If the attendance sheet is not available, either roll call or submitted quizzes will serve as attendance record. Partial attendance (if you come late, leave early, or leave the classroom during class [see “Policies” section]) will not receive any credit. Missing points for attendance can only be made up *via* extra assignments (see below policy on make-ups).

g) Extra assignments (60 points, at least)

We will do, at least, 60 points in extra-credit assignments. Some, if not all, of these assignments will be additional quizzes on readings or additional questions in quizzes or tests.

VI. Grade distribution

The following scale indicates how your total number of points at the end of the term will determine your grade:

351-400 points = A
 301-350 points = B
 251-300 points = C
 201-250 points = D

Important notes:

1. The above scale means that if you obtain 201 points (appr. 50%) at the end of the term those points *guarantee* you a D- (see below the note on +/- grades); 251 points (appr. 63%) guarantees you a C- and so on (i.e., appr. 75% a B-; and about 88% an A-). At the end of the term, however, this scale may be revised--and if so, only to make each grade more easily attainable--depending on the overall performance of the class. Since partial grades for major assignments will also be revised to compensate for possible unexpected difficulty, the above final scale will be revised only if these prior partial adjustments turn out to be insufficient.
2. As a reference for your progression, the following scale can help you see

how well you are doing by the middle of the term, that is, by the time the first 200 points in regular (not extra) assignments have been completed): 101-125 pts = D; 126-150 = C; 151-175 = B; 176-200 = A. All the grades corresponding to the first 200 points will be available no later than a week after the grade for Test II is posted.

3. Pluses and minuses will be assigned for the course final grades (i.e., B-, B+, C+, C-, etc.), except A+ (which is not an option at CSUN). Pluses will be assigned to grades when the numerical totals fall within the highest ten points in each of the point brackets above (e.g., 341-350 points would be a B+), and minuses to the lowest ten points in each of the brackets (301-310 would be a B-). (This same rule will apply if, and once, the grade brackets are revised according to the criteria in Important Note 1 above).

VII. Policies

I. Submissions and attendance

1. **Late assignments and absences.** You will *not* get credit for submitting late an assignment. Since attendance in this course is equivalent to an assignment, and since there is no assignment that can serve as a make-up, absences—even *justified* absences—are equivalent to “late assignments” (or “no submission” in this case) for grade purposes. Notice that, in both cases (late assignments and absences) you can compensate for the missed points by doing the extra-credit assignments (see above).

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- a) What “late” means.
 - i. For any submitted assignment, “late” means “after the precise time set as a deadline” (i.e., there is no grace period). If for some justified reason we agree on an extension (see below), “late” means after the new deadline we have set—and the same policy for late assignments will apply in these cases if the new deadline is not met.
 - ii. For the purpose of attendance grade, “late” means arriving after the ten first minutes of class. Leaving during the class for any period of time (see exceptions below) before the end of class would be equivalent to being “late”—which is equivalent to being absent for credit purposes. Recall that there is no partial credit for attendance.
- b) Leaving during class: no attendance grade. Leaving the classroom *for any reason* and *at any time* while the class is in progress and *not returning* would be equivalent, for attendance credit purposes, to being absent for the day *unless* the classroom is left for a brief period (no more than fifteen minutes) and for a *well-justified reason* (i.e., an emergency) about which I am properly informed. A student cannot benefit from this exception more than twice during the term (i.e., after the second occasion, leaving the classroom while the class is taking place will be considered an absence regardless of the reason).
- c) Leaving/re-entering the classroom: no attendance for the day and one instance of disruptive behavior. See “Leaving/re-entering the classroom while class in progress” under the Policies on Disruptive Behavior below.

2. **Assignment submissions.** All assignments must be submitted according to the instructions provided with the assignment description. As a rule, unless otherwise specified, assignments are due *in hard copy* and *in person* at the beginning of the class of the day in which they are due. Permission by the instructor must be obtained to submit assignments in a different format or through other means than those specified in the assignment. Failure to submit assignments according to the instructions (or according to other conditions allowed by the instructor) will mean, for the purpose of receiving credit, that the assignment has not been submitted.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- a) To avoid misunderstandings and possible unnecessary complications, keep always copies of everything you turn in. If you submit anything electronically or through the course web page, keep always a copy of the email message you sent or of the “receipt” you received with the submission. If something goes wrong as you try to submit an assignment electronically, e-mail *immediately* the assignment as an attachment to the instructor’s campus address. Delaying this more than fifteen minutes beyond the deadline for submission will be equivalent to submitting the assignment late (which will be equivalent to “no submission” for credit purposes).
 - b) Using an alternative submission method without having obtained permission to do so will be equivalent to submitting a late assignment without having obtained an extension (i.e., it will be equivalent to “no submission” for credit purposes). Permission to submit assignments through means other than those specified in the assignment description must be obtained at least twenty-four hours before it is due.
 - c) Not being able to be present in class the day an assignment is due is *not* enough justification to submit an assignment late without obtaining permission (an extension) for it. Submitting it late for this reason would be equivalent, for the purpose of obtaining credit, to a “late assignment” (i.e., to “no submission”).
3. **Extensions.** Extensions of deadlines for submissions *because of personal circumstances* may be obtained. These extensions must, however, be explicitly requested by the student at least twenty-four hours before the assignment is due (unless the personal circumstances involved impede it, which will have to be shown as well). Notice that simply requesting an extension is not, in any case, equivalent to *having obtained* an extension. Only once the justification is accepted as valid by the instructor and a new deadline is approved by the instructor and accepted by the student will the extension be considered granted and the new deadline valid. In general, an extension will only be conceded *if* (a) the relevant personal circumstances show the practical *impossibility* to complete the assignment by the deadline, and (b) the request is accompanied by sufficient evidence/explanations showing that the *reason* to miss the deadline had priority over the responsibility to meet it (this might include, e.g., a doctor’s note, a police report or similar proof). In general, no extensions will be conceded because of excessive workload. See also below “Last possible deadline for extensions and make-ups.”

II. Make-ups (for tests)

1. **General policy on make-ups.** Make-ups can only be done for major tests and only under certain circumstances. They must, first, be properly requested by the student and they can only be done after the approval the instructor. A request for a make-up will only be honored *if* (a) the instructor is informed *at least twenty-four hours before* the date in which the test is scheduled about the impossibility to take the test (an exception to this requirement would require to justify and document the impossibility to inform); and (b) the impossibility to take the test is *satisfactorily justified* (which might imply showing documents, such as a doctor’s note, a police report or similar proof). “Satisfactorily”

implies showing that the other commitment, obligation, or impediment in conflict with the test has appropriate *priority* over the duty to take the test. This means that simply having *something else to do* at the time of the test is not enough grounds to support a request for a make-up; and it also means that, in cases in which the other obligation might have a priority *equal* to the test but whose date was set or chosen by the student *after the first day of classes*—i.e. after the syllabus became public--the student will not be excused from the obligation to respect the course deadline or assignment date (this would apply to cases, e.g., in which a social event may have been scheduled by the student after the first day of classes).

2. Other (no make-ups)

- i. Quizzes on readings. *No make-ups* will be done for quizzes on readings or movies *regardless of the reason for missing them*. There will be no exceptions. Fairness and practicality are the main reasons behind this. Since these quizzes are designed to give the student credit for having done (and understood) the readings, and those readings will usually be covered during the class in which the quiz is given, a make-up would defeat the purpose of these quizzes. *Earlier* make-ups (i.e., opportunities to take the quizzes before the time when they are scheduled) will not be granted either. Besides the fact that, in full fairness, it is not recommendable that different students have access to the quiz at different moments, I cannot guarantee that I will be able to grant all possible requests of this kind (practical reason). And granting some but not all would be unfair. Extra-credit assignments can serve to compensate for any missed quizzes. (This is a major reason why we will do so many extra-credit quizzes.)
- ii. Other assignments and attendance. *No make-ups* will be done for any other non-test *assignments* (see “Extensions” above) or for *absences* (see above “Submissions and Attendance”). Extra-credit assignments can serve as a substitute to compensate for missed points in these cases. Notice that, since attendance has credit value—it is treated as a course assignment for grading purposes--the justification of an absence *cannot* count as a sufficient reason to obtain the missed points. In other words, there is no make-up for missing the *assignment* of *attending a class*. (Think, however, that each class fully attended in a 16-week term with twice-a-week meetings, may come to about 1.5-2 pts depending on the possible missed classes and major tests.)

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- a) If a make-up is granted, the new date and time set for the make-up becomes the official date and time of the test (for the purposes of being late, absent, and so on).
- b) All make-ups for tests *must be done* no later than *ten instructional days* (according to the official university academic calendar for the term’s instructional period) since the day the test took place (unless sufficient reason not to do so is provided).² They must also be done *in person* and *during office hours* (which means the student will have to make themselves available at those times and within ten instructional days following the test). It is the student’s responsibility to take the necessary actions to guarantee that the make-up can be scheduled within this deadline. Scheduling a make-up will, in principle, require that we meet at least once during office hours to determine whether the case has

² Instructional days are all those *not* marked as “no instruction” in the University’s “Fall 2026 Instructional Days” (<https://www.csun.edu/university-advising-student-services-center/advisement/important-dates-and-deadlines>).

been sufficiently documented and to agree on the date and format of the test. Both this meeting and the make-up test must be done within ten instructional days since the day of the test.

- c) All make-ups for *any* assignments must be done by the last scheduled day of regular class meetings *for this course* unless it is a make-up for an assignment scheduled on the last day of classes or on Finals' Week (see for these cases below "Last possible deadline for extensions and make-ups"). This rule has priority over the ten-instructional-day rule above (which means that the period to do a make-up for a test that is scheduled less than ten days before the last scheduled class meeting will be exactly the remaining instructional days before the last scheduled class meeting).
- d) Granting a make-up does not guarantee that the format of the test will be the same. The instructor will decide on the format after considering both fairness and practical issues. In general, all make-ups for multiple-choice tests will be done in essay-question format.

III. Academic integrity

1. **Importance.** Cheating and plagiarism are violations of academic integrity. Academic integrity is a fundamental obligation of each CSUN student.³ Its importance can never be emphasized enough: without integrity, not only a *fair* evaluation of a student's work is compromised but the very possibility of such evaluation is impeded.
2. **What it is.** For the purposes of this course, what counts as a violation of academic integrity (or what counts as cases of "academic dishonesty") is what is included in the University Policy on Academic Integrity (<https://catalog.csun.edu/policies/academic-integrity-policy/>). Whether *observable behavior* (i.e., decisions and actions that can be observed in a submitted assignment) exhibit respect, or failure to respect, the general university policy or the specific course rules and policies designed to show integrity in this course assignments will be the grounds to determine whether a violation of academic integrity has occurred.
 - If there are online assignments for this course, in order to set some basic guarantees for integrity, students might be required to use some additional CSUN software (such as LockDown Browser). If so, instructions and a deadline to obtain it will be provided before it is required.
3. **If it happens.** All *confirmed* cases (of cheating or plagiarism) will be treated according to the university's guidelines and procedures. This means that, at least two types of actions will be taken. (1) The Office of the Vice President for Student affairs will be informed, especially if it occurs repeatedly (see the CSUN "Faculty Responsibilities" in the University Policy on Academic Integrity [<https://catalog.csun.edu/policies/academic-integrity-policy/>]); and, depending on the seriousness of the case, a request to undertake disciplinary action may also be placed. And (2) the grade for the assignment and/or the course will be lowered accordingly. This is how the grade will be affected and what counts as a violation:

³ "The maintenance of academic integrity and quality education is the responsibility of each student within this university and the California State University system. Cheating or plagiarism in connection with an academic program at a campus is listed in Section 41301, Title V, California Code of Regulations, as an offense for which a student may be expelled, suspended, or given a less severe disciplinary sanction. Academic dishonesty is an especially serious offense and diminishes the quality of scholarship and defrauds those who depend upon the integrity of the campus programs.[...]" ("Appendix E2: Academic Dishonesty," in *CSU Northridge Catalog* as available on Jan. 17, 2009 at : <http://www.csun.edu/catalog/appendices.html>)

- How the grade will be affected. In a first (confirmed) instance, the *full assignment* affected (not only the question/answers affected) will receive zero points (i.e., no grade). In a second instance, the assignment will receive zero points and the final grade of the course will be reduced by 25%. In a third instance, the assignment will receive zero points, and the final grade will be reduced by 50%. In a fourth instance, the student will receive an F grade at the end of the term.
- What counts as a confirmed instance. “One confirmed instance” above refers to *each* action which violates this policy, *not* to each assignment in which the policy is violated. This means that if there are two violations *in the same assignment*, and these are the two first violations by the student during the course, the assignment will receive zero points and the final grade will be reduced by 25%.

IV. In-class behavior

1. **Disruptive behavior**

a) Seriously disruptive behavior

In-class behavior which seriously disrupts the conditions under which our classes can proceed normally will not be tolerated. If the behavior continues after the student is notified for the first time of its gravity, the student may be requested to leave the classroom. If such a behavior occurs in at least two instances throughout the term (i.e., instances in which the student is notified about it) it will result in a reduction of 25% of the final total points acquired at the end of the term. A third instance may result in an additional 25% grade reduction (that is, in a 50% reduction of the final grade) and a fourth in a failing grade. All these cases will also be reported to the Office of Student Affairs and any actions this office might recommend will also be taken. Extreme cases in which the behavior in question may fall within the competence of the police services will be addressed according to university guidelines first (and only secondarily according to this course policy, if it applies).

b) Other disruptive behavior

1. Leaving/re-entering the room while class is in progress. Leaving and re-entering the classroom while class is in progress will be considered disruptive behavior (but not *seriously* disruptive behavior). Only leaving the room (and not returning) while class is in progress will result in no attendance credit for that day. (See “Late assignments and absences” above). Leaving *and re-entering* the classroom will result, besides in an absence for the day, in *one instance of disruptive behavior*. If it occurs in three different occasions throughout the semester, the total grade for attendance obtained throughout the semester will be reduced by 50%. If it occurs on four occasions throughout the term no grade for attendance will be assigned. After the fourth occasion it will be considered “seriously disruptive behavior” for the purposes of its impact on the grade (see above): the fifth occasion will have the same impact on the grade that the second instance of “seriously disruptive behavior” (i.e., a reduction of 25% of the final total points). Subsequent instances will fall within the subsequent instances of “seriously disruptive behavior” mentioned above. If the leaving/re-entering behavior occurs more than once in the same class, the student may be asked to leave the classroom for the day.

- Note on the relation to policies with same penalties. Since the penalty

for this type of disruptive behavior is the same as the penalty for, e.g., the use of electronic devices or for talking in class, the penalties in these cases will be added to each other in this way: once one of these policies has been violated three times or more, three violations of the other policy will count, for the purpose of calculating the penalty, as one additional violation of the first policy. Thus, if three violations of each policy occur, it will be equivalent to four violations of one (i.e., no grade for attendance will be assigned at the end of the term); four violations of one and three violations of the other will be equivalent to five violations of the former, and so on. If the three policies are violated three times, the penalty would correspond to the one for a fifth violation.

2. Talking in class. Talking to others (or aloud to oneself) while class is in progress will be considered disruptive behavior. If the behavior occurs more than once in the same class and the student has been notified previously, the student may be asked to leave the classroom for the day. If the behavior occurs in three occasions throughout the semester, the total course grade for attendance will be reduced by 50%. If it occurs on four occasions no grade for attendance will be assigned. After the fourth occasion it will be considered “seriously disruptive behavior” for the purposes of its impact on the grade (see above): the fifth occasion will have the same impact on the grade that the second instance of “seriously disruptive behavior” (i.e., a reduction of 25% of the final total points). Subsequent instances will fall within the subsequent instances of “seriously disruptive behavior” mentioned above.
 - Relation to other policies. If this policy is violated at least three times and other policies with similar penalties are also violated, see above “Note on the relation to policies with the same penalties” under policy on “Leaving/re-entering the classroom while class is in progress” to see how the final penalty will be determined.

2. Electronic devices

- a. The policy: No electronic devices are allowed during class. All electronic devices *of any sort* must be switched off during class time *and* kept away from the reach of both the hand and the eye (unless a major reason to act otherwise exists and permission has been granted by the instructor).
- b. The consequences:
 - After the first violation of this policy the student will lose the right to choose where they will sit during class for the rest of the term. From that moment on, the student will have to choose an unobstructed seat in the front row of the classroom for the remainder of the semester (or alternatively, a seat approved by the instructor). Each class in which the student fails to comply with this aspect of the policy (after the first warning) will be equivalent to an absence for attendance credit purposes.
 - If this policy is violated in three occasions—i.e. if the student has been informed in class of the violation of the policy in three occasions--the student’s final grade for attendance will be reduced by 50%. If it occurs on four occasions throughout the term no grade for attendance will be assigned. After the fourth occasion it will be considered “seriously disruptive behavior” for the purposes of its impact on the grade (see

above): the fifth occasion will have the same impact on the grade that the second instance of “seriously disruptive behavior” (i.e., a reduction of 25% of the final total points). Subsequent instances will fall within the subsequent instances of “seriously disruptive behavior” mentioned above.

- Relation to other policies. If this policy is violated at least three times and other policies with similar penalties are also violated, see above “Note on the relation to policies with the same penalties” under policy on “Leaving/re-entering the classroom while class is in progress” to see how the final penalty will be determined.
- If a student’s choice of seat or other arrangements (e.g., use of desk, clothes, posture, place of hands) might make it difficult or impossible to determine whether this policy is being respected, the student will be requested to remove all obstacles that might create doubt. If the doubts persist for at least two classes, the student will lose the right to choose where to sit and will be requested to occupy an unobstructed seat near the front of the classroom for the remainder of the semester.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

The following behaviors will *also* be considered violations of the “electronic devices” policy:

- a) keeping an electronic device within reach (of hand or eye) even if it is not being *used* with the hands.
- b) taking actions that might create conditions to violate this policy without being noticed (such as placing the table or yourself or your things in such a way that the instructor might never be able to see the possible of electronic devices)
- c) not taking sufficient actions to show clearly the compliance with the policy (i.e., not taking actions to make it possible to determine whether the policy is being respected or not)
- d) purposely deceitful behavior (e.g., acting *as if* using an electronic device)

3. Absences *de facto*.

A student who is present in the classroom but who spends a good part of the class (at least fifteen minutes) engaged in activities which, in practice, make them be absent (i.e., absent for any pedagogical purposes), will not receive credit for attendance that day. These activities include, but are not limited to, using a cell phone, computer, or any other device during class, talking to other students, sleeping, working on assignments for other classes, or reading material unrelated to the class.

If these cases occur on at least three occasions *in which the behavior is also disruptive for the class* (e.g., watching videos that may distract others), the student will not receive credit for attendance at the end of the term. After the fourth occasion it will be considered “seriously disruptive behavior” for the purposes of its impact on the grade (see above), that is, the fifth occasion will have the same impact on the grade that the second instance of “seriously disruptive behavior” (i.e., a reduction of 25% of the final total points).

- Relation to other policies. If this policy is violated at least three times and other policies with similar penalties are also violated, see above “Note on the relation to policies with the same penalties” under policy on “Leaving/re-entering the classroom while class is in progress” to see how the final penalty will be determined.

4. Use of desks/tables.

Desks should be at all times clean of everything that is not strictly necessary to perform your task and duties as a student as well as of anything that impedes the implementation of course policies or which interferes with the quality of other students' presence in the classroom. This means, among other things, that bags, bag packs, coats, and other items unrelated to class activities should be placed on adjacent chairs, the floor, the back of the seat or the hangers at the back of the room.

- Recall that using any items to hide yourself or your hands while the class is in session would be equivalent to a violation of the policy on electronic devices (see policy on "Electronic devices" above). This means that three warnings for improper use of the desk will result in a reduction of 50% of the course grade for attendance at the end of the semester. Violations beyond these three uses would be treated in the same way that violations beyond three uses of electronic devices (see above).
- Relation to other policies. If this policy is violated at least three times and other policies with similar penalties are also violated, see above "Note on the relation to policies with the same penalties" under policy on "Leaving/re-entering the classroom while class is in progress" to see how the final penalty will be determined.

V. Office hours

Office hours are always open to any student. No time slots will be reserved, or appointments made at specific times within those hours, that is, students will have an opportunity to talk to the instructor *only* on a first-come first-served basis. No regular office hours will be held during the first week of classes or during Finals' Week. Office hours for an in-person course will only be in person; and for an online course, only *via* videoconference.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- a) Coming to office hours is *not* a requirement for the course. Coming or not to office hours does not affect *in any way* your grade. Your performance in graded course assignments and activities is all that counts towards your final grade.
- b) As with any other forms of communication, office hours will immediately be interrupted if CSUN's Student Code of Conduct is not respected. Any violations will be reported to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

VI. Students with disabilities

If you have a learning disability of any kind for which you are, or may be, requesting a special accommodation, you should contact the office of Disabilities Resources and Educational Services (DRES) or the National Center on Deafness (NCOD) as early as possible in the term. (DRES is located in Bayramian Hall 110 and can be reached at 818-677-2684; NCOD is located on Bertrand Street in Jeanne Chisholm Hall, and their phone number is 818-677-2611). Once any accommodation has been approved by any CSUN office, you should inform me immediately. Failing to inform me as soon as possible may result in a delay to take the actions required by the approved accommodation.

In principle, all accommodations approved by DRES or NCOD will be honored in precisely the same terms and conditions which that office will determine appropriate

for each individual case. In the rare event that an accommodation interferes in an important way with our syllabus, course practices or policies, or the possibility of a fair evaluation, an alternative with an equivalent resulting benefit will be adopted, always in consensus with DRES or NCOD and the student.

VII. Other important deadlines

1. Deadline to request a grade revisions of any assignment

All requests to revise grades for any course assignment must be submitted within 48 hours from the moment the grades for that assignment are posted on Canvas and must be accompanied by precise reasons as to why the grade received should be revised (and to which extent). Since for all written assignments (except the Final Project, if there is one) you will receive first the grade on paper (with the graded assignment), it is your responsibility also to check promptly that the grade posted corresponds to the grade you see on the written assignment.

2. Latest possible deadline for all extensions and make-ups

All extensions and make-ups for assignments due during the regular formal instructional period of this course must be scheduled by the last day of scheduled classes *for the course* (as it appears in the syllabus). There are two exceptions to this, both of which are subordinated to *practical considerations* (i.e., whether it is actually possible to do it) and to having *guarantees of fairness* (with respect to the class). (1) In the case of a possible make-up for assignments due on the last scheduled class, the make-up will have to be done by the last official university day of *formal instruction* for the current term (see “last day of formal instruction” for the term in the official academic calendar). If the last official day of formal instruction for the term coincides with the last class meeting for the course, the make-up will have to be done no later than the end of that same day (subject to the conditions of practicality and fairness mentioned above). And (2) in the case of an assignment scheduled or due during Finals’ Week, a possible make-up will have to be done no later than the last official day of Finals’ Week. If the assignment was due on the last official day of Finals’ Week, the make-up will have to be done no later than the end of that same day.

VIII. Tentative Course Schedule

INTRODUCTION

WEEK I

Tu., Aug. 25: **Introduction to the Course: Syllabus and Student Introductions.**

Th., Aug. 27: ***What is “Philosophy of Film and Literature”?***

READING [fiction]: E. Keret, “A Healthy Start,” from *Suddenly, A Knock on The Door* (London: Vintage Books, 2013), pp. 45-53.

MOVIE [short]: Thompson, H. W. (Director). (2014). *A New Man* [Film]. [9 mins.] Available at: <https://vimeo.com/72598776>

WEEK II

Tu., Sep. 1: ***What is “Philosophy of Film and Literature”?* [II]**

READING: W. Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1937).

Th., Sep. 3: What is “Philosophy of Film and Literature”? [II] [cont.]

PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE

WEEK III

Tu., Sep. 8: *The Nature of Literature*

READING: R. Stecker, “What is Literature?” in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 50 (1996), pp. 681-94 [repr. in PLCCR, pp.65-71]

Th., Sep. 10: *The Nature of Literature [cont.]*

WEEK IV

Tu., Sep. 15: *The “Reality” of Fiction*

READING: A. Thomasson, “Fictional Characters as Abstract Artifacts,” from *Fiction and Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.5-23, 155, 156 [in PLCCR, pp.144-153].

Th., Sep. 17: The “Reality” of Fiction [cont.]

WEEK V

Tu., Sep. 22: *Emotion in Fiction [I]: Paradox of Fiction*

READING: K. Walton, “Fearing Fictionally,” from *Mimesis and Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 195-204, 241-245, 249 [in PLCCR, pp. 177-184].

Th., Sep. 24: *Emotion in Fiction [II]: Paradox of Fiction vs. Paradox of Horror*

MOVIE: Haneke, M. (Director). (2012). *Amour* [Love] [Film]. Les Films du Losange; X Filme Creative Pool; Wega Film.

WEEK VI

Tu., Sep. 29: **TEST I**

Th., Oct. 1st: *Emotion in Fiction [III]: Paradox of Horror*

READING: S. Feagin, “The Pleasures of Tragedy,” in *American Philosophical Quarterly* 20 (1983), pp.95-104[in PLCCR, pp. 185-193]

WEEK VII

Tu., Oct. 6: *Emotion in Fiction [IV]: Literature vs. Film*

READING [fiction]: Igor Teper, “The Secret Number” (2000)

MOVIE [short]: Levy, C. (Director). (2012). *The Secret Number* [Film]. [15mins]). Available at: <https://vimeo.com/43732205>

Th., Oct. 8: *Interpretation*

READING: J. Robinson, “Style and Personality in the Literary Work,” in *Philosophical Review* 94 (1985), pp.227-47 [repr. in PLCCR, pp. 301-309].

WEEK VIII

Tu., Oct. 13: **NO CLASS:** *Professional Travel*

Tu., Oct. 15: **NO CLASS:** *Professional Travel*

WEEK IX

Tu., Oct. 20: *Interpretation [cont.]*

Th., Oct. 22: **TEST II**

WEEK X

Tu., Oct. 27: ***Literary Values (I): Knowledge***

READING: C. Wilson, "Literature and Knowledge," in *Philosophy*, vol. 58, no. 226, 1983, pp. 489-496. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S003181910006664X>.

Th., Oct. 29: *Literary Values (I): Ethics [cont.]*

PHILOSOPHY OF FILM

WEEK XI

Tu., Nov. 3: ***Literary/Film Values (II): Ethics***

READING: B. Gaut, "The Ethical Criticism of Art," from J. Levinson, ed., *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 182-97, 199, 201, 202 [repr. in PLCCR, pp. 355-63].

MOVIE: Kubrick, S. (Director). (1971). *An Orange Clockwork* [Film]. Warner Bros. [Available online at CSUN University Library]

MOVIE: Riefenstahl, L. (Director). (1935). *Triumph of the Will* [Film]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHs2coAzLJ8>

Th., Nov. 5: *Literary Values (II): Ethics [cont.]*

WEEK XII

Tu., Nov. 10: **NO CLASS:** *Professional Travel*

Th., Nov. 12: **NO CLASS:** *Professional Travel*

WEEK XIII

Tu., Nov. 17: **TEST III**

The Nature of Film: *Photography, Moving Image, Animation, Film*

READING: D. McIver Lopes, "The Aesthetics of Photographic Transparency," in *Mind*, vol. 112, no. 447, 2003, pp. 433-48. <https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/112.447.433>.

MOVIE [short]: Schaap, E. (Director). (2011). *Rooted* [Film]. Utrecht School of the Arts (HKU) [5 mins.]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IshQFFwW30U>

MOVIE [short]: Lepore, K. (Director). (2010). *Bottle* [Film]. [5 mins.]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mVEapKnS1c>

ADDITIONAL READING: Thomas Wartenberg, "Philosophy of Film," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = [<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/film/>](https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/film/).

Th., Nov. 19: The Nature of Film [cont.]

WEEK XIV

Tu., Nov. 24: **Film and Ethics: *The Case of Pornography***

READING: S. Dwyer, "Pornography," in RCPF, pp. 515-526

AUDIO: Catherine MacKinnon on "The Pornography Phenomenon." Available at: <https://www.makers.com/videos/552d3714e4b0280be0cdf2ba>

AUDIO: Andrea Dworkin Testimony Before the Attorney General on Pornography. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neQeea4rmLA>

ADDITIONAL READING: Ch. Falzon, "Why Be Moral?" in RCPF, pp. 591-600.

Th., Nov. 26: **NO CLASS: *Thanksgiving Recess***

WEEK XV

Tu., Dec. 1: Film and Ethics: *The Case of Pornography* [cont.]

Th., Dec. 3: ***Film Value: Film as Philosophy***

READING : Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Conclusion.

MOVIE : Pourriat, E. (Director). (2018). *Je ne suis pas un homme facile* [I am not an easy man] [Film]. Autopilot Entertainment; Film Invaders; Frenchkiss Pictures. [1h 38 mins]

ADDITIONAL READING: Th. Wartenberg, "Film as Philosophy," in RCPF, pp.549-559.

WEEK XVI

Tu., Dec. 8: *Film as Philosophy* [cont.]

Th., Dec. 10: **TEST IV⁴**

IX. Other important dates⁵

Mon., Aug. 24 to

Sun., Aug. 30, 11:59 pm: Wait listing continues through Sun., Aug. 30, 11:59pm. No permission is required to add classes before this day (except for restricted classes).

⁴ This is the last test of the term. This means that there is no final exam for this course. You should disregard any dates for such an exam—or for any other assignment for that matter—which may have been provided to you by others or through other means (you may have seen, in particular, in SOLAR a date assigned for the final exam for this course). You should, in any case, be available during that date in case that a campus closure or some other major event forces us to cancel Test IV. If this happens it will be rescheduled during the day and time assigned to our course for a final.

⁵ See full academic calendar at https://live-csu-northridge.pantheonsite.io/sites/default/files/2026-06/2026-2027_Academic%20Calendar_FINAL%2006-11-26_4.pdf and a full registration calendar at <https://www.csun.edu/current-students/registration-calendar>

Mon., Aug. 31st to Sun. Sep. 20:	To add a class, request a permission number from the instructor and enroll using self-service registration. To drop classes or change grading basis, request approval using the appropriate Late Schedule Change form(s).
Sun., Sep. 20, 11:59pm:	Last day to add, drop, or change grading basis (CR/NC) using online, self-service registration
Fri., Dec. 11:	Last day of formal instruction (Fall 2026 Semester).
Sat., Dec. 12- Fri., Dec. 18:	Finals' Week
Wed., Dec. 23:	Instructor's grades due
Th., Dec. 24:	Last day of the Fall 2026 semester

Northridge, August 21st, 2026